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Tramore Dunes and Backstrand

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The Tramore Dunes (Burrow) are the result of a classic inshore process seen on all coasts - the growth of a spit of shingle and sand across a shallow bay. Behind the spit lies the Back Strand which dries out at low tide and is connected to the open sea by narrows at Rinneshark. The Burrow has a narrow neck and expands eastwards. Longshore drift is from the west so any loose material accumulates at the tip, which is hooked, and on the opposing spit at Bass Point.

The dunes themselves are well developed. There are high ridges and valleys, old stabilised surfaces and new foredunes at shore level. This means that all the major vegetation types are found from the strand flora, through mobile dunes to stable grassland, with saltmarsh on the northern edge and slacks at Bass Point. The flora is particularly rich and has most of the plants characteristic of the south-eastern dune systems though some are reduced by erosion and trampling. Tramore is the only site in the country where sea knotgrass (*Polygonum maritimum*) has grown though it is sporadic in appearance. The dunes have another protected species, the wild asparagus (*Asparagus officinalis*) as well as a distinctive shrubby community in which dewberry (*Rubus caesius*) and privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*) play an important part. Much of the saltmarsh around the Back Strand has been reclaimed but where patches persist they are characterised by sea blite (*Suaeda maritima*) and the introduced *Spartina* grass which is spreading. A feature peculiar to the saltmