

From: [O'Malley Vincent](#)
To: [Nea Christian](#)
Cc: [Phelan Sarah-Jane](#)
Subject: RE: Re. Reactive Maintenance works at SO-N59-002.00 Ballysadare River Bridge
Date: Thursday 30 July 2020 16:54:03

Hi Christian,
Having reviewed the content of the email from Atkins, I am happy to accept the reasoned determination as set out below.
Sincerely
Vincent O'Malley

From: Nea Christian [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday 30 July 2020 16:14
To: O'Malley Vincent <[REDACTED]>
Cc: Phelan Sarah-Jane <[REDACTED]>
Subject: FW: Re. Reactive Maintenance works at SO-N59-002.00 Ballysadare River Bridge

Vincent,
Having reviewed Paul's email below and having regard to the very minor nature of the works, I recommend that the following reasoned determination can be made:

Having performed screening for Appropriate Assessment in respect of the proposed reactive maintenance works detailed in the email received from Paul O'Donoghue dated the 29th of July, 2020, and entitled 'Re. Reactive Maintenance works at SO-N59-002.00 Ballysadare River Bridge', I accept the recommendations of Atkins that the proposed reactive maintenance works, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, would not be likely to have a significant effect on any European site in view of the best scientific knowledge and the site's conservation objectives. I determine that an Appropriate Assessment of these proposed works is not required, as it can be excluded on the basis of objective scientific information following the screening done that the proposed works, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on any European site.

Kind regards,
Christian.

From: O'Donoghue, Paul [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday 29 July 2020 18:21
To: Nea Christian <[REDACTED]>; O'Malley Vincent <[REDACTED]>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re. Reactive Maintenance works at SO-N59-002.00 Ballysadare River Bridge

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Christian

Re. Reactive Maintenance works at SO-N59-002.00 Ballysadare River Bridge

The structure location is illustrated here (bridge location circled in Red).



[Source: NBDC maps].

Ballysadare River Bridge is a 7 arch bridge located on the N59 as it passes through Ballysadare, Co. Sligo. It carries the N59 over the Ballysadare River (WFD Cathcment - Owenmore[Sligo]_SC_030) just upstream of where the river enters Ballysadare Bay. (Note: River Names are taken from EPA Maps - <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>). Ballysadare River Bridge is located above the 'highest point to which the ordinary tide flows' [Source: Heritage Maps; www.heritagemaps.ie – Historic 25" map].

Proposed Works:

A number of trees / branches are trapped upstream of Ballysadare River Bridge. It is proposed to access the river by boat – cutting free the accumulated branches. These will be allowed to float downstream where they will be captured some 200m downstream of the bridge at the weir; where they will be further cut up as required and removed from the river.





Ecological Characteristics:

The bridge is located within the Unshin River SAC (001898). The qualifying interests of the site are as follows: -

- Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitriche-Batrachion vegetation [3260]
- Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) [6210]
- Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae) [6410]
- Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0]
- *Salmo salar* (Salmon) [1106]
- *Lutra lutra* (Otter) [1355]

The river at Ballysadare River Bridge does not support any of the Annex I habitats for which the Unshin River SAC has been designated. Otter are recorded from Ballysadare Bay and from the bridge (2015; River Biologists' Database (EPA) – Source; NBDC). Furthermore, as noted it is above the 'highest point to which the ordinary tide flows'. The Unshin River upstream of the bridge supports notable populations of Atlantic salmon, which will pass upstream / downstream along the Ballysadare / Unshin River system (CRFB; Western River Basin River Districts. Sampling Fish for the Water Framework Directive – Rivers. 2009 & 2009).

Downstream of the bridge, the river enters Ballysadare Bay SAC (000622). The qualifying interests of the site are as follows: -

- Estuaries [1130]
- Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]
- Embryonic shifting dunes [2110]
- Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* (white dunes) [2120]
- Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130]
- Humid dune slacks [2190]
- *Vertigo angustior* (Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail) [1014]
- *Phoca vitulina* (Harbour Seal) [1365]

The NPWS Saltmarsh Monitoring Project shows no saltmarsh habitat at or near the bridge. None of the sand dune habitats for which the SAC has been designated are located at or close to the bridge (NPWS, 2013). Estuaries and mudflats are all located downstream and not at or close to the bridge. The environs of the bridge do not support habitat suitable for *Vertigo*. Sites used by Common seal are within the central portions of Ballysadare Bay; the weir located 200m downstream of the bridge impedes movement of seals up the river.

The bridge is located upstream of Ballysadare Bay SPA (004129). The qualifying interests of the site are as follows: -

- Light-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota*) [A046]
- Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) [A141]
- Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) [A149]
- Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) [A157]
- Redshank (*Tringa totanus*) [A162]
- Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]

No suitable habitats for these species occur at or close to the bridge, and the bridge is sufficiently remote that disturbance

impacts are not predicted.

The Ballysadare River Bridge is not within an area designated as being sensitive for Freshwater pearl mussel. Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) has been recorded close to the bridge in 2016 - G668291 (Source: NBDC). Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) was recorded close to the bridge in 2014 - G668290 (Source: NBDC). There are no records of invasive species such as Indian balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) or Giant-rhubarb (*Gunnera sp.*) (Source: NBDC).

As noted, all works will take place from a boat and the riverbank. Access to the river will be limited to access by foot to retrieve tree limbs etc. at the weir. Works are of short duration. While there may be temporary disturbance, no impact to otter using the watercourse is therefore predicted.

There are no works to the bridge itself. No impact on bats is anticipated.

Negative impacts to Natura 2000 sites are not anticipated.

References: -

NPWS (2013). Conservation Objectives: Ballysadare Bay SAC 000622. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2013). Conservation Objectives: Ballysadare Bay SPA 004129. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2013). Ballysadare Bay SAC (site code 622) Conservation objectives supporting document - coastal habitats. Version 1.0. October 2013. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Atkins Findings -

This Screening for Appropriate Assessment is based on the best available scientific information. It is concluded that the proposed project poses no likely significant effects on Natura 2000 sites. Thus, it is recommended that it is not necessary for the proposed project to proceed to Appropriate Assessment.

Findings of TII Appropriate Assessment -

Can you please provide a Reasoned Determination?

Paul O' Donoghue *BSc PhD CEnV MCIEEM*
Principal Ecologist
Ireland

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