
CAUSEWAY COAST AND GLENS

COUNTRYSIDE RECREATION STRATEGY

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IN ASSOCIATION WITH

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On behalf of



The Causeway Initiative

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1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

This document sets out a Countryside Recreation Strategy for the Causeway Coast and Glens. It has been commissioned by the Causeway Initiative in association with the Countryside Access and Activities Network (CAAN). The study aims to provide an effective and sustainable framework for the future management of countryside recreation within the Causeway Coast and Glens area, specifically seeking to maximise current and future opportunities for participation whilst striving for the conservation and protection of natural environment. Specific objectives are as follows:-

- Any recreational use of the Northern Ireland countryside is managed in a way which provides a high quality and consistent experience for all recreational users.
- New and developing facilities for countryside recreation within Northern Ireland are resourced, supported, provided and managed in a strategic way and
- The public's awareness of countryside recreation opportunities within Northern Ireland is raised and participation in countryside recreation by well-informed users is encouraged.

The Causeway Coast and Glens area encompasses the Council areas of Ballymena, Ballymoney, Carrickfergus, Coleraine, Larne, Limavady, Moyle and Newtownabbey (See map 1). The area extends from the eastern shore of Lough Foyle to Belfast Lough and includes the Causeway Coast, Antrim Coast and Glens, and North Derry Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

1.2 Northern Ireland Countryside Recreation Strategy

November 1998 saw the publication of Northern Ireland's first Countryside Recreation Strategy which set out a strategic framework for the future of countryside recreational activities. Following a recommendation in this document, the Countryside Access and Activities Network for Northern Ireland was established in March 1999 and tasked with the strategic development and management of countryside recreation across Northern Ireland. The 1998 strategy listed twenty-six activities to which archery, sea fishing and windsurfing have been added.

Land-Based Activities

- Caving

- Clay Pigeon Shooting
- Fell Running
- Field Sports
- Two Wheeled Motor Sports
- Four Wheeled Motor Sports
- Horse Riding
- Mountain Biking
- Mountaineering
- Orienteering
- Walking/Rambling
- Archery

Water-Based Activities

- Canoeing
- Coarse Angling
- Game Angling
- Sea Angling
- Jet Skiing
- Rowing
- Sailing
- Sub Aqua
- Surfing
- Windsurfing
- Water Skiing

Air-Based Activities

- Aeromodelling
- Gliding
- Hang Gliding & Paragliding
- Microlight Flying
- Parachuting
- Popular Flying

The Causeway Coast and Glens Recreation Strategy is one of five covering Northern Ireland's most protected landscapes, the others being the Mourne, the Sperrins, Fermanagh and South Armagh.

2.0 CURRENT POSITION

2.1 Introduction

The following is a summary of the current position for each of the twenty-nine activities with the Causeway Coast and Glens. It is based on consultation with the governing bodies of all the activities, Council officers responsible for access, recreation and tourism, information from Forest Service and other consultees and on the consultants own knowledge of the area. CAAN has recently commissioned reviews of off- road cycling and canoeing opportunities in Northern Ireland and that information has fed into this study. The following sections also consider management issues and aspirations for each activity. Maps 2 to 8 show the sites.

2.2 Land Based Activities

Caving

There is one caving site in county Antrim which is infrequently used because of difficult conditions.

Clay Pigeon Shooting

There are many types of Clay Pigeon shooting body in Northern Ireland each with their own following, layout and regulations e.g., Skeet, Olympic skeet, Automatic ball trap, Olympic trench (15 multiple ball trap) and Down the Line. Their individual regulations formalise the placing of the trap that releases the clays, the angle and elevation of the trajectory and the places from which the shooters must stand to address the quarry. There is also considerable informal activity by field shooters practising with a manual trap.

There are 1100 members of the Ulster Clay Pigeon Federation (UCPF) in Northern Ireland. There are 61 clubs within the Association, each usually having one type of layout, which is run and operated by the members. These include 2 commercial centres both associated with shops. Few clubs own their premises, most lease them. A major benefit of being in a club is of access to insurance. Most clubs would welcome new members who are prepared to share club work and responsibilities. Fees and shoot profit pays for rent of site and facilities. There are some facilities for the disabled in clubs using a flat layout but not in those, which require gradients e.g., quarry faces to simulate flying birds.

Enquiries to the UCPF will result in an aspiring shooter being contacted by an appropriate club. The activity is promoted through the game fairs where it is often offered on a "*come and try it*" basis on the day.

Northern Ireland does not have a facility adequate for international standards even though we have produced international champions. An international standard centre, which will include facilities for all the branches of the sport and also archery, is planned for a site between Ballymoney and Ballymena. Available finance and planning approval remain to be obtained. It is considered that such a centre would transform the local sport and attract visitors to major events. Many clubs would welcome grant aid to improve facilities for both disabled and able-bodied members such as the 3 sided semi-covered stands used by Golf driving ranges. Shooters, residents and visitors require a gun licence / certificate / authority from the Police to carry a firearm. There is still much red tape and delay in obtaining police authorisation but it has recently become much easier to obtain a shotgun licence.

Fell Running

Fell running as a sport is very much a spin-off from clubs which are essentially either running or orienteering clubs. Of about 50 running clubs in Northern Ireland, 20 have regular and consistent interested fell runners. These are not uniformly distributed across the country, but concentrated in the East of the Province such as greater Belfast, South Down and Larne. Thus, events and training also tend to be concentrated in the east. While training is essentially an individual and casual (in an organised sense) thing, big events such as a championship can attract up to 150 runners with typically 100 spectators.

Fell running takes place at four sites in the area. These are used for fell races. People training for races use a wide range of sites close to their home bases. There is a fear in landowners minds that they are liable to damages and claims if they give access, in spite of events carrying their own insurance.

The N.I. Sports Council on request provides information about this sport. They also would pass specific queries to the organisation. There is a website www.nifra.org.uk accessible to visitors.

Achievement of an agreed access route at Knocklayde would reactivate a very good site, starting and finishing at Ballycastle Forest. The encouragement of pubs or hotels to offer services in the neighbourhood of sites would greatly facilitate the events and could provide commercial spin-off.

Field Sports

The pattern of shooting in the Causeway Coast and Glens reflects the geography and land use of the area. Whilst shooting takes place across the entire area, the shooting rights ownership pattern of control of large tracts of land by families and individuals with relatively small pockets in places like the Glens, has a particular significance. Glenarm Estate (Earl of Antrim) is seen by the British Association of

Shooting Clubs (BASC) as a particularly good example of practice with excellent habitat management (some by Ulster Wildlife Trust) and the annual release of 10,000 pheasants and partridges. Shooting availability on these estates and forests is variously controlled and includes owner family use, day permit sales, lease and management to clubs, syndicates and individuals. A private syndicate that releases large numbers of partridges annually for example runs Rathlin Island. Because of the large acreage's involved there are relatively fewer shooters than in the Sperrins and Fermanagh. There are relatively few clubs in the area, though one of the largest at Coleraine has 100 members. Individual clubs and syndicates can control as much as 20,000 acres of moorland and small numbers of shooters pay large sums for the game shooting in the estates. Wildfowling takes place along the Eastern Shore of the Foyle, at the Bann Mouth and at Larne Lough. The Larne Lough Wildfowling are seen by BASC as an organisation with a good track record in nature conservation. The Ballymena Show, farming, conservation and country sports will attract 20,000 spectators and typically the Country open day at Glenarm 13/14 July attracts 20,000/25,000 visitors.

The field sports shooting seasons and restrictions are in operation in NI under the terms of the Wildlife (NI) Order 1985.

There are many locations with game shooting estates eg:-

- Loughguile
- Benvarden
- Bushmills
- Carrickfergus
- Newtowncrommelin
- Glenarm
- Rathlin Island

Forest Service forests in the area with shooting leases are as follows:

- Clare Wood
- Ballycastle Forest
- Slieveanorra
- Garry
- Glenariff
- Craigs Wood
- Portglenone
- Binevenagh
- Springwell
- Bann Woods N
- Cam
- Loughermore

- Gortnamoyagh
- Banagher

These leases vary in length but normally extend to three years and are subject to bids based on price and more importantly management plans for the sites. Holders of leases can be private individuals, companies or consortia. With a few exceptions based on accompanied deer shooting, shooting within Forest Service forests is not available to the visitor.

Information on shooting opportunities is limited. No information on game shooting in Northern Ireland appears to be available on the World Wide Web.

BASC considers that there are still viable pockets of grouse in the upland areas, with the longer term potential for the habitat to be improved and grouse numbers gradually increased by syndicates with some security of tenure. There are still some good areas for Irish hares, breeding curlews and grouse (all species designated for protection and action under the NI Biodiversity Strategy), notably between Larne and Ballymena in unimproved marginal habitat. There has been some movement towards a voluntary ban on hare shooting because of the scarcity elsewhere. The greatest potential threat seen by BASC is that of increased public access particularly with dogs and the organisation considers that there is an urgent need for the management of the uplands to ensure sustainable sharing of the countryside. Shooters, residents and visitors require both a gun licence/certificate/authority from the Police to carry a firearm and permission from the landowner to shoot. A game licence is required to shoot game. A full-bore rifle is required to shoot deer. There is still much red tape and delay in obtaining police authorisation but it has recently become much easier to obtain a shotgun licence.

Two Wheel Motor Sports

Two wheel motor sport as a countryside activity relates to one day trials, organised by the Motor Cycle Union of Ireland (MCUI), Ulster Section and to moto-cross and enduro events under the auspices of the Motorcycle Racing Association (MRA). One day trials involve terrain such as rocky river beds, quarries and rough, marginal land. Areas required for competition are not extensive. Moto-cross is a speed competition on an undulating off road course. Typically courses cover a number of fields with an area requirement of around 5 hectares. Speeds can be high, tyres are heavily cleated and ground is normally churned up. Spectators are a feature of the sport and car parking for up to 1000 people may be necessary. Enduro is a form of cross-country rally with a number of special timed sections that may resemble moto-cross. It requires an extensive area of off-road tracks and needs considerable car parking and service areas. Tyres can be damaging to soft ground sites. Only two sites, one near Broughshane and one at Watertop Farm /

Ballypatrick Forest where enduro events have been held, appear to be used in the Causeway Coast and Glens area for any of these activities.

The governing bodies the MCUI and the MRA provide details of the activity and the events to interested parties

Management issues include the issue of multi-use of countryside areas, opportunities for people to train for events, and noise and disturbance to nearby residents and other users.

The MCUI is seeking a permanent off-road facility for two wheel motor sports and this is the subject of feasibility studies and strategic development plans. A motor sport facility is being proposed for Kilroot which may have the capacity to provide for all of the two wheel events.

Four Wheel Motor Sports

Car rallies organised by motor clubs are the most frequent type of use, these take place mainly within Forest Service Forests. NI Championship events are organised in these forests by several clubs, and these events will attract between 500 and 1000 competitors. Some four wheel drive activity is carried out on tracks in the Causeway Coast and Glens countryside but this use is not extensive. Stock car racing takes place at Drumneil Road in Aghadowey. Meets are organised by the Northern Ireland Four Wheel Drive Club.

The following forests in the area have been used for rallying by permit:-

- Ballypatrick
- Glenariff
- Slieveanorra
- Springwell
- Cam
- Gortnamoyagh
- Banagher
- Grange Park
- Loughermore
- Capagh Woods
- Ballyboley Woods

An annual year book is provided to members of the 31 NI car clubs by the Association of NI Car Clubs, and this details all events.

All events are organised with Forest Service permission and oversight. Where possible Forest Service informs other known users prior to events of this type taking place, since rallying is not compatible with any other forest use. Events are

extensively marshalled by the car clubs to prevent casual users and spectators straying into the paths of competitors.

Rallying often damages the forest road surfaces and needs to be restored to an equivalent standard following an event. The organisers of the event pay for this in addition to charges for a permit for the activity, and restoration is normally complete within three to four weeks of an event.

Forest Service has constant problems with unauthorised access to forests by people 'using stolen cars. Vandalism of gates to this end is a significant issue, as is the abandonment of these stolen cars within the forests.

Horse Riding

General information about equestrian activities is listed on the Tourism Ireland and NITB Discover Northern Ireland sites. More detail on riding holidays in the area is available on www.causewaycoastandglens.com, with links to opportunity providers. Site information is available on the Forest Service website. The British Horse Society provides information on events, clubs and approved instructors on its website www.bhsireland.org.uk and is primarily of use to people locally seeking information. Information on events is sent to members of the various local organisations and advertised in the press, and particularly in horse/agriculture related publications.

