

A6.102b Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax* (non-breeding)

1. Status in UK

See section A6.102a.

2. Population data

| | Population sizes (individuals) | Selection thresholds | Totals in species' SPA suite |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|--|
| GB | 689 | 7 | 241 (35% of GB total) |
| Ireland | 2,633 | 26 | No SPAs selected in Northern Ireland |
| Biogeographic population | 36,800 | 368 | 241 (0.7% of biogeographic population) |

GB population source: Bignal et al. 1997

All-Ireland population source: Berrow et al. 1993

Biogeographic population source: derived from Hagemeyer & Blair 1997

3. Distribution

See section A6.102a for description of distribution and taxonomy.

Choughs are largely resident on their breeding areas, although there is some local movement. Out of the breeding season, non-breeders mix with fledglings to form large non-breeding flocks that roam and feed over extensive areas (Warnes 1982; Madders *et al.* 1998). The social significance of such winter flocking is both important and complex (Bignal *et al.* 1989; Bignal & Bignal 1997). Research on Islay has shown that the conservation requirements of such flocks is an important consideration in maintaining a viable population, not least because of their social role.

4. Population structure and trends

See section A6.102a. Winter numbers of Chough are not monitored on a national scale, although the UK population is covered by an international Anglo-Irish survey every ten years.

5. Protection measures for population in UK

SPA suite

In the non-breeding season, the UK's SPA suite for Chough supports, on average 241 individuals. This amounts to 35% of the British breeding population. The suite contains about 0.7% of the international population. In an all-Ireland context, no sites have been selected in Northern Ireland. The SPA suite contains eight sites (Table 6.102b.1) where Chough has been listed as a qualifying species.

Other measures

See section A6.102a.

6. Classification criteria

All sites in the UK that support more than 1% of the national population of Chough in the non-breeding season were considered under Stage 1.1, and all, except for Gruinart Flats, The Oa peninsula and the Kilmeny area of Islay, were selected after consideration of Stage 2 judgements. Kilmeny, The Oa, Gruinart Flats and Kilmeny were not selected because of lack of data.

Skomer and Skokholm has been identified as an SPA for breeding Chough but in winter, there are little data available on the birds' movements, although they are believed to move across to mainland parts of Pembrokeshire.

All of the sites are of high naturalness, with a long history of occupation by Chough, and all make a significant contribution to the species' European range. Most sites have been selected solely because of their importance for Chough, although three of the sites (Rinns of Islay; Glannau Aberdaron and Ynys Enlli/Aberdaron Coast and Bardsey Island; and Skomer and Skomer) are multi-species sites.

Distribution map for wintering Chough SPA suite

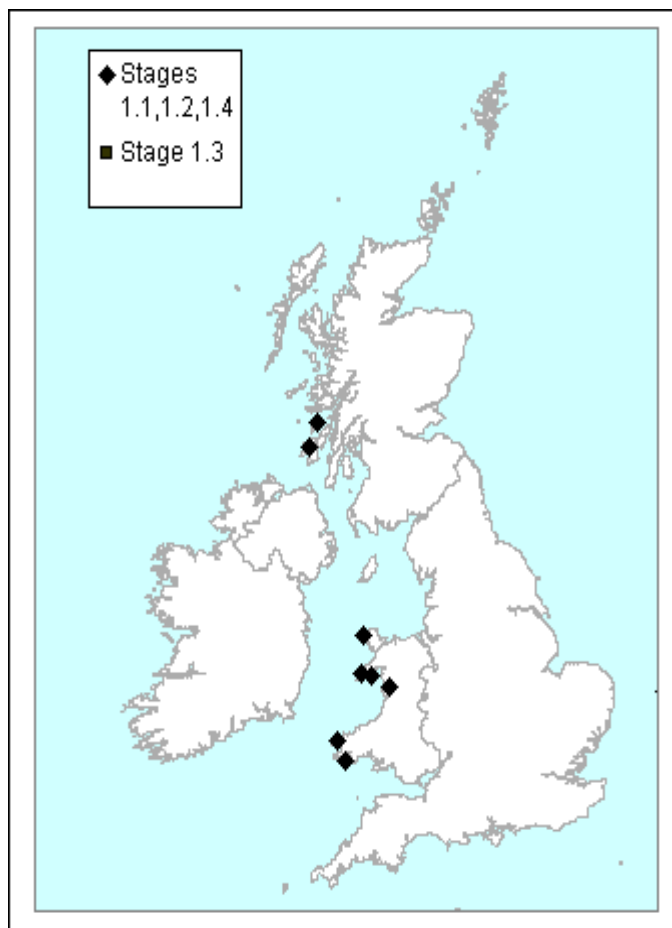


Table 6.102b.1 – SPA suite

| Site name | Site total | % of biogeographical population | % of national population | Selection stage |
|---|-------------------|--|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| Castlemartin Coast | 24 | <0.1 | 3.5 | 1.1 |
| Craig yr Aderyn | 55 | 0.1 | 8.0 | 1.1 |
| Glannau Aberdaron and Ynys Enlli/Aberdaron Coast and Bardsey Island | 24 | <0.1 | 3.5 | 1.1 |
| Glannau Ynys Gybi /Holy Island Coast | 18 | <0.1 | 2.6 | 1.1 |
| North Colonsay and Western Cliffs | 18 | <0.1 | 2.6 | 1.1 |
| Mynydd Cilan, Trwyn y Wylfa ac Ynysoedd Sant Tudwal/Mynydd Cilan, Trwyn y Wylfa and the St Tudwal Islands | 18 | <0.1 | 2.6 | 1.1 |
| Ramsey and St David’s Peninsula Coast | 22 | <0.1 | 3.2 | 1.1 |
| Rinns of Islay | 62 | 0.2 | 9.0 | 1.1 |
| TOTALS | 241 | 0.7% | 35.0% | |