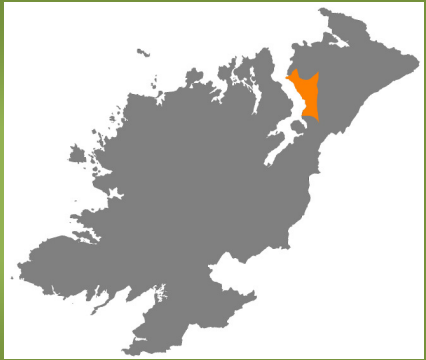
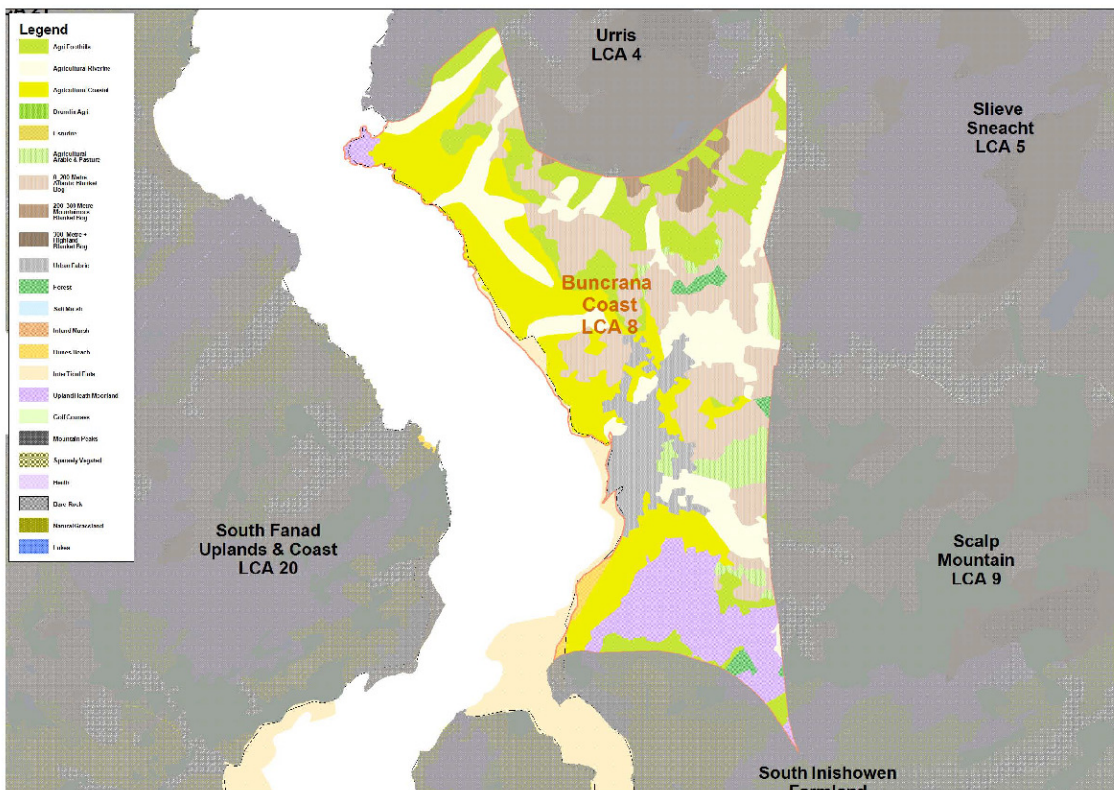


# Buncrana Coast LCA 8



Buncrana Coast LCA is located on the west of the Inishowen peninsula and is defined by Buncrana Town, a long stretch of sandy coastline along the Swilly and the surrounding mountains that encircle this fertile agricultural landscape. This is a historic landscape intrinsically associated with Lough Swilly as evident from the plethora of recorded monuments and protected structures in the landscape including enclosures, middens, cairns, promontory forts, Napoleonic forts, a castle and seaside Victorian architecture. Buncrana LCA is an interesting and active landscape with a synergy of land uses that contribute to the unique character of this area.

## Landscape Character types



## Seascape Character Units

Map/list Seascape units

Seascape Unit 6, Lough Swilly overlaps substantially with this LCA

**Key characteristics uses:** Lough Swilly is a large inland glacial tidal fjord that separates the Inishowen and Fanad peninsulas with high elevated bog and low-lying fertile fields and a range of uses including agriculture, tourism, forestry, and multiple sea uses including fishing, aquaculture, sailing, swimming, watersports and diving.