Horse riding takes place in the area both as a casual and organised activity, and participants are both horse owners and non-horse owners. Casual horse riding occurs throughout the area, largely along roads (usually minor), in forests and on beaches. Organised horse riding is provided by equestrian centres, which are found across the area. Many of these provide teaching using their own schools and cross-country courses. A few offer horse and pony trekking where people ride out over more extensive areas. Competition events and pleasure rides are organised by bodies such as the British Horse Society Liaison Committee, local Riding Clubs, Ulster Rural Riders Association, Pony Clubs, the Irish Long Distance Riding Association and Eventing Ireland. There are also a number of hunts in the area.

Equestrian centres providing riding opportunities for both local people and visitors are as follows:

- Island Magee Riding Centre
- Glens Riding Centre
- Red Hall, Ballycarry
- The Beeches Equestrian Centre, Ballyclare
- Galgorm Parks Riding School, Ballymena

- Galgorm Manor Equestrian Centre, Ballymena
- Rainbow Equestrian Centre, Islandmagee
- Hill Farm Riding Centre, Castlerock
- Island Equestrian Centre, Coleraine
- Maddybenny Riding Centre near Coleraine
- Faughanvale Pony Trekking Centre, Greysteel

The official Forest Service sites where riding is allowed by permit are as follows:-

- Glenariff Forest Park
- Slieveanorra Forest
- Ballyboley Forest
- Cam Forest
- Springwell Forest

Water Service also allows riding in Woodburn Forest. Accessible sandy beaches particularly in the Coleraine and Benone areas are used for riding, with time zoning having been introduced by Councils during the summer months to reduce conflict and improve safety. There are dedicated bridle paths at Coleraine and near Ballymena. Other locations such as Glenarm Castle and Beltoy Playing Fields, Carrickfergus are occasionally used for equestrian events.

Many forests are used without permission for horse riding which raises issues of potential conflict with other users, particularly those operating with permission for motor sports or holding shooting leases. Some car parks could be more generously sized for horseboxes. There is some concern about the safety of vehicles and possessions whilst using horse trails.

As with the rest of N.I. the Causeway Coast and Glens area has very limited off road riding provision outside the major forests, as compared for example to similar areas in GB. There the BHS has been able to publish a series of books '...on Horseback' describing trails that use mainly bridleways and byways. There is increasing concern amongst riders and others about the safety of on road riding. The provision by the providers of horse-riding holidays of multi-day riding breaks is limited by the poor provision of routes and particularly routes that could link together to make multi-day trails. Riding provision is most useful close to where people stable and provide daily exercise for their horses. Boxing horses is not easily undertaken on a daily basis and therefore the focus for development should be close to centres where horses are stabled.

Mountain Biking

Mountain biking is a sport that has a number of competitive sub disciplines including downhill, cross-country, cycle-cross, BMX and trials. Across these

disciplines there are believed to be some 2000 participants. Forest Service gives permission for competitive (insured) events in the area but not normally for the regular training required. In addition there is a large number of people who cycle casually in the countryside in the same way as for example people ramble on foot. These people vary in their expectations from family groups wanting short off-road sections, mainly for safety reasons, and others wanting longer distance, whole day cycle expeditions. Provision of off-road trails for mountain bikes falls significantly below that of England, Wales and Scotland.

There is a paucity of information on off-road cycle routes, basically because there are so few. The informal network provides information through web sites, much of which advertise unofficial sites and encourage underground activity. The NITB refers callers to Mountain Bike North a co-operative approach between the Ulster Cycling Federation and the Northern Ireland Cycling Federation. This organisation provides detail of the competitive events programme.

Mountain biking currently takes place off-road at most forests and woodlands within the Causeway Coast and Glens area. With the exception of a short, quality section in Binevenagh Forest, and one private estate, all of this access is currently without permission and in many cases is seen as a nuisance activity by landowners.

Until more sites are provided there is little point in trying to restrict access to current unofficial sites as this runs the risk of stymieing a sport that has difficulty developing. Any downhill sites provided need careful management and sustainable surfaces otherwise they become unsafe.

The recently completed CAAN strategy for off-road cycling identifies the following proposals for off-road cycling :

- Creation of family routes for off-road cycling of between 3 and 5 miles in length at Springwell and Glenariff forests
- Creation of cross country courses at Springwell- Binevenagh and at Slieveanorra / Ballypatrick
- Establish a downhill route at Binevenagh
- Provide information on off-road cycling opportunities as they develop (web site and leaflet)
- Provide management and co-ordination through CAAN and Mountain Bike North.

Mountaineering

Rock climbing is pursued in the Causeway Coast and Glens area at two main sites:

- Ballygalley (unauthorised)
- Fair Head, where the rock is sufficiently firm to climb.

Of these two, Fair Head is the most significant site being some 2km long by 100m in height, and draws people from all over the UK and Ireland because of the particular characteristics of the columnar basalt providing steep technical climbing.

The main access to the climbing at Fair Head is through the National Trust clachan at Coolanlough where there is a climbing hut that provides basic accommodation. Some climbing has been carried out at Rathlin Island but difficulties of access to the base of the cliffs have meant that the island is not a popular climbing site.

Few other opportunities exist in the area except for O'Cahan's rock in Roe Valley which is of interest for rock climbing and abseiling training. This site is used by permission from Environment and Heritage Service and there are access restrictions. A voluntary ban on climbing on Ballygalley Head during the nesting season is in place. Maintaining access to rock climbing sites is important to climbers.

Climbers normally self-rescue when they are able to from within the resources of the party. Where this is not possible cliff rescue on Fair Head is covered by 999 arrangements put in place by the Northern Ireland Mountain Cave and Cliff Rescue Co-ordinating Committee.

Orienteering

Orienteering is pursued actively in the area by two clubs, one, the North West Orienteering Club based at Limavady and covering most of the area north and west of Glenariff and the Lagan Valley Orienteers who cover the south part of the area. All three clubs in Northern Ireland co-operate in providing an annual programme of fortnightly events throughout Northern Ireland.

Orienteering takes place mainly in forests but also, at a more advanced level, across some upland areas. In addition to suitable terrain, a specialist map is required for which there are internationally agreed symbols and conventions. Most of the forests in the Causeway Coast and Glens area have been mapped for orienteering, with the most recent being remapping of Downhill, Binevenagh and Loughermore Forests. Glenariff Forest Park is due to be mapped in 2002.

Permanent orienteering sites, where mapped courses and permanent posts are available have been provided in Downhill Forest and Roe Valley Country Park but are absent from the rest of the area. This type of provision provides visitors with a half-day of activity and is a useful introduction to the sport.

Information about orienteering is available on a telephone information line (events only) and on the web site www.niorienteering.org.uk which gives details of clubs and events. Periodically significant championship events are hosted in Northern Ireland with the British Orienteering Championships having been held at Benone on the first weekend in May 2002. This event attracted large numbers of people from across the UK and Ireland – over 1300. Northern Ireland Orienteering Association (NIOA) has been engaged in a lottery funded development project for the past two years focused on creating sufficient new maps and permanent courses to take the sport forward in terms of facilities and opportunities for new participants. Under this scheme new maps have been created at -Benone, Loughermore and Downhill and further maps and permanent courses are proposed at Ballycastle and Glenariff forests. Tardree and Woodburn could also provide valuable opportunities to extend the sport.

In comparison with other areas in Northern Ireland the area has very few orienteering facilities with development having taken place mostly around the three club nuclei at Limavady, Enniskillen and Belfast. In resource terms however the area has considerable potential.

Walking/Rambling

Walking covers a range of recreational activities which at one end is casual, irregular and short distances, through to long distance challenge walking on a regular basis. The middle ground is taken by a relatively large group represented by 25 rambling clubs who regularly, often weekly, make a daylong trek on a suitable route. Within these are often the 'walkers for health' who make walking part of their daily routine. Walkers broadly fall into two types, those who primarily roam the uplands taking their own route, and those who follow trails and paths whether in upland or lowland country. This is a similar range participated in by most tourists and visitors. The recent N.I. Passenger Survey suggests that relatively few visits are made which are specifically for walking, compared with the Republic of Ireland. The range of walking as an activity suggests that an appropriate range of walks and areas for open access should be available. Around centres of population a series of relatively short routes making the most of the attractive landscape settings; a number of waymarked longer routes within easy travelling distance; a range of long-distance routes waymarked and arrangements giving access to remote and higher areas. In reality, a glance at what exists shows that this idealised distribution is far from being available in the area. In general open country access and waymarked ways are well catered for, whilst shorter, circular routes are not. The deficit is particularly in lowland walks of which there are very few. The saving grace is that the distribution of forests, parks and protected landscapes throughout the country does give generally good access to attractive

areas thanks to bodies such as the Forest Service, The National Trust, Environment and Heritage Service and some more active councils.

The concept of the ring of N. Ireland called the Ulster Way, a route of over 500 miles on off-road and by-way walking has been in existence since the 1960's. Although not entirely achieved, a significant portion does exist in the Causeway Coast Area from Newtownabbey in the south to Cushendall. This is augmented by the waymarked Moyle Way, a high route from Ballycastle to Glenariff, and the Causeway Coast Way which runs from Portstewart in the west to Larrybane Head, Ballintoy, a spectacular coastal route of high quality. New Waymarked Ways are currently under development between Slemish and Glenarm, around the Borough of Newtownabbey, and from Benbradagh to Binevenagh in the west of the study area.

For tourists coming to Northern Ireland the NITB provides a website: www.discovernorthernireland.com which incorporates walking. CAAN publishes a series of guides to the waymarked ways including the Moyle and Causeway Coast Ways. These are available in paper format and on their web site. A number of published books and route cards also detail walks in the area, one of these is published by the Geological Survey and identifies sites of earth science interest. Causeway Coast and Glens regional tourism organisation highlights walking as a key product in its brochures and references tour operators who provide walking packages in the area.

By far the major issue is the achievement of agreement with landowners, predominantly farmers, for public access. High on the list of worries of farmers are public liability claims and stock concerns. Of concern to those who have in the past enjoyed access to unenclosed high ground with or without permission, is the rate at which areas of the Antrim high plateau are being fenced or access disputed.

Routes being actively pursued includes a route from Slemish via Glenwherry to link with the Ulster Way here, a Knockramer ring route from Broughshane, an extension to the Cranny Falls walk at Carnlough via Eagle Craig and a Ballycastle, Fairhead, Cushendun route via Cushleake mountain. The future of the Ulster Way as a viable long distance route is currently being considered and a public consultation period is underway. The consultations have revealed that there should be a national route that is considerably longer than any of the waymarked ways and which provides a challenge to walkers. This could be based on improvements to the current route of the Ulster Way. Government consultation on safeguarding open country access in Northern Ireland has been shelved for the time being but in the long term will be important. Councils are quite active in trying to provide riverside walks, significant achievements have been made already and there are longer-term aspirations for routes along the rivers Bann and Roe.

Archery

The Northern Ireland Archery Society (N.I.A.S.) was founded in 1953 as one of the Regional Societies within the Grand National Archery Society (G.N.A.S.), which is the governing body of archery within Great Britain. The N.I.A.S. is probably one of the smallest, but this fact doesn't take away from the enthusiasm of all the archers. There are currently 24 active clubs within the province, with a total membership of over 300.

Ballymena and Carrickfergus are the only two locations within the study area which have archery clubs, although archery events are also held in Mallusk. All types of archery are shot from these clubs - Indoor Target, Outdoor Target, Field and Clout as well as all styles from Barebow, Recurve, Compound and Longbow. The most popular rounds being Indoor Target and Field. Ardclinis Outdoor Activity Centre, based in Cushendall offers indoor target archery, and also caters for the disabled archer.

Disabled archery is an increasingly popular sport within the Province – both Ballymena and Carrickfergus archery clubs are fully equipped with facilities to offer archery to people with disabilities.

Field archery is probably the most sought after form of archery, it involves performing archery on a specially constructed course. Different targets are used such as trees and hay bales; distances vary and the course is often completed against time. In recent years it has become increasingly difficult to get access to suitable sites for field archery. The provision of suitable sites within the countryside, where archery clubs could lay out a field course would be most desirable.

2.3 Water-Based Activities

Canoeing

Very little information is available on canoeing sites except for two white-water guidebooks available through specialist shops. Neither is very well presented or comprehensive in the information provided. The Northern Ireland Tourist Board and RTO have no specialist canoeing information but do provide contacts in the area who can advise from personal knowledge.

