

Rockabill

Written by David Walsh

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Rockabill is the larger of two granite rocky islets, strictly called Lighthouse Island. The smaller islet is the Bill and they are connected at low spring tides. They have a total area of 0.9ha above the high water mark. The lighthouse was first constructed in 1860, and was rebuilt in 1900. It was automated in April 1989. The island was designated as a Special Protection Area in 1988 and as a Statutory Refuge for Fauna under the Wildlife Act 1976. The Roseate Tern Conservation Project began in May 1989 and prevents landing in spring and early summer. Ask Birdwatch Ireland at (01) 2819878 if in doubt. Resident wardens enforce the restrictions.

The Roseate Tern is an endangered species so do respect the rules. Ireland takes seriously its duty to Roseate Tern and Brent Goose, its two biggest contributions to international conservation. This conservation programme is one of the huge successes for Birdwatch Ireland. 90% of Ireland's Roseates breed here, which represents 35% of Europe's population, so it really is off limits in season.

Landing

Landing on Lighthouse Island is in the sound between the two islands onto a small pier with steps or onto rocks to the side, depending on circumstances. There is another pier with steps just further E, but which is usually more exposed. A narrow cut immediately right of this pier opens to give a convenient pool at low to half tide for landings. Beware of all landings at springs when considerable lift can occur.

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