

NORTH DONEGAL - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Inishowen Head
Other names used for site	Srúibh Brain
IGH THEME	IGH13 Coastal Geomorphology
TOWNLAND(S)	Stroove
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Greencastle
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	13, 22
ITM CO-ORDINATES	668230E 943700N
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER 3	GS1 BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO. 1
GIS Code ND008	

Outline Site Description

A scenic cliff-bounded coastal section at the eastern end of the Inishowen peninsula.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

Dalradian Supergroup schist and quartzite (Inishowen Head Grits and Phyllites) rocks form the rocky cliffs and craggy outcrops. Upper bluff sections are blanketed with glacial and periglacial drift that slopes down to the basal rocky cliff that is cut into bedrock.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

The easternmost point of the Inishowen peninsula and Co. Donegal, Inishowen Head lies at almost the same longitude as Kildare town. Overlooking the approach to Lough Foyle, this bold headland rises over 100m above sea level. The steep coastal slopes (glacial drift) descend to wave-washed rocky cliffs. Craggy outcrops and slope mantles (slope debris) of earthy rubble are the result of periglacial processes that followed the melting of ice sheets towards the end of the last major Ice Age.

The coastal landscape to the southwest of Inishowen Head, as far as Greencastle, is characterized by a stretch of relatively flat land that rises abruptly in elevation from c. 15m to 50m, only 500m inland from the shore.

During the last glaciation, the shore (a raised shoreline) between Greencastle and Inishowen Head was more than 20m higher than present levels. This coastal area hosts the remnant of late glacial and post-glacial raised beaches, features that are characteristic of the north Donegal coastline.

Site Importance – County Geological Site; may be recommended for Geological NHA

This site is important as a scenic location for coastal landforms (cliffs, slopes, beaches). The site is located within the North Inishowen Coast SAC (002012), and any future promotion of the designated site should include aspects of the site's geomorphological and geological heritage.

Management/promotion issues

Because of its scenic coastal setting, this site is a popular destination for visitors. Inishowen Head is the first Discovery Point on the Wild Atlantic Way (Donegal to Cork direction). Access to the disused signal station viewing point is through private land, grazed by sheep. Together with the County Geological Site at Dunagree Point, this site is ideally suited for the promotion of geological heritage both in literature pertaining to the area, and on public information panels at beach and viewpoint parking sites.



Inishowen Signal Station viewed looking NW from parking area at Inishowen Head.



Benkeeragh beach at the foot of the cliffs and bluffs on the northwest side of Inishowen Head.



Sheer cliffs and vegetated bluffs on the northwest side of Inishowen Head.