Most rivers in the Causeway Coast and Glens area are paddled for at least some of their lengths. Some lakes have canoeing visits but this is not a significant activity. The whole coastline is paddled in sea kayaks and a range of other types of canoe, while, the surf at most of the north coast beaches attracts canoe surfers.

The canoe clubs in the area are affiliated to the Canoe Association for Northern Ireland and a number of competitive events held in the area including races on the River Bann and the Roe.

All or part of the following rivers are paddled: Inver, Glenarm, Cushendall, Glenshesk, Bush, Agivey, Bann, Roe, Maine and Glenwherry. Kayaks use the estuaries of the Foyle and Bann rivers. Most of the sea is paddled and the surf at Portrush, Benone and Portstewart in particular attracts surf kayakers. The lower Bann navigation is well used by canoeists that are its largest user group. Proposals have been developed to improve the navigation for canoeing including improving portage facilities around the locks and providing campsites along the route.

There is a need to manage the use and timing of use of rivers that have both canoeing and game angling interest. Several access agreements have been made between canoeists and anglers that involve temporal zoning. These are not always well known to those who turn up to paddle and there is a need to maintain and improve relationships. People visiting the area, and who would like to canoe when they see the quality of the opportunities find no sites, to hire canoes or to take part in existing programmes. Canoeists would like to see greater information on paddling in the area, to see the Bann navigation improved for canoeing journeys and marketed as a canoe trail and to see hire opportunities on appropriate waterways.

Coarse Fishing

The Lower River Bann leaves Lough Neagh at Toome and flows northwards through Lough Beg and onwards to the sea near Coleraine for a distance of thirty miles. It offers, especially in the sluggish and deep stretches, exceptional fishing for a range of coarse fish. This fishing is popular and many anglers from Britain and indeed further afield return regularly. The river is rich also in wildlife and in places provides forest and riverside walks.

Most fishing is casual, but competitions are held on the Portglenone stretch (89 pegs) and Movanager Canal (45 pegs). In September 2001 the Six Nations event (it included Belgium and France) attracted 72 competitors and approximately 250 spectators. There is a coarse angling club based in the Ballymoney area

Much of the Lower Bann is fishable, though in places steep banks and dense vegetation occur. The principal stretches mostly with some facilities are the following:

- Clay Lakes – These are in the area of old mineral workings and give casual angling.

- Lough Beg to Portglenone – Other than at Newferry and Portglenone, few facilities exist, but the Portglenone stretch has good stands, 89 pegs, car parking, disabled stands and forest roads. Roach, perch, bream, hybrids and pike are plentiful.
- Portna – is a popular site just upstream from Kilrea Bridge. This is best for casual fishing and larger pike can be found in Portna Canal.
- Movanager Canal – is situated several miles downstream from Kilrea. It provides casual and event fishing. This stretch has disabled stands and good car parking.
- Agivey Bridge to Drumaheglish old railway bridge (Reference C895255) – offers a three mile stretch for general and occasional competition fishing.

Information about the coarse angling and licences is available from N.I.T.B., Tourist Information Centres and Ulster Coarse Fishing Federation.

The Lower River Bann and Lough Beg are considered by the Federation to be of national importance as a coarse fishery. A major issue is the rapid increase in the numbers of cormorants on the river. Up to eight may be culled, but this is considered very inadequate. Occasional nuisance of noise and wave is caused by jet-skiers.

Improved and greater access is sought on the Portglenone stretch with 'pegs' increased from 89 to 200. As a consequence of insufficient 'pegs' the World Championships had to be declined for 2002. Toilets at key sites would enhance and add to the ambience of the site. An access road and parking would do much to improve access to the Clay Lakes near Toome. The Federation subscribes to the principle of multi use of facilities including parking, toilets, stiles, paths and walks.

Game Angling

Game angling takes place throughout the area with over twenty rivers, streams and tributaries flowing from the Antrim Plateau and Eastern Sperrins and the Lower River Bann to the west. In addition, more than six reservoirs stocked annually with trout attract hundreds of anglers.

Brown trout are present in all streams with salmon and sea trout in most in season. Dollaghan are also present in the Lough Neagh feeders. Indeed the whole angling scene in the area is of major importance. There are at least eight coastal game angling clubs and a further twelve inland which control many miles of game angling waters and are actively involved in management and bailiffing. Game

angling competitions are mainly internal, that is, restricted to club members. Day tickets are available to visitors at reasonable cost on most waters.

Angling sites are located at:

- Lower River Bann – The main game fishing stretches are found at Portna, Carnroe and Movanager.
- The Agivey, Macosquin, Wee Agivey, Ree and Ballymoney Rivers flow into the lower reaches of the River Bann and give excellent runs of salmon from June onwards.
- The Bush river enters the Atlantic near Bushmills and is an experimental salmon river available to anglers who are required to co-operate with the research programme.
- There is a series of glens spate rivers southwards round the Antrim coast which receive runs of migratory fish. The main rivers are the Ballycastle, Glendun, Cushendall, Glenariff, Glenarm. The Inver and Glynn are modest streams flowing east near Larne.
- The Three Mile Water is a surprisingly pleasant urban stream which flows into Belfast Lough at Whiteabbey.
- The river Main and three major tributaries, the Clogh, Braid and Kells water drain south into the north east corner of Lough Neagh and is an outstanding system for salmon, brown trout and dolly. The river is an outstanding system for salmon, brown trout and dolly.
- The Six Mile Water drains westwards into Lough Neagh at Antrim.
- River Roe: This river drains northwards through Dungiven and Limavady to the Foyle. Though the lower reaches lie outside the area, the river offers outstanding salmon and sea trout fishing with good brown trout.
- Binevenagh Lake – situated on the top of Binevenagh mountain, and replenished annually by DCAL.

A number of reservoirs provide significant opportunity to fish for good sized and sometimes large brown and rainbow trout, stocks of which are replenished annually by the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure.

These reservoirs are Quoile Reservoirs (near Broughshane), Altnahinch Reservoir (near Ballymoney), Dungonnell Reservoir (near Cargan), Killylane Reservoir (near Larne), Woodburn Reservoirs (near Carrickfergus), Lough Mourne and Copeland Reservoir (north of Carrickfergus).

In addition a number of put and take fisheries offer further opportunities. Sites are located at Straid Fisheries in Ballyclare, Tildarg Fisheries also in Ballyclare, Woodford Fly Fishery in Carrickfergus, Moorbrook Lodge in Castlerock and Albert Atkins Angling Centre in Garvagh.

Information about game angling in the area is available from N.I.T.B., Tourist Information Centres, tackle shops and Ulster Angling Federation Ltd.

Over enrichment (Eutrophication) due to excessive phosphates in the river systems from sewage and agricultural fertilisers continues to be a major issue. Careless use of Jet Skis on the Lower Bann is a matter of concern. These machines tend to be intrusive, there are safety issues but no bye-laws.

Some conflict arises between anglers and canoeists, a result of insufficient co-ordination between the two governing bodies. At times, management of water flows by the River Agency on the River Bann is considered unhelpful for game fishing but is welcomed by farmers who wish to see water released promptly.

Some of the inland rivers in the area suffered in the past from arterial drainage. The Federation believes more needs to be done to rehabilitate these rivers. More car parking at key access points on popular waters should be provided: perhaps progress could be made through Peace II Funding. The Federation is not enthusiastic about the increase in riverside walks, perceiving disturbance to wildlife.

Sea Fishing

Sea and shore angling are both very important activities in the area and can be carried out anywhere along the North and East coasts. The key attractions of the area are the extent of coastline, the scenic backdrop and importantly the quality of the catches. A number of different activities take place as follows:

- Along the beaches of the north coast there is considerable shore based angling for flounder, plaice, cod and shore-bass. The resource supports important competition angling with key sites being Benone, Portstewart and Ballycastle
- At some resorts e.g. Cushendall and Portrush charter angling businesses take visitors to sea on a daily basis.
- There is a smaller but active interest in small boat sea angling and this is carried out both by people who bring their own small boats to the area, who live locally and who charter small boats from companies such as Predator Sea Angling in Cushendall.

Amongst a specialist group of sea anglers the area is well known for its variety of shore, rock and boat fishing and its stocks of angler fish, bass, turbot and wrasse for boat based anglers and rays, dabs, conger, Pollack, coalfish and dogfish for rock angling. However to the non-specialist visitor this aspect of the area is almost invisible and is worthy of greater promotion.

The developments effected along the North Mayo coast where the fisheries boards have signed good rock and shore angling sites and have worked with local

businesses on the provision of both small and larger boat charter are viewed with envy by local interests and would be worthy of development in the area.

Jet Skiing

Jet skiing, or use of personal watercraft, takes place on one section of the River Bann and are widespread along the coastline. The sites are Newferry – Lower Bann within a defined zone; Brown's Bay and Portstewart Strand

There is no information on sites for jet skiing in the area, although management information is provided adjacent to the jet ski zone at Newferry.

Jet skiing can present a hazard to other water users. This has been increasingly recognised and Limavady Borough Council for example are trying to zone activities at Benone Beach. In other areas such as Portstewart Strand and at Newferry a defined zone has been provided and management introduced. Registration of craft and compliance with a code of conduct has been introduced on the Lower Bann through controlling access points and excluding those who do not comply with management guidelines. A co-ordinated approach to providing for jet skiing and of self-management with support would be useful in the area. This could include the development of a dedicated lake site to enable activity to be displaced from the Lower Bann where it is affecting the coarse angling potential and is probably inappropriate due to the width of the river and the proximity to the Ramsar site. Nationally a co-ordinated approach about where jet skiing can best be facilitated would probably be desirable.

Rowing

The Lower Bann River at Coleraine and Drumaheglis are the principal centres for rowing in the area, with four clubs:

- Bann Rowing Club
- Coleraine Academical Institution Rowing Club
- North Coast Integrated College Rowing Club
- University of Ulster Coleraine Rowing Club

Coastal rowing (gig racing) also takes place and is a traditional activity in the Glens area, centred on Carnfunnock, Glenarm and Carnlough. Increasingly local people are competing with coastal settlements in Scotland and around the coasts of Ireland at festivals and events. A team participated in the Atlantic Challenge in 2000 and 2001.

The CAAN website www.countrysiderecreation.com provides contact information for the Ulster Branch of the Irish Amateur Rowing Union whose web-site is

www.rowingulster.com. This site is out of date but provides links to unofficial sites which carry up to date events programmes and links to clubs etc.

Rowing is susceptible to the wakes of fast powered watercraft and there is often conflict between people practising rowing and use of the water by others. Ideally rowing, no wake, zones would be set up and managed on the Bann at Coleraine and at times at Drumaheglis.

The Coleraine facility should be further developed, enabling it to become a Regional Centre and include improved facilities for handling of the boats, launching and recovery, provision of information and rescue facilities catering both for the holding of events and casual use. Additional access opportunities are required to enable the Lower Bann to be more fully used. The reservoir at Ballinrees near Coleraine could provide a training facility for junior rowers with stable training sculls. Issues of multiple use such as conflict or potential conflict with other users needs a method of resolution. There is also potential at Carrickfergus for rowing on Belfast Lough.

Sailing

Sailing is a very vigorous sport in the Causeway Coast and Glens area consistent with the quality of the sailing resource. The waters around the shores are sheltered from prevailing SW winds and the cruising grounds between Belfast Lough and the Foyle estuary are attractive to both local and visitor sailors.

Sailors can be subdivided into cruising and racing sailors with the latter category including both keel boats and dinghies. The majority of sailors belong to yacht clubs because of the focus of suitable facilities, such as slipways, winches and cranes and other assistance including race organisation and coaching. Clubs in the area include Carrickfergus, East Antrim, Jordanstown, Whitehead, Larne, Cushendall, Portrush, Portballintrae and Coleraine at both Seaton's Marina and the main Coleraine marina. Two of these clubs, Carrickfergus and East Antrim, are RYA champion Clubs, i.e. they provide a focus of excellence in starting well and improving performance for junior sailors. The area has hosted world championships in a number of dinghy classes including toppers and wayfarers. Sail NI is an initiative to improve facilities for visiting yachts-people and has involved councils in the area.

