



Site Name: South-west Porcupine Bank SAC

Site Code: 002329

The designated area is located on the south-western edge of the Porcupine Bank close to a canyon as it slopes into the Rockall Trough approximately 300 km west of the Blasket Islands off the Co. Kerry coastline. In the north-east Atlantic, major sedimentary mound areas exist that are several million years old. These carbonate mounds form isolated or clustered seabed elevations that may measure up to 350 m high and, in Ireland, significant clusters have been documented fringing the upper slopes of the Rockall Trough and Porcupine Seabight. Almost all host coral reef patches.

The site is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) selected for the following habitats and/or species listed on Annex I / II of the E.U. Habitats Directive (* = priority; numbers in brackets are Natura 2000 codes):

[1170] Reefs [1349] Bottlenose Dolphin (<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>)

The South-west Porcupine Bank SAC is approximately 23 km long, 17 km at its widest, and covers an area of 329 km². It contains a number of carbonate mounds close to the continental shelf break, in water depths of between 600 and 1600 m. The area was surveyed by the RV Professor Logachev TTR13 cruise in 2003. The greatest coral coverage was found in the south-west of the site on an isolated mound which hosted extensive areas of coral on its summit. The other mounds surveyed exhibited patches of coral reef and, as in other sites, there are areas of coral rubble associated with areas of live coral, with a diversity of species present. The framework coral is *Lophelia pertusa*.