**Coastal edge:** The coast is predominantly low-lying with silty edges and areas of salt marsh and salt meadows.

**Visibility:** High degree of uninterrupted visibility of the lough from many points along the shore and coast.

**Special features significant buildings, landmarks, biodiversity and cultural features:** Blueflag beaches of Lisfannon and Lady's Bay, the defensive forts at Dunree head and Ned's Point, a plethora of protected structures and structures identified on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage as well as a rich archeological heritage and old demense landscape.

## Landscape Characteristics

### Land Form and Land Cover

- Undulating, fertile agricultural landscape with underlying schist geology, framed by uplands to the north, east and south and Lough Swilly to the west (one of only three glacial fjords in Ireland).
- Dunree head, at the northern extent of this LCA is an elevated quartzite promontory, housing a lighthouse and disused military barracks (formerly a Napoleonic fort). The lands undulate towards the shore between Dunree and Bunrana, and consist of generally medium to large agricultural fields bound for the most part by lush native hedgerow interspersed with clumps of trees and isolated deciduous trees.
- The higher Schist Mountains of Luddan Hill and Mouldy Hill, define the southern boundary of this LCA, and contain a large working quarry and some coniferous forestry plantations on the lower northern and eastern slopes.
- The coastline has a low rocky edge along the northern section of the LCA with a softer sandy shoreline towards the south from Lady's Bay along Bunrana Beach towards the Blue Flag beach at Lisfannon.

### Settlements

- **Bunrana:** Bunrana is the 2nd most populated town in the county, located between the River Crana and River Mill, it boasts a rich history and heritage, with many fine examples of architecture and urban planning throughout the town. This area was, historically, the home of the O'Doherty clan and O'Doherty's Keep, located at the mouth of the Crana River in Swan Park, is all that remains of a 14<sup>th</sup> Century Castle. Bunrana was a traditional Irish linear settlement, modified during the 'Plantation' to create a planned main street and market square. Bunrana Railway



Station operated from 1864-1953 connecting Buncrana to Derry to the south-east and north towards Clonmany, aiding the growth and vitality of the town as a quality seaside resort. More recently it has experienced a rise and fall in the textiles industry whilst continuing to be a key service centre for Inishowen and wider Donegal County.

### **History, Culture and Heritage**

- This LCA has a significant maritime and defensive history owing to its strategic location alongside the large glacial Fjord that is Lough Swilly, and surviving structures include:
  1. Lighthouse at Dunree Head
  2. Dunree Military Fort
  3. Porthaw Fort
  4. Buncrana castle
  5. Lighthouse along Buncrana Shore
- Dunree head has been a strongpoint from prehistory to it being a 'Treaty Port' of the British during the early years of Irish independence.
- Numerous archaeological structures and sites throughout the area, including a number of Recorded Monuments.
- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage including 5 RPS structures and 137 on the NIAH.
- Buncrana had a major textiles industry through the years and the Swan Mill and Tullyarvan Mills and associated structures inform the character of areas of Buncrana today.

### **Access and Recreation**

- The R238 regional road, one of the primary routes into west and central Inishowen, and a network of county roads permeate this area allowing easy vehicular access throughout.
- A seasonal ferry runs from Buncrana to Rathmullan on the opposite side of Lough Swilly operating from the large pier at Buncrana.
- A RNLI lifeboat and slipway is located at Porthaw, just north of Buncrana.
- The Wild Atlantic way follows the length of the Swilly coastline in this LCA.
- The Inishowen 100 is an established tourist route that follows the entire coast within this LCA.
- 18 hole golf course at Lisfannon on the south-western shore.
- Strong Tourism and leisure industry focused on the landscape, seascape and their use.
- The Lough Swilly Railway ran from Derry and Letterkenny through this LCA and north into Inishowen, closing in 1953.
- Fort Dunree Military Museum is a prime tourist attraction on the coast of this LCA.

### **Biodiversity**



- Ecologically important landscape containing 171.4ha of Natura 2000 sites (SAC & SPA), 61.74ha of NHA sites and 80.11ha pNHA sites as well as the important biodiversity links of the riverine corridors, and the old railway line.
- Large fluid sand dune system and coast along the south
- Patchwork of medium to large sized agricultural fields generally bounded by native hedgerow and deciduous trees.
- Large areas of deciduous woodland particularly along the coast and along river valleys.

### **Forces for change**

- Further consolidation and development of Bunrana.
- Linear development along the rural road network
- Tourism related holiday home developments.
- Potential for further development of Sailing and water based tourism activities.
- Golf tourism
- Renewable energy development).
- Afforestation on higher ground..
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development
- Coastal erosion
- Tourism Product Development of the coast, Ned's Point and Fort Dunree.