The main sites for sailing are generally adjacent to the yacht clubs listed above. Marinas for yachts are available at Carrickfergus, Glenarm, Ballycastle, Coleraine – Seaton's and Coleraine Town. There is very limited inland sailing in the area, the main potential lies at Ballinrees near Coleraine and at Woodburn. The website www.ryani.org.uk provides information about member clubs and facilities, events and coaching courses. A Sail NI leaflet provides information on facilities for visiting

yachts. Various almanacs provide tidal, navigation and port entry information for the Causeway Coast and Glens coastline

There is a lack of opportunity to charter yachts around the shores of Northern Ireland. Sailboat hire has not been developed around the coastline, although day and residential courses are available in Cushendall.

RYA aims to increase the numbers of young people taking part in sailing and indeed to increase numbers overall and to assist people to achieve their full potential in the sport. A national sailing and coaching facility is planned for Carrickfergus in association with developing coaching facilities at the University of Ulster.

Sub Aqua

This is a popular and well supported activity in the Causeway Coast and Glens area. It comprises two main pursuits – scenic diving and wreck diving. The coastline is used by all the clubs in N.I. There are 20 clubs affiliated to the N.I. Federation of Sub Aqua Clubs and an additional 8 clubs are members of the British Sub-Aqua Federation – a total of about 1000 divers. Virtually every slipway between Belfast Lough and the Foyle is a potential site, the three main focal points being Islandmagee, Rathlin Island, Dunseverick Harbour. There is also regular diving near Madmans Window, Glenarm. The sport has developed and clubs have evolved to using bigger and better boats. Most of the slipways are inadequate in some way, such as stopping short of low water, or with a step at the end.

The Federation has a website www.nifsac.org.uk which co-ordinates development activities, provides information on grants, interlinks with individual club websites and provides information about management issues at dive sites. More general information, which could be provided at or about launch sites, giving the local range of tides and specific details of slipway, water depth at mean low water and adjacent dangers seems entirely lacking. Similarly, tourists and those potentially interested do not appear to be provided with general information by NITB. Generally, each club looks after itself, and is acutely aware of safety issues, so that weather forecasts, sea state, tides etc. are well researched before diving. Sub Aqua clubs are generally marine conservation orientated and have developed codes of practice for marine conservation. One such is the code of conduct for diving in Strangford Lough.

A limited number of sites should be evenly distributed around the coastline (possibly at Carnlough, Cushendall, Ballycastle and Portrush) and invested with improved slipways, car-parking suitable for vehicle and boat trailer, a fresh water hose line, information and toilets. There may also be scope for more than the two dive centres at present existing, at Islandmagee and Rathlin – the latter presently

out of use. As the clarity of water generally improves towards the north, additional dive centres would seem to be appropriate on the Causeway Coast section where dive boats and gear for hire would be the norm and the provision of overnight mooring facilities dedicated to sub-aqua boat use would also encourage the use of sites, e.g. weekend use.

Surfing

The surfing 'bible' – "Storm Riders Guide to Europe" is the authoritative guide to surfing. In this, the Causeway Coast is one of the most significant location amongst five in Ireland. It attracts an international clique and has done since the 1960's. All of the major strands from Benone in the west to Whitepark Bay are surfing sites, with a natural 'centre' at Portrush. It has the advantage over the west coast sites of being easier to access with a much larger population. The surf is considered of potential international quality. E.g. the political/social situation prevented the European Junior Championships taking place in 1994, and everything was in place for 2000 but no funding was available. The main use is casual, but all sites are used for coaching except Portballintrae which is considered unsuitable for beginners for safety reasons. The Regional Training Squad in Northern Ireland use the sites and have developed Irish Champions in the past and an 6th in the World in 1998-2000. When open days are held, hundreds are attracted to the Causeway Coast sites. There are five surf clubs that use the Causeway Coast, Causeway Coast Surf Club with approximately 80 members, Queens Surf Club with 120 members, Coleraine University Surf Club with 110, East Coast Surf Club with 85 and the Christian Surfers Network with 30 members. There are four surf shops / equipment hire businesses based along the north coast – two at Portrush, and two at Portstewart.

Outside of surfing circles, information about surfing is difficult to access, other than a general tourism claim that surfing occurs in the area.

Water quality is a critical factor shared with other water users, e.g. canoeists and swimmers. A lobby group 'Surfers against Sewage' centred in Cornwall, surveyed the Causeway Coast in 2000 and pressed the need for improvement in water quality. The problems tend to be related to outfalls from local communities. Developments which introduce hard edges where waves break e.g. piers, breakwaters or erosion control works, introduce physical dangers to surfers. Such development can affect wave breaking patterns and tidal streams, causing hazards and sometimes spoiling the quality of the surf. The multiple use of the water off beaches is an additional problem. Swimmers are vulnerable to the surfers, surfers and swimmers are vulnerable to jet skis, especially when the latter are 'jumping' surf – coming from seaward when swimmers and surfers are invisible. Zoning of water users elsewhere and along the North Coast is seen as appropriate in managing multi-use.

A surfing centre at Portrush is seen by surfers as desirable. Apart from changing facilities and showers, it would provide information daily to surfers; it would provide boards and coaching for beginners and casual users; it could attract the commercial surf schools and shops for equipment; it would be an office for administration of the sport and clubs. (This is the situation at Tramore, Co Wexford, a direct parallel to the Causeway Coast). The information would provide an important contribution to safe surfing by both locals and visitors on the coast. This development has community support in addition to that of the Surfing Association. Unfortunately a proposal for Lottery funding for development has already been rejected, but a revival may be justifiable.

Windsurfing

Ulster Windsurfers Association organises racing events in Ulster but in conjunction with Irish Windsurfers Association produces a joint events calendar. There are some 200 Windsurfers in membership of the Association and perhaps 1000 plus non-affiliated, casual users in N. Ireland. Contact is the Secretary and RYA representative Colin Mairs.

Windsurfing operates at 2 levels: the proficient enthusiast who follows strong onshore wind, sharing information with other members. Those who enjoy more casual activity and sail from a variety of venues for relaxing informal enjoyment. Casual windsurfing takes place right around the coast wherever there are beaches, caravans or a holiday resort.

Benone, Downhill, Castlerock, Portstewart, Portrush, White Rocks, Ballycastle, Lough Foyle and Browns Bay are popular venues for windsurfing. Teaching is carried out at the Ardclinis Outdoor Adventure Centre, Cushendall and enthusiasts use most of the beaches in the northern counties of Ireland. Because of the prevailing winds and gales the North coast is the most popular in N. Ireland but they will use any of those suitable in the appropriate conditions. Contact details are available for windsurfing on the CAAN website.

Windsurfing boards have evolved dramatically in the last few years and are much more stable, and both easier to sail and can be sailed in very light conditions. There is therefore a great opportunity to involve new young participants. Whilst the RYA has a trailer and number of craft for hire for training purpose, it is out of date and needs replaced if there is to be growth in the sport. There has not been the same support for windsurfing by the RYA as for other sailing activities and encouragement through the yacht clubs would help immeasurably. There is potential to increase participants in the study area with help to sailing clubs to purchase training equipment, particularly if a condition of grant is that they will be

hired in a supervised way and instruction provided to the general public at certain times of year.

Water Skiing

The governing body is the Irish Water Ski Federation. There are 3 Clubs operating on 3 stretches of the Bann, the Edge over 3 miles, New Ferry over 3 miles and the Barefoot over 1 Km. Clubs tend to operate in the evening and weekends between April and October.

Club water-skiers tend to specialise in the disciplines which their facilities permit e.g. wake board, trick and jump, snowboard, slalom and barefoot. Non club activity is generally informal, uncontrolled, has minimal facilities and is often carried out in waters unsuitable for performance skiing and can tolerate small waves. Performance water-skiing requires flat water, which in practice is only found in certain sheltered inland waters. Casual water-skiing which does not entail the same range of high-speed jumps and manoeuvres can take place in more open waters and along the coast in favourable weather conditions.

The high capital cost of ski boat, jetties, water lease or purchase, maintenance and insurance make the sport comparatively expensive for the relatively few members in each club. Their way forward may be to provide facilities commercially. This is done at the Edge Watersports centre at Drumaheglis Marina on the Bann, where Council owned facilities are operated by the proprietor. Currently they operate 1 boat, employ 6 drivers and 6 instructors and operate daily, morning to evening, from Easter until the end of September. They are insured and provide instruction and skiing for individuals and groups and also provide for various other water based sports and fun activities. A second, longer established watersports base, Ski Supreme, provides waterskiing close to Coleraine at Loughan Island where there is a further waterski zone available for use by the school and by private boat owners with access to the river. Ski Supreme has diversified into café, sales and self-catering accommodation. The client base is a mixture of booked groups and individual holidaymakers.

Information on these can be obtained through the tourist information centres and local visitor publications. Ski Supreme is also signed with brown tourism signs from the main Ballymoney-Coleraine road.

Water-skiing requires bathing quality water and inland watersports areas are not tested to this purpose. High-speed outboard motors have traditionally been noisy and therefore development has been resisted for this reason. Whilst the boats operating from the Council facilities at Drumaheglis, Coleraine and New Ferry are insured and certified, boats which enter the Bann from other uncontrolled slips may not be insured, are not controlled, often behave in a dangerous manner near other

water users and ignore wake zones. Fishing events and water-skiing in the same stretch of water are incompatible. Discussions on river management have taken place within the forum of the Lower Bann Advisory and Co-ordinating Committees. Waterways Ireland has now officially taken control of navigation on the Lower Bann. Waterskiers consider that the Bann needs ByeLaws and the ability to enforce them.

Facilities for performance skiing are limited in the area. A reservoir at Woodburn, east of Carrickfergus, could provide facilities for water-skiing by ski boat or cable, which is virtually noise free and creates no risk of water pollution by oil or fuel. There is need for an international standard water sport centre which would require a minimum length of 2.4 km. within a 2.4 square km area.

This would cater for the various water-skiing disciplines and could in addition cater for certain other water sports.

2.4 Air-Based Activities

Aeromodelling

Aeromodels are generally accepted as model aircraft up to some seven kilos weight and includes gliders. Activity takes place at key locations throughout the Causeway Coast and Glens.

Aeromodelling sites providing opportunities for both local people and visitors are as follows:

- Limavady – Suitable for casual use in Aghanloo Airfield using existing runways
- Ballymoney – This is a site on Dervock Road providing casual and club centered activity
- Ballymena – This site near Broughshane offers casual flying on a grass field
- South Derry – The site near Garvagh provides casual activity and occasional events on a hard surface at Aghadowey Airfield
- A site in Coleraine is hoped for in due course
- Mallusk – This site is located near Glengormley on Belfast City Council playing fields. It offers casual and thermal soaring events. It is an important site.
- East Antrim – Casual flying takes place on a site near Larne.

Details are available from N.I.T.B., Tourist Information Centres and N.I. Association of Aeromodellers.

Locating affordable and suitable sites is often a problem. Charges at some facilities can be £20 per hour. Noise is a possible source of conflict and can discourage multi use at some sites, as can safety requirements.

The Sports Council has been very supportive and each year a Development Plan has been agreed. This has allowed training, events and coach development. Permanent sites, tenure and accommodation are ongoing aspirations.

Gliding

Gliding is centred round the club airfield at Bellarena, considered to be one of the best soaring sites in the British Isles. Regulation of gliding has been delegated by the C.A.A. to the British Gliding Association of which U.G.C. is a member club. The membership of 60 to 70 is drawn from throughout Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. In addition, each year the club introduces about 300 visitors to gliding through short-term membership. Gliding activity is frequent when weather conditions permit. An annual Open Day attracts about 200 visiting members of the public with up to 50 of these sampling gliding for the first time however the club welcomes visitors on any day that gliding takes place. Visitors are also drawn from GB and Europe and the club has a reciprocal membership arrangement with

Dublin Gliding Club. A first flight costs £35 and includes family membership for two months. Membership fees are subsidised for young people.

Information is available from N.I.T.B., some Tourist Information Centres and the Ulster Gliding Club.

Bellarena Airfield is the only official site in Northern Ireland. The 50 acre site has regional significance and is owned by the club. Facilities are good and include a hangar, workshop, club house, toilets and showers, two towing aircraft, four club gliders, a retrieval vehicle and parking.

UGC co-operates with air traffic control at City of Derry Airport and has letters of agreement with the authorities concerning access to air-space in the vicinity of Magilligan Prison. U.G.C. has filed an airfield protection plan with the Planning Service to maintain safe approaches free from tall buildings, pylons and masts. A modest level of co-operation exists with microlight fliers from Newtownards and Microlight Ireland Flying Club who need to log cross-country flights for qualifications and may land at Bellarena by radioing ahead.

