

DONEGAL - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Cósta Shliabh Tuaidh
Other names used for site	Slieve Tooley Coast
IGH THEME	IGH13 Coastal Geomorphology
TOWNLAND(S)	Ballard, Beefan, Beefan and Gaveross Mountain, Faugher Mountain, Gaveross, Glenlough, Maghera, Meenasillagh, Port
NEAREST TOWNS	Ardara and Glencolumbkille
SIX INCH MAP NUMBERS	72, 80, 81
ITM CO-ORDINATES	555600E, 889437N
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER: 10	GS1 BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NOs. 3, 4
GIS Code DL042	

Outline Site Description

Slieve Tooley is a mountainous, north-facing cliff approximately 200 m high, extending southwards from Maghera past the inlet of Port, to the precipitous cliff topped by quartzite at Glen Head.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The cliffs have been uplifted by isostatic rebound during the Holocene, so much of their height is a result of these uplift processes since glaciation. It is likely that much of their form is also a result of glacial action. The predominant cliff-forming rock type from Maghera to Glencolumbkille is a sequence of quartzites of the Dalradian Slieve Tooley Quartzite Formation.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

This coastal section is the type area for the Slieve Tooley Quartzite Formation and there are excellent and accessible exposures beside Maghera strand and on the hillside at Port. The lower beds comprise at least 50 m of repetitive thin-bedded quartzite with occasional current bedding, while the upper beds are a massive clean quartzite that usually weathers to produce a blocky appearance. Basic igneous rocks (metadolerite) are common in the form of thick sills found at low level along the entire coastal section and minor exposures of Port Askaig Formation diamictites (tillites) also occur.

This combination of rock types gives rise to high cliffs and adjacent jagged offshore islets and stacks. The coastal section has caves and at least one spectacular natural arch. Part of the north-facing cliff edge is subject to continual erosion, with recent listric cracks appearing on its upper surface. At Port, the wave-cut platform is below a pinnacle-stack and the waterfall behind the present shoreline is clear evidence that there has been isostatic rebound. Close to Port, a much higher and more extensive erosion surface apparently dates from the last Ice Age.

Site Importance – County Geological Site, maybe recommended for Geological NHA

The site is an excellent study site for the various landforms produced by coastal erosion. The ecological importance of this coast, which is reinforced by its geological and geomorphological significance, is also recognized by its inclusion in the West Donegal Coast SPA (004150) and the Slieve Tooley / Tormore Island / Loughros Beg Bay SAC and proposed NHA (00190).

Management/promotion issues

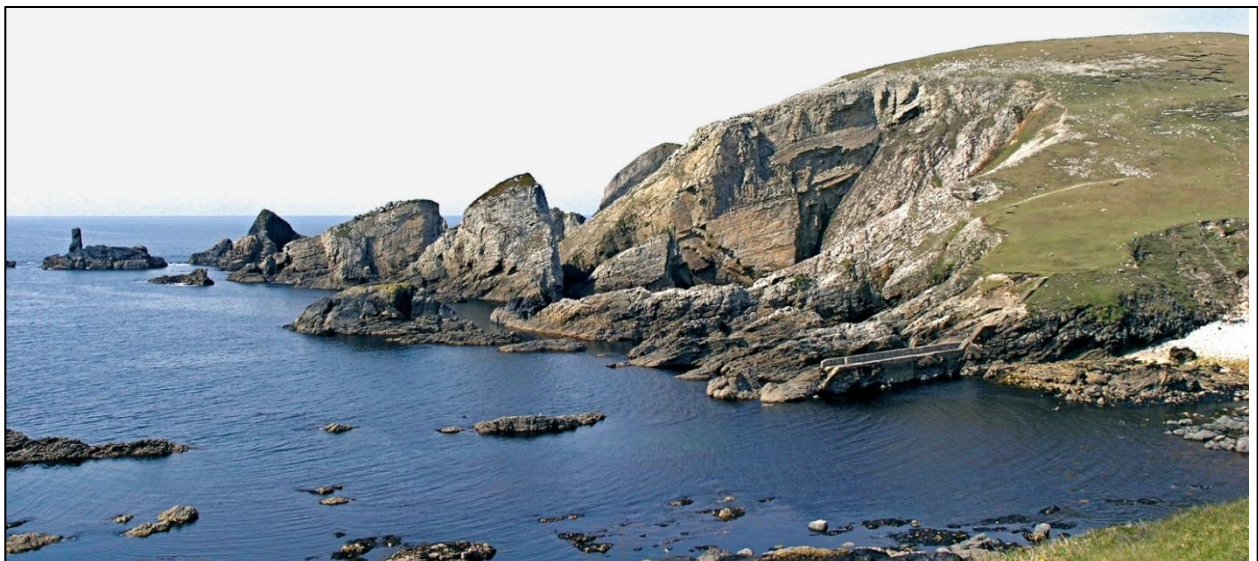
The northern margin of this coast west of Maghera is largely inaccessible. The coastal hillsides immediately north of both Glencolumbkille and Port provide fairly strenuous access to a sample of its geological and geomorphological features. Good views of the northern margin can be had from the west end of Loughros peninsula and more distantly from Rosbeg. The latter view to Tormore is a favourite with local artists.



Slieve Tooley from Loughros Point.



Coastal section in Slieve Tooley Quartzite, at Port, where cliffs, stacks, arches and caves all occur.



Slieve Tooley Quartzite at Port.