U.G.C. enjoys a good level of stability through ownership of its site and its sound administrative structure. The club is also a member of the Northern Ireland Sports Forum and Countryside Sports Sub Group. Aspirations include:

- a) New aircraft (first priority). Some of the fleet is 30-40 years old
- b) A hangar for the towing craft
- c) A permanent clubhouse

Hang Gliding & Paragliding

Hang gliding and paragliding takes place over much of the area but especially round the coastal margins and along the west facing basalt escarpment running south from Benone towards Glenshane Pass. The hang glider consists of a large cloth wing stretched over a light framework: the paraglider has an inflatable parachute shaped wing.

Competitions are difficult to arrange due to wind direction, strength and unpredictability. Nevertheless, it is planned that the club will organise ten small events through 2002. This is a spectator friendly sport and can cause flurries of interest for example near Whitepark Bay.

There is a core of 60 flying members in the Province plus a handful of visitors. The main event in 2000 was the Ulster Open held at Dungiven and Magilligan. Thirty competitors and sixty spectators were present.

Hang gliding and paragliding sites providing opportunities for both local people and visitors are as follows:

Practically any hill is suitable but wind direction and strength are vital. Northwesterly winds are favoured, south winds are less favoured.

Eleven sites are listed in Sites Guide 2000 though some of these may not have formal landowner permission. Other sites just outside the designated area occur along the East Sperrins and Divis Mountain. The main sites are listed as follows:

- Magilligan – An important site. It is a ridge running west for six miles from the Mussenden temple.
- White Park Bay – This is a small coastal site not suitable for training.
- Torr Head – This is a coastal ridge site six miles long from Torr Head to Loughan Bay. Not a training site.
- Lurigethan – An excellent site overlooking Cushendall but not for beginners.
- Robin Young's Hill (Carncastle) – This site is a concave bowl shape facing east at Ballygalley. It is suitable for general activity.
- Agnew's Hill – This site comprises a two mile long easterly facing ridge west of Kilwaughter. It is suitable for general gliding.
- Shane's Hill – This site is a small south easterly facing hill linking to Agnew's Hill. Suitable for general gliding.
- Skeagh – This is a small training hill some six miles north-west of Larne.
- Skerrywhirry – This is a small hill site twelve miles east of Ballymena and used less frequently.
- Big Collin – This is an important site five miles north west of Ballyclare. This is a fine site for general gliding.
- Knockagh – This is an excellent cliff ridge site three miles north of Whiteabbey. It suits experienced pilots.
- Benbradagh – To the east of Dungiven
- Mullaghmore – Two miles west of Glenshane Forest

Information about hang gliding and paragliding is available from N.I.T.B., some Tourist Information Centres and Ulster Hangliding and Paragliding Club.

Windfarms pose dangers to pilots. Relationships with landowners are good. There are few pilots who are not members of the representative body. A big issue is the erection of fences unknown to the governing body since a real safety factor is present. Progress with the Occupiers Liability consultation would help since litigation is a concern of landowners.

Assistance with the running costs of the two part time paragliding schools would be welcomed. Costs of becoming qualified fliers range from £400 to £750. Few

facilities are required other than a few small car parks and simple toilets at key sites. There are no development plans available at present.

Kite Buggy has in recent years become increasingly popular, although expansion is hindered due to the great difficulty in finding suitable sites to practice the sport. Gumball rally was supported by the council on Benone Strand in September 2001.

Microlight Flying

Microlights are very small powered aircraft usually for one person, based on a fabric wing similar to that of a hang glider. Organised flying is based on a grass runway at Mullaghmore approximately five miles south of Ballymoney. Flying activity is daily if the weather is suitable. During April to October, clear evenings allow regular evening flying. The site is operated by Microlight Ireland Flying Club. An open day, to promote the sport and to enthuse, is held annually in August. Approximately 120 young people were present at a recent event. 'Fly-ins' are also held once or twice a year. Small numbers of visitors from Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland fly in to this event. Formal arrangements for microlight flying are operated by Microlight Ireland Flying Club.

For recreational microlight flying, Mullaghmore, some five miles south west of Ballymoney, is the only official site in Northern Ireland. Private sites are scattered across the province. They are usually only for the use of the owner/flier and do not have insurance for visiting fliers or spectators. The facilities normally comprise a field and shelter for the microlight and may be subject to seasonal usage.

City of Derry Airport is restrictive due to operational hours, costs (£8 per landing) and Department of Transport regulations. Bellarena Airfield, approximately eight miles north of Limavady, is controlled by the Ulster Flying Club - occasional use of the airfield is permitted for cross country flights to enable the flier to obtain a licence. However it is necessary to radio ahead for permission to land and the airfield may not have personnel present. Movenis near Garvagh is a parachuting centre. Where occasional microlight landings are understood to take place. It is also understood that occasional landings are made on safe sand strands such as East Strand at Portrush and Benone, however there is the obvious risk of conflict with other users of the beach.

N.I.T.B., principal tourist information centres and M.I.F.C. should be able to advise of Microlight activity in the area.

The club is experiencing difficulties in operating the Mullaghmore site and these are a major constraint on expansion. The site owner is reluctant to agree an extension to hangar space and there would be an instant demand for storage for at least eight Microlight aircraft. Access to the site is gained by driving across the

runway and it is often grazed by cattle and sheep which can cause a safety issue. Accommodation in the area is limited, so members often arrive in camper vans or sometimes sleep in their vehicles as it is preferable to be close to the site.

The club is currently negotiating acquisition of a new green field site approximately three miles south of Ballymoney. Safety conditions will be much superior as there will be no animals. The potential exists for a runway of 630m by 20m with a 20m runoff on each side and facilities including hangarage, parking and a user and visitor facility including basic accommodation. The club participates in the Countryside / Air sub group of the Northern Ireland Sports Forum and is considering an approach to Countryside Access and Activities Network for assistance with a funding application.

Parachuting

Participants travel from all over the province and the Republic of Ireland to the Wild Geese Parachute Centre at Movenis, two miles east of Garvagh. Weekends are busy, mid weeks relatively quieter. Most participants are drawn from the Belfast / North Down area. The excellent accommodation (36 beds, restaurant and recreational facilities) encourage jumpers to come for weekends.

The Centre caters for beginners and experienced jumpers. There are approximately 100 full time members. Instructor training is provided at Movenis and several competitions and events are held each year. Local people are invited and welcome.

Parachuting sites providing opportunities for both local people and visitors are as follows:

- Movenis is the only centre in Northern Ireland open to the public. There is a closed club at Queens University Belfast and military jumping at Ballykelly. Facilities are excellent and include:
 - Two towing aircraft and retrieval vehicle
 - 490 metres of hard runway
 - Hangarage and indoor training facility
 - Toilets, showers, large restaurant, T.V., pool
 - Offices
- Due to powerlines running across a low ridge to the west and north, beginners are not allowed to land on the airfield but an arrangement is reached with a local farmer four miles away.

Details of parachuting are available from N.I.T.B., Wild Geese Parachute Centre and Tourist Information centres.

New safety guidelines have been introduced by the British Parachute Association. Adjacent powerlines on a nearby ridge mean therefore that beginners cannot land at the centre until their tenth jump. Therefore, a "split drop zone" has been agreed as stated earlier with a local farmer. However, there is some difficulty with surrounding farmers since animals may panic. A further complication is that parents and friends must drive out from the centre to observe jumps into this drop zone and sometimes have problems finding the location. An additional issue is that a van must go out with a stretcher, first aid and other equipment.

The Centre has a reasonable public profile and does fifty displays each year. Locations in the Causeway Coast and Glens have included Portrush (Raft Race), Benone, Coleraine and Moyola Golf Club. Competitions may include formation sky diving, canopy formation and hitting a target. These events attract hundreds of spectators. The Centre has written to N.I.E. to propose putting the powerlines underground, but the sum quoted of £170,000 is beyond their means. Some multi use is possible and microlights may obtain permission to land by radioing ahead to check the position.

Recently the Centre was used as a launch pad for ballooning. History was made when two parachutists made the first parachute jumps from a hot air balloon over Northern Ireland.

Popular Flying

There is no recognised flying facility for light aircraft in the Causeway Coast and Glens. It is believed some private flying may take place by individuals from grass strips.

The Ulster Flying Club is the recognised representative body whose resources and activities are concentrated at Ards Airfield. According to the Flying Club, a small club is based at City of Derry Airport, which is eight miles west of Causeway Coast and Glens.

General details of popular flying may be obtained from N.I.T.B., and Ulster Flying Club.

Ulster Flying Club has approximately 450 members but it is not known what numbers may come from the area. Hard runways are preferred for light aircraft larger than microlights.

2.5 Outdoor Education Centres

The Causeway Coast and Glens area has for a long time been the focus of outdoor activity, outdoor education and field studies, and has a number of residential centres for activities and studies as follows:

Ardclinis Outdoor Adventure - Based in Cushendall, the centre offers abseiling, archery, bridge building, canoeing, coastering, cycling, fly fishing, gorge walking, hill walking, orienteering, power boating, problem solving, rafting, rock climbing and treasure hunts.

Bushmills Education Centre – Subsidised by the North Eastern Education and Library Board, the centre offers courses which not only focus on aspects of the NI Curriculum (biology, geology and geography), but include a blend of adventure activities such as canoeing, surfing, orienteering, climbing, sailing, archery and mountaineering. The centre has dormitory based accommodation.

Woodhall Residential Centre – A North Easter Education and Library Board Centre with provision for personal and social development and management development programmes including mountain activities, canoeing, sailing, orienteering and field studies. The centre offers catered accommodation.

Drumalla Field Centre – Based in Carnlough, the centre essentially deals with curriculum based programmes based on mountain and water activities for AS to A2 level. The centre is residential.

Magilligan Field Centre – Based in Limavady and funded by the Western Education and Library Board. The Field Centre deals with curriculum based programmes and covers subjects such as geology, biology and geography. The centre is residential.

2.6 Outdoor Activity Providers

Wild Ulster Jeep Tours - Provides tailor made packages to include, walking, climbing, fishing, canoeing, horse riding, cycling, watersports, National Trust events, festivals, golf, etc. Accommodation can also be arranged.

The Stewart Brothers, Island Fisher and Causeway Fisher are charter boat companies based in Portrush. They all cater for sea angling, wreck trips and pleasure trips a specialist sea angling charter boats and provide all equipment.

The Wandering Star and Boy Matthew are charter boat companies based in Portstewart. They provide charter and deep sea angling trips from specialist sea angling charter boats and provide all equipment.

Active Leisure is based in Portballintrae and offers canoeing in Portballintrae Harbour, surfing, photography and archery facilities for large groups.

Bannside Ramblers organise walks during the summer months to destinations all over the Causeway Coast and Glens area.

Dal Riada Venture, based in Portstewart, offers guided walking holidays for the beginner or expert along the length of the Causeway Coast.

Aquaholics PADI Dive School is a dive centre providing equipment sales, dive tuition, boat charter and dive club for all divers and beginners. Although based in Portstewart, courses and dives are run along the North and North West coasts of Ireland.

Ski Supreme is located approximately 5 miles outside of Coleraine and lies directly alongside the River Bann. The company offers waterskiing, banana boating, speedboat rides, Canadian paddleboats.

Predator Sea Angling based in Cushendall provides reef/wreck fishing, all night conger hunts, rod hire, tuition. Charter trips can last 3/ 4 hours, evening and all day trips.

North Irish Lodge Dive Centre is based in Islandmagee and offers PADI Dive Resort and school. It offers show dives, wreck dives, scenic dives, drop offs, night dives, sea angling, boat trips along the Gobbins Cliffs, white knuckle rides and corporate charter. The centre also offers the chance to stay at holiday cottages.

Irish Cycling Tours, Belfast – Programme of excursions includes a 3/4 day cycle tour and walking tour in the Antrim Coast and Glens. Accommodation comprises of small family run hotels, guesthouses and B&Bs

The Edge Watersports is based at Drumaheglis Marina and Caravan Park on the banks of the River Bann, just outside Ballymoney. The Edge is the only Water Ski School in Northern Ireland to offer water-skiing for wheelchair users as well as for a number of other disabilities. The school is approved by Ballymoney Borough Council and affiliated to the Irish Water Ski Federation.

Wild Geese Sky Diving Centre, Garvagh is situated in the North West of the Ulster, approximately 12 miles from Coleraine. One of the best equipped centres within the British Parachute Association with a purpose built hangar housing aircraft and training facilities which include kit stores; suspended harnesses; fan trainers, aircraft mock-ups and packing area. The centre has accommodation for parachutists who wish to stay overnight

2.7 Other Countryside Activities

It is recognised that many other activities and pursuits which are outside the remit of this study, take place in the countryside, adding to peoples enjoyment and appreciation of this resource. Some of these activities are high profile and attract significant numbers of participants and spectators such as the World Ploughing Championship near Limavady and the annual Portrush Raft Race, others are local activities undertaken by local people such as horse shoe throwing in Cushendun, model yachting on Rathlin island, and Highland games in Ballymena.

3.0 COUNTRYSIDE RECREATION ISSUES

3.1 Introduction

A large number of issues have been identified during the consultations. The following are considered the most relevant to the development of a Countryside Recreation Strategy for the Causeway Coast and Glens.

3.2 Common Issues

- i) The area is not generally perceived as an activity holiday venue or where a holiday or short break could be enhanced by activities.
- ii) There is a general lack of comprehensive information to alert people to activity opportunities or to direct them to appropriate sites.
- iii) There is the need to establish the area as destination for day activity visits which would help to develop a critical mass.
- iv) There is a lack of opportunity for people to “come and try” with provision being primarily orientated towards the club member or experience participant.
- v) There is a relative scarcity of activity events throughout the year which might coincide with a holiday visit.
- vi) There is no co-ordination of effort between land managers, governing bodies and Councils nor a forum for discussion of issues pertaining to countryside recreation.
- vii) There is a need for more opportunities for people with disabilities and special needs.
- viii) Accommodation providers should be more aware of activity opportunities and the needs of users.
- ix) Access to recreation opportunities is restricted for the non car user.
- x) There should be more directional and information signage which would both inform and help to raise the profile of activities.

3.3 Issues for Land Activities

- i) There is a need to provide routes for riding, off-road cycling and for longer distance walking and to secure countryside access in areas where it is being restricted by fencing and obstruction.
- ii) In support of such activities there is a lack of services such as cafés, parking, guided walks and rural transport.
- iii) Extensive areas of public lands are underused for recreation – e.g. Glenariff to Broughshane - there is potential for linking areas of public lands for recreation purposes.
- iv) New facilities are required for mountain biking so as to formalise the use and provide a cycling product that can attract day visitors.

3.4 Issues for Water Activities

- i) No inland water quality testing towards achieving bathing water quality at contact watersports sites.
- ii) Some zoning but potential to extend zoning of personal watercraft away from other users, and of swimmers away from surfers.
- iii) Some ongoing management of multi-use watersports sites but not co-ordinated and not to a standard.
- iv) Little or no equipment hire and instruction (only surfing) Safety supervision would be needed if this was introduced.
- v) Little provision of information on accessible watersports for day visitors and tourists.

3.5 Issues for Air Activities

- i) No provision of day visitor activities based on the air sports – e.g. tandem paragliding flights, AONB overflights, gliding days. Parachuting publicity based on charity jumps.
- ii) Provision of information on access to air-sports for both local people and visitors.
- iii) Need for improvements and security of tenure of some facilities

4.0 THE COUNTRYSIDE RECREATION CONTEXT

Countryside recreation activities are primarily led and organised by the voluntary sector through clubs and associations. In general terms there are no statutes governing the activities, and voluntary governing bodies of sport tend to make rules to guide their own members. Exceptions to this are angling in respect of closed and open seasons for game angling, and exceptionally on catch limits and tagging; wildfowling and field sports in respect of allowed quarry and the seasons they may be shot; and yacht cruising and powered boating in respect of the rules of the road (collision regulations) on the sea and some inland waters.

Local authorities are empowered to provide for recreation for people in their district and are assisted in doing so by a number of bodies including the Department for Education, the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure, the Sports Lottery Fund and the Sports Council. They have specific duties in respect of asserting and protecting public rights of way in the countryside and are empowered to create new access. In this they are assisted through financial support from Environment and Heritage Service. EHS may also assist with providing funding to councils to provide open space for recreation for areas such as Carnfunnock Country Park near Larne. In practice, following local demand for facilities, Councils have tended to provide built facilities for indoor sports and swimming, and playing pitches and have played a very limited role in provision for outdoor recreation interests.

The Forest Service is the most significant formal provider of countryside recreation opportunities in the Causeway Coast and Glens area through key provision such as the well-used Forest Parks. Forest Service following its initial, visionary, establishment of the Forest Parks has tended to respond to demands from customers in its provision and to develop incrementally. Water Service, although a big land owner in the area, has been reluctant, on water quality grounds, to permit much access and then only on foot or for angling.

Some water recreation facilities have been provided through first the Department of Agriculture Drainage Division, then Department of Agriculture Rivers Agency and latterly through the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure reflecting post-devolution administration. This includes jetties and canoe steps on the Lower Bann. Angling facilities have been grant aided under the Peace 1 Salmonid Enhancement Programme.

The Countryside Access and Activities Network (CAAN) was formed in 1999 to co-ordinate initiatives towards countryside recreation provision and management, and attempts to bring together the main statutory and voluntary bodies with an interest.

The majority of countryside recreation does however either actually or potentially take place on private lands with a variety of leases or access agreements between farmer and club or organisation. Such relationships need to be actively managed on a local basis and to this end both the District Councils and CAAN pursue active relationships with farmers and farming representative groups to ensure proper management and the establishment and maintenance of good relationships. The Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust is anticipated to play a strong role in countryside recreation management.

In 1998 The Activity Centres (Young Persons' Safety) (Northern Ireland) Order was introduced to provide a framework of legislation to protect young people (under 18 years of age) being led or instructed in countryside recreation (adventure) activities. Regulations will be introduced in due course to provide arrangements for the registration and inspection of activity centres in Northern Ireland. This Order will bring Northern Ireland into line with pre-existing arrangements in England, Wales and Scotland and with a different but similar scheme in Ireland. The legislation primarily relates to activities which carry significant risk if not well managed or which involve a high level of remoteness. The following activities are covered within the regulations developed for England Wales and Scotland:

CLIMBING	WATERSPORTS	TREKKING	CAVING
(on natural outdoor features)	(on most lakes, fast flowing rivers & the sea)	(in remote moorland or mountain areas)	
Rockclimbing	Canoeing	Hillwalking	Caving
Abseiling	Kayaking	Mountaineering	Pot-holing
Ice climbing	Dragon boating	Fell running	Mine
Gorge walking	Wave skiing	Orienteering	exploration
Ghyll scrambling	White-water rafting	Pony trekking	
Sea level traversing	Improvised rafting	Mountain biking	
	Sailing	Off-piste skiing	
	Sailboarding		
	Windsurfing		

Similar legislation in Ireland carries no age limits, stating that the novice adult also needs to be protected from poor practice in provision of adventurous activities. Irish legislation also requires that overseas activity providers offering adventurous activities need to apply for a license.

In 2001 amendments to marine navigation legislation in Ireland also created new powers to regulate the use of fast powered craft. All craft, whether used on the sea or inland waters that are capable of travelling at over 17 knots, now require to be

registered with a national registration scheme and to be driven independently only by people over 16 years of age, in possession of an appropriate certificate of competence. The bye-law powers of local and other authorities have also been extended to provide a sound framework for management of fast powered craft at beaches, multi-use sites and on inland waters. It is predictable therefore that there will be some displacement of craft which do not conform towards Northern Ireland's waters whilst they remain lightly regulated. Fast powered craft in Ireland now have to carry appropriate numbers of approved personal flotation devices and those on personal watercraft must wear them.

Following devolution the new north-south body Waterways Ireland has taken over responsibility for navigation on the Lower Bann, and it is anticipated that this will lead to a strengthening on bye-law powers and activity development on the river.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 introduced new laws and measures aimed at ending discrimination which many disabled people face. The act gave disabled people new rights in the areas of employment; access to goods facilities and services and in buying or renting land and property. Within this strategy the second category is most relevant. The act also set up the Northern Ireland Disability Council to advise government on discrimination against disabled people. In particular the act makes it unlawful to refuse to provide any service to a disabled person that is being provided to members of the public, irrespective of whether the service is being provided on a paid or unpaid basis. The scope of services is considered to include recreation and any related means of communication or information, or any related accommodation. Implementation in law of all parts of the act will be complete by 1st Oct 2004, within the timescale of this strategy. Since December 1996, it has been unlawful for service providers to treat disabled people less favourably for reasons related to their disability. Since October 1999, service providers have had to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people, such as providing extra help, or making changes to the way they provide their services. By October 2004 service providers should have made reasonable adjustments to their premises to overcome physical barriers to access. Full information on requirements under the act is available within the Code of Practice on rights of access to goods facilities, services and premises available from www.disability.gov.uk/dda

Facilities for the disabled are limited within the study area. Drumaheglis Marina, which is located approximately five miles outside Ballymoney, offer a wide range of water sports which cater for the disabled, such as jet skiing, wake boarding, water skiing and banana boating.

There are disabled angling facilities at Ballymena, Burnfoot and Roe Valley Country Park and Swann's Bridge, although angling clubs would provide more if grant aid was available. Disabled archery is an increasingly popular sport within

the Province – the two archery clubs within the study area (Ballymena and Carrickfergus) are equipped with facilities to offer archery to people with disabilities.

The Rainbow Equestrian Centre in Islandmagee is purpose built for both disabled and able-bodied riders and is British Horse Society Approved. The instructors are both BHS approved and are Riding for the Disabled approved. The centre operates in conjunction with North Irish Lodge who offer self catering accommodation for both able bodied and disabled people. The Lodge also offer various other activities which are disable-friendly, such as bird watching at the Gobbins Cliffs, fishing on reefs off the Antrim coast and guided walks along the Antrim Coast.

The Outdoor Education Centres provide an invaluable service in facilitating the disabled, disadvantaged and special needs sector to enjoy various sports within the study area.

Countryside recreation in the Causeway Coast and Glens has been co-ordinated since the formation of the Causeway Initiative through its various focus groups and committees including the landowners and users group, The liaison with outdoor education centres and the executive and statutory levels of the Countryside Recreation Working Group. Issues of importance have been addressed through these for a including a response to the Foot and Mouth disease crisis, efforts on interpretation, enhancement of access points, joint planning for new access and action on footpath repair and erosion control.

The CRWG does not at present provide a forum for discussion with the full range of users or between landowners and users, both of which will be essential in ongoing management and in moving the strategy forward.

5.0 THE ACTIVITY MARKET

5.1 Introduction

The importance of Northern Ireland's countryside as a lynchpin of tourism marketing and the potential for increased provision for activity tourism is one reason to develop this strategy. However there are two other types of participants; local residents and day visitors from other parts of the Province. This study needs to address the needs of all three. Indeed the sustainability of activity businesses may rely on local off peak use and in some cases local clubs are providing the basis of a tourism product. Also importantly are the recognised health and social benefits of participation in countryside sport and recreational activities. For each of the three types of participants, there are different levels of ability which require a different level of provision. For example the person who wants to try an activity for the first time will require information on where to go, loan of all the necessary equipment and a suitably qualified instructor. The experienced person, with is or her own equipment, may only need access to a site.

5.2 The Match of Activity Provision to Participant

Table 1 summarises the match of current provision under each activity to the type and experience of potential participants. From this can be seen that while there is generally a good match between activity and local resident participant, the match with day visitors and tourists is more patchy and overall a lot poorer.

Table 1 : Match of Activity Provision to Participant

Activity in causeway coast and Glens area	Local Resident		Day Visitor		Tourist	
	Beginner	Improver Advanced	Beginner	Improver Advanced	Beginner	Improver Advanced
1 Caving						
2 Clay pigeon Shooting						
3 Fell Running						
4 Field Sports						
5 2 w motor sports						
6 4 w motor sports						
7 Horse riding						
8 Mountain Biking						
9 Mountaineering						
10 Orienteering						
11 Walking/Rambling						
12 Archery						
13 Canoeing						
14 Coarse Angling						
15 Game Angling						
16 Sea angling						
17 Jet Skiing						
18 Rowing						
19 Sailing						
20 Sub Aqua						
21 Surfing						
22 Windsurfing						
23 Water Skiing						
24 Aero modelling						
25 Gliding						
26 Hang gliding/Paragliding						
27 Microlight Flying						
28 Parachuting						
28 Popular flying						

Key

	Good
	Fair
	Some
	None

6.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF COUNTRYSIDE RECREATION

The table overleaf identifies types of countryside recreational impact on the environment. Not all impacts will occur with small parties and infrequent activity. Pressures on the Causeway Coast and Glens area by recreation are not considered significant at present except in the following cases:

1. Walking where peatland erosion is causing some concern
2. Bank erosion along the Lower Bann
3. Duneland erosion due to recreation pressure

However, in a strategy designed to develop the potential for sustainable countryside recreation in the Causeway Coast and Glens the potential impacts must be considered. Particularly given the relatively high levels of nature conservation designation, in the uplands and coastline. All of the activities covered in the report have potential impacts but not all of these are significant.

The most prevalent impact of recreational activity is disturbance of fauna, in their normal activities such as feeding, roosting, nesting and raising young. Occasional disturbance may not be harmful, whereas constant disturbance may cause fauna to desert young and move on to another area.

Many activities inevitably involve trampling of flora with sustainability depending on the robustness of vegetation and the number of visits. In the nesting season trampling may cause physical damage to eggs and nests.

The passage of many feet or constant washes caused by powered craft can cause erosion of river bank or mountain side.

Noise is most commonly an impact on humans but may also be included in the disturbance category above.

Removal of fauna is an inherent part of field sports and of angling and is normally carried on against a view of what constitutes a 'sustainable harvest'. People engaging in both types of activity are usually actively involved in the management of the quarry species, wither through habitat improvement or through stocking. This management normally favours the quarry species but may have adverse impacts on others.

Powered craft use has some minor impacts on water quality from small emissions of oil from exhaust systems and potentially from spillages of fuel. Collisions with marine fauna may also be an issue.

Some types of countryside recreation such as water skiing and keel boat sailing require infrastructure such as moorings and slipways that physically change the natural environment with a consequent, though often small, loss of habitat beneath the facility.

The removal or modification of flora is occasionally an impact of activities with rock climbing use causing devegetation of ledges, and habitat management for some game birds involving the control of natural predators.

Over the past twenty years the majority of countryside recreation activities have developed codes of conduct for their activities, which set out to minimise the impact of their activities. In many cases the recreational participants are themselves keenly interested in maintaining a quality environment for their own activities. However the special interest of sites used for recreation is not always obvious and in such cases external controls on use of measures to inform participant of how to avoid damaging the special interest may be necessary. Good management can minimise or remove most of the impacts outlined in table 2.

Table 2 Potential environmental impacts of countryside recreation

Activity	Potential impact							
	Disturbance of fauna	Trampling of flora/fauna	Erosion	Noise	Removal of fauna	Change to physical features to accommodate the activity	Water quality	Removal or modification of flora/fauna
Caving	✓					✓		
Clay Pigeon Shooting				✓				
Fell running	✓	✓						
Field Sports	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓
Two wheeled motor sports	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Four wheeled motor sports	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Horse-riding	✓	✓	✓					
Mountain biking	✓	✓	✓					
Mountaineering	✓	✓						✓
Orienteering	✓	✓						
Walking / Rambling	✓	✓	✓					
Archery	✓	✓						
Canoeing	✓							
Coarse angling	✓	✓						
Game angling	✓	✓			✓	✓		
Sea angling	✓	✓			✓			
Jet skiing	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	
Rowing	✓					✓		
Sailing	✓					✓		
Sub Aqua	✓			✓ ¹	✓ ²		✓ ³	
Surfing								
Windsurfing	✓							
Water skiing	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	
Aeromodelling	✓			✓				
Gliding	✓					✓		
Hang gliding and paragliding	✓	✓	✓					
Micro light	✓			✓		✓		
Parachuting	✓			✓		✓		
Popular flying	✓			✓		✓		

7.0 THE VISION

¹ If fast powered craft are used to access dive areas

² Not inherent in the activity, recreational divers have a code of practice that discourages gathering specimens, but a potential impact.

³ When associated with powered boat use

7.1 Introduction

A vision workshop was held in Houstons Mills, Broughshane on 26 March 2002 to which were invited representatives from the sports governing bodies, Councils, community networks, activity providers and others with an interest in countryside recreation. The purpose of the vision workshop was to establish a picture of countryside recreation within the Causeway Coast and Glens in five to ten year's time.

The following key statements were made at the workshop about the desired future of countryside recreation within the Causeway Coast and Glens:

A calendar of events which are set to take place in the Causeway Coast and Glens area should be compiled in conjunction with NITB, local Councils and the National Trust. There needs to be one central organisation who can disseminate all the information before circulation

There needs to be integration and sharing of activities which use similar resources, i.e model slope soaring sites are the same as for hang and paragliding, therefore there is an opportunity to consolidate these in some way

The availability of a number of small regional airfields to suit local recreational flying, microlight, light aircraft, powered (and which launch) hang gliding & paragliding, powered parachute, helicopter (visiting or based), glider land-out and tow-off facility, model flying and flight training. Powered model flying is NOT compatible with manned flights of any kind.

Water sports are accessible to visitors in the Causeway Coast and Glens, although accommodation and restaurant facilities could be improved

The reconciliation of local and visitor / tourist needs would be beneficial to angling in the Causeway Coast and Glens area

The Causeway Coast and Glens is the prime venue for angling in Northern Ireland, although sea angling could be enhanced. There is the potential to build on the existing sea angling resources

There is a need to identify the most appropriate form of marketing / publicity for particular activities which take place in the Causeway Coast and Glens

There is the potential to market an activity to the relevant target market

There is the opportunity to develop a canoe / kayak trail along the Lower Bann, in conjunction with the establishment of camp sites, foot paths and foot bridges

There are not enough dive bases in the area, therefore there is an opportunity to build on this

A flying centre with appropriate facilities, and security of tenure, would be advantageous in the Causeway Coast and Glens area.

There is the opportunity to develop more suitable venues for 4-wheel motor sport in the Causeway Coast and Glens area, such as a better choice start / finish accommodation, more car parks and better support from the police.

The Ulster Way needs to be maintained and promoted. There also needs to be more car parks and youth camp sites located along the Ulster Way

There is the potential to develop long and short distance mountain bike trials, subject to gaining access to land

7.2 A Possible Vision

The Causeway Coast and Glens area is an area with a wealth of managed and sustainable countryside recreation activities, which take place all year round. Local people and visitors are welcome to take part at a number of levels from complete beginner to advanced practitioner against a superb natural resource background. All participants are well informed about the potential impacts of their activities and behave towards the natural environment in a responsible way and have respect for other legitimate countryside users and for the livelihoods and objectives of farmers and land managers.

7.3 Key Aspirational Statements

- i) The recreational experience from the user's point of view
 - a) People know that the area offers a significant number of different activities
 - b) People receive advice and information that enables them to know where the activities take place and where their particular activity is welcome
 - c) People (including men, women, young people, children, people with disabilities, people on low incomes) are assisted on a daily or regular basis in the appropriate season to get involved in activities through taster opportunities and provision of equipment and coaching/guiding

- d) People (including men, women, young people, children, people with disabilities) are assisted to go further and progress to a higher level in the activities through opportunities for more advanced journeys/programmes, and through vibrant local clubs who welcome new members.
 - e) People are attracted to the area from elsewhere by appealing events in their own activity
 - f) People can easily find out more about the countryside they are visiting as an activity participant
 - g) People can reach a significant number of activity opportunities in the area by public transport, and the transport company understands and facilitates their needs to carry appropriate equipment.
 - h) People's participation is supported through accessible and informed services such as weather forecasts, eating places (at suitable times and seasons) accommodation, information, equipment and advice)
 - i) People's participation is supported through appropriate infrastructure.
 - j) Water quality and environmental quality is consistent with the activity needs and expectations
 - k) Well positioned and appropriate signage ensures that people can find activity locations
- 2) The recreational experience from the land manager's point of view
- a) Individual participants are aware of their potential impacts on critical flora and fauna and plan their activities and behave accordingly.
 - b) People respect facilities provided to assist activities
 - c) Activity businesses, local clubs and clubs visiting the area are fully aware of their potential impacts on flora and fauna, are fully aware of any management arrangements for their activity and are responsible users
 - d) People are aware of the other activities that may take place where they are and understand their needs and any management arrangements
 - e) Farmers are assisted begin the process of providing charged services to recreational users such as camp sites, camping barns, informal rural car parks, food and accommodation, and equipment hire
 - f) There is a monitoring programme within the countryside to ensure that any negative impacts of recreation are noticed and remedied
 - g) Conflict between activities is minimised or avoided through management techniques such as zoning
- 3) Key statements from the activity providers point of view:

- a) Clubs are assisted to make arrangements for local people, and where appropriate visitors, who want to take up activities, try out equipment and receive basic coaching
- b) The activity businesses can reach both niche and general activity markets cost effectively through joint marketing initiatives to domestic and overseas markets
- c) Activity business start up support recognises the lead in period required before activity businesses are financially viable.
- d) Market research is available to people in activity businesses, including information about leisure day visit patterns and volumes
- e) Public lands are accessible for use by activity businesses
- f) Where there is potential, regional centres are developed for some activities

8.0 ACTIONS TO REALISE THE VISION

Draft objectives and programmes to realise the vision has been set out under a number of key themes:-

1. To ensure that the countryside resource is both maintained and appropriately managed for recreation
 - Create an ongoing forum for discussion and action between landowners, managers, governing bodies and Councils to co-ordinate the development of countryside recreational activities and to address issues arising.
 - Improve habitat to support appropriate native quarry for field sports in the area where these align with agreed nature conservation objectives and designations, and the NI Biodiversity Strategy and within the context of an overall uplands management plan for the area that includes recreational use.

2. To ensure that countryside recreation is managed to reduce conflicts between users and between recreation and other land uses
 - Promote the development of official sites for off-road two wheel motor sports in order to displace unofficial use of countryside areas.
 - Provide attractive official sites and management and co-ordination for some activities e.g. mountain biking.
 - Promote the development of further codes of conduct between anglers and canoeists to support joint use of the river resource for recreation.
 - Develop a lake site for jet skiing to reduce pressure on other sites and to allow
 - Introduce by laws on the Lower Bann to control inappropriate use e.g. no wake zones for rowing, when passing jetties and close to nesting birds, to formalise existing zones for water-skiing, and to protect the coarse angling potential of the river.
 - Continue with area focused user and management forums e.g. Lower Bann, Causeway Coast to provide a forum for detailed recommendations on access and recreation management. Consider the development of further area or topic focused groupings for e.g. upland areas, beach and coast management

3. To increase the number of sites available for land recreation
 - Develop more bridle ways and traffic free routes, particularly close to equestrian centres, to create circular routes and to increase the length of existing routes.
 - Develop off-road cycling routes as planned in the CAAN off road cycling strategy (Springwell, Glenariff, Binevenagh and Slieveanorra/Ballypatrick) and respond to other local proposals.
 - Develop a wider range of walking routes, particularly circular routes, riverbank and lowland walks.
 - Identify the opportunities offered by the extent of public lands between Ballycastle and Broughshane and bring forward proposals for increasing their recreational use and value subject to environmental management issues. Including consideration of a horse trail between Glenarrif and Broughshane.

4. To make activities more accessible to beginners and visitors
 - Develop come and try it opportunities, and training and hire facilities on available lakes in the area for canoeing, rowing and sailing (e.g. Ballinrees, Altnahinch, Woodburn)
 - Develop and promote a canoe trail along the Lower Bann Navigation including the installation of appropriate facilities for portaging the locks, support for the development of a canoe hire and outfitting operation and the provision of two informal campsites.
 - To assist organisations and businesses to provide more opportunities to come and try outdoor activities in the area for visitors
 - Assist clubs to increase youth membership and to develop training programmes and youth equipment pools.
 - To support angling organisations and businesses to provide introductory angling programmes for visitors.
 - To raise the profile of sea angling opportunities in the area and consider signage of key shore and rock sites, and active promotion of the sea angling interest of the area.
 - To support the development of small boat sea angling in the area including boat hire and guided trips.

5. To raise the profile (amongst potential visitors) of the Causeway Coast and Glens area for activities
 - Provide a comprehensive guide to countryside activities throughout the Causeway Coast and Glens.

- Encourage development of an activity based website presentation of the area.
 - Signpost the main activity sites and locations of activity providers.
 - Further develop traditional activities such as gig racing as both a recreation activity and tourism product.
 - Encourage visitor participation by operating pick-ups from main tourist offices in resort towns.
 - Develop or assist the development of more activity events to help raise the profile of the area, to provide opportunities to participate and to ensure that there is something to do every day in the area
6. To realise economic returns for business associated with countryside recreation
- Encourage and assist accommodation providers and eating establishments to provide packages associated with events and competitions.
 - Encourage the development of activity packages based on special interest breaks.
 - Develop long distance walking and riding routes linked to accommodation.
 - Encourage accommodation providers to link up with activity businesses.
 - Provide assistance to product development – i.e the packaging of activity, guiding or instruction, accommodation and travel into and around the area
7. To develop the potential of the coastline
- Develop more short-term visitor moorings for yachts and dive boats, associated with opportunities for meals, accommodation and culturally based entertainment.
 - Promote yacht based visits to the area to people with boats in the Clyde area in Scotland
 - Develop and promote on a network basis, a number of focal points around the coastline with improved slipways, car parking for vehicles and boat trailers, toilets, fresh water hose line, etc for activities such as sub-aqua, RIBs, trailer sailing, dinghy sailing, and sea kayaking. Provide slipway management where there are conflicting uses or nature conservation issues.
 - Develop a surfing centre at Portrush with a full range of facilities for local and visiting surfers including safety information, rescue, showers, changing, hire and retail opportunities

- Encourage sea angling development in the area through support of sea angling clubs, venues and businesses and through the signage of key sites.
8. To improve the accessibility of air sports
- Encourage and support clubs in developing or securing new facilities.
 - Encourage initiatives to provide basic training or tandem flights for beginners or visitors.
9. Maintain and improve the ability of natural resources in the area to continue to support countryside recreation
- Promote the need to improve water quality for water contact sports in some parts of the area
 - Resist the development of upland structures and roadways and inappropriate coastal development in order to retain the interest of hill walking and boat based visitors.

8.1 CAUSEWAY COAST AND GLENS - ACTION PROGRAMME

PROGRAMME 1 – SITE AND AREA MANAGEMENT					
Actions	Bodies Involved	Priority	Time	Cost	Assumptions
1 Establish a Countryside Recreation Forum	Heritage Trust/Councils/Landowners/ Sports Governing Bodies/CAAN	1	2002 - 2006	£6K	Admin support over 4 years
2 Promote the need for improved water quality at some locations	Heritage Trust	2	2002 - 2006		
3 Monitor development proposals for potential impacts on countryside recreation activities	Councils	1	2002 - 2006		
4 Develop an uplands management plan that considers recreation and nature conservation needs and opportunities and the needs of landowners	Heritage Trust and Others	2	2003 - 2004	£30K	
5 Develop further codes of conduct for anglers and canoeists. This is underway between CANI and SCNI Water Sub Group	Recreation Forum/Local Clubs	2	2003 - 2004	£10K	Printing costs
6 Introduce by laws on the Lower Bann	Waterways Ireland	2	2003 - 2004	£15K	Printing costs and signage
7 Continue with area focused user and management forums eg Lower Bann	EHS/DARD and Others eg Councils	1	2002 - 2006	£6K	Admin support over 4 years
8 Undertake user monitoring eg surveys, counts	Heritage Trust & others (for example on projects such as Way Marked Ways)	1	2002 - 2006	£20K	
9 Initiate site monitoring of impacts arising from recreational use	Heritage Trust & Others	1	2002 - 2006	£40K	
			TOTAL	£127	

PROGRAMME 2 – ACCESSIBILITY						
Actions	Bodies Involved	Priority	Time	Cost	Assumptions	
1 Develop more bridle ways and traffic free routes	Councils/Forest Service/Water Service/Riding Centres	1	2002 - 2006	£300K	Includes 10km of newly constructed tracks	
2 Provide new off road cycling routes at Springwell, Glenariff, Binevenagh and Slieveanorra/Ballypatrick	CAAN/Forest Service/Cycle Clubs	2	2003 - 2005	£75K	Includes Springwell family route (4.5Km), Springwell / Binevenagh / Grange (20Km), Binevenagh Downhill route (3Km), Glenariff family route (3Km) and Slieveanorra/Ballypatrick cross-country route (10Km).	
3 Provide circular walks near settlements around lakes and beside long distance routes. Include themed trails as they are in the CAAN Operational Plan and may include heritage or cultural trails	Councils and Others / CAAN as appropriate	1	2002 - 2006	£400K	Includes 20km of newly constructed paths	
4 Develop linear low land and river walks	Councils and Others	2	2003 - 2005	£400K	Includes 20km of newly constructed paths	
5 Develop an access strategy for public lands between Ballycastle and Broughshane	Forest Service/Water Service/Councils	1	2002 - 2003	£20K	Consultancy fee	
6 Provide transport to activity sites from main resort towns	Councils/Activity Providers	2	2003 - 2006	£40K	Co-ordination / support over 4 years funding	
				TOTAL	£1235K	

PROGRAMME 3 – FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE						
Actions	Bodies Involved	Priority	Time	Cost	Assumptions	
1 Develop a number of focal points for water sports both on inland waters and along the coast	Councils	1	2002 2006	- £600K	4 No sites	
2 Develop a surfing centre at Portrush	Council/Sports Governing Body	1	2002 2004	- £250K	Dedicated building and equipment	
3 Support air sport clubs in securing sites and facilities	Councils	3	2005 2006	- £50K		
4 Develop a canoe trail along the Lower Bann with supporting infrastructure and services	Waterways Ireland/Sports Governing Bodies/Councils/CAAN	1	2002 2004	- £125K	Portage facilities at all locks/one additional campsite with facilities (shared with other river users)/leaflet/ signage	
5 Promote the development of official sites for off road two wheel motor sports	Councils/Private Sector	2	2003 2004	- £20K		
6 Develop official sites for activities that may conflict with other users/site management eg jet skiing	Councils/Private Sector / CAAN within a strategic context	2	2003 2004	- £50K		
				TOTAL	£1095K	

PROGRAMME 4 – COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING						
Actions	Bodies Involved	Priority	Time	Cost	Assumptions	
1 Produce and promote an annual comprehensive guide to countryside activities in the area	Heritage Trust/Councils	2	2003 - 2006	£50K	Over 3 years	
2 Produce an activity based web site	Heritage Trust/Councils	2	2003 - 2006	£12K	Design and maintenance over 3 years	
3 Provide better signage for key activity sites	Councils/Roads Service/Activity Providers/Land Managers eg Forest Service, National Trust	1	2002 - 2003	£30K		
4 Promote the area as a sailing destination from Western Scotland	RTO/Councils	1	2002 - 2003	£40K		
				TOTAL	£132K	

PROGRAMME 5 – EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES						
Actions	Bodies Involved	Priority	Time	Cost	Assumptions	
1 Promote and assist the development of festivals based on activities such as gig racing	Local Communities/Councils	1	2002 - 2006	£80K	4 No annual festivals	
2 Develop a programme of frequent activity events	Heritage Trust/Councils/Clubs/Activity Providers	2	2003 - 2005	£50K		
3 Support the further development of sea angling	Councils/DCAL	1	2002 - 2003	£200K	Infrastructure/equipment /marketing support	
4 Assist clubs to increase youth membership and to develop training programmes	Sports Governing Bodies/Councils	3	2004 - 2006	£40K		
				TOTAL	£330K	

PROGRAMME 6 – VISITOR SERVICES					
Actions	Bodies Involved	Priority	Time	Cost	Assumptions
1 Encourage the development of activity packages linked to special interest breaks and events	RTO	1	2002 - 2004	£100K	Rebranding/enhancement of facilities (10 No businesses)
2 Develop a network of guides and instructors	Heritage Trust	2	2003 - 2005	£20K	Training programme
3 Develop more visitor moorings at key sites along the coast	Councils/Clubs	1	2003 - 2005	£250K	3 - 5 No sites
4 Encourage initiatives that provide introductory programmes and 'come and try' eg angling, air sports	Heritage Trust/Private Sector	2	2003 - 2005	£20K	
				TOTAL	£390K

SUMMARY	
Programme	Total Cost
Programme 1 – Site and Area Management	£127K
Programme 2 – Accessibility	£1235K
Programme 3 – Facilities and Infrastructure	£1095K
Programme 4 – Communications and Marketing	£132K
Programme 5 – Events and Activities	£330K
Programme 6 – Visitor Service	£390K
TOTAL	£3309K

9.0 CASE STUDIES

9.1 Rossnowlagh Beach, Co Donegal

Rossnowlagh Surf Club was founded in 1968 - a small room at the Sand House Hotel was used as a Surf Club House. As the club and sport grew in Rossnowlagh, especially after the European Surfing Championships were held in Rossnowlagh in 1985, the facility at the Sand House Hotel was no longer sufficient.

In 1986 Rossnowlagh Surf Club commenced the building of a new Surf Club House and Lifeguard Station on the beach front at Rossnowlagh. The venture was supported by the local community, Donegal County Council, and the Government. Funding for the project came from the County Council, the Department of Sport, and club funds. The building was carried out under a FÁS Training Project (FÁS Programmes are funded from Irish Exchequer sources and the Community Support Framework through both the European Social Fund and the Regional Development Fund. FÁS provides a range of training and employment programmes, aimed at employers, employees and unemployed people).

The club house is a modest building providing the basic shower facilities, storage, changing, meeting areas etc. It also includes an area for lifeguards, with a watchtower overlooking the beach. It was officially opened in 1988 by the then Minister of Sport, Frank Fahey.

The facility allowed the surf club to expand, going from approximately 30/40 members to 200/300 members in the first season it was opened. The club was able to offer surf lessons and hire facilities, provide employment, and had more than adequate funds to maintain the club house.

As Rossnowlagh Beach grew in popularity with tourists and water users, the local development group saw the need for a beach management strategy. Rossnowlagh beach is unusual in so far as cars are allowed onto the beach and a right-of-way exists across the beach. Working with all the interest groups and the County Council, a scheme to zone the beach was agreed.

Rossnowlagh beach is now zoned with different areas for swimmers, surfers, canoeists, and power craft and a car free area. This is essential for safety at all beaches as they grow in popularity.

9.2 North Western Fisheries Board

The Central Fisheries Board in Ireland is a statutory body operating under the aegis of the Department of Marine and Natural Resources, and was established under the Fisheries Act 1980. The principal function of the Central Fisheries Board is to support, co-ordinate and provide specialist support services to the 8 Regional Fishery Boards within Ireland.

The North Western Regional Fishery Board, comprising Counties Donegal and Fermanagh, is one of eight Regional Fishery Boards within Ireland. It's primary objective is to ensure that angling continues to be recognised as a valuable asset, and to achieve the maximum benefit to the exchequer by promoting angling as a leisure pursuit and by developing the tourism potential of the resource.

Staff within the North Western Regional Fishery Board are involved in the following activities:

- Provision of advice, assistance and material with regard to the Irish angling product to both national and overseas tour operators and agents;
- Optimising coverage of the Irish angling product with local, national and international media;
- Enhancing signage within the region, making it easier for the angling visitor to locate the best angling sites;
- Liaising with Bord Failte, Regional Tourism Organisations, market groups and travel companies to devise co-ordinated marketing strategies for the promotion of the angling product;
- Compiling and maintaining an up-to-date databank of angling information;
- Assisting at national angling events and provide educational material, lectures and courses on the value of the angling resource to the region, conservation, species diversity and angling methods and techniques;
- Lakes, rivers and coastal stretches within the region are regularly surveyed and mapped, fisheries are managed and stocked, while banks and access routes to the waters edge are developed to ensure the visitor gets directly and easily to the hotspots.

Most of the angling in the north west region of Ireland is organised around recognised angling centres which specialise in catering for the angling tourist. Salmon and trout fisheries are usually the property of an individual, club, organisation or the state and permission to fish is generally required except in the case of the state owned lakes.

Sea angling is unequivocally the most popular form of angling in the region - North Western Regional Fisheries Board reflect this through its various policies to protect and conserve this valuable resource. The Boards' responsibilities cover a twelve mile limit off the coast. The Boards' strategies and operations are both preventative and reactive in nature and include the following:

1. The creation of a deterrent by ensuring the maximum visible presence in waters where the threat of illegal activity is greatest;
2. Prosecution of offenders and confiscation of illegal nets, equipment, tackle and catch.

The 'Ireland' series of leaflets on coarse, game, sea, pike and river trout angling are produced by the Regional Fishery Boards, and document thoroughly the best angling sites throughout Ireland, and are species specific. These leaflets also include information on safety, weather and access, ensuring that the visitor is thoroughly informed on the status of these sites. The use of the World Wide Web is also an extremely effective method used by the Central Fisheries Board in making people aware of what is available to the visiting angler. The website is very thorough, and covers everything from where the best sites are, to weather forecasts, charter companies and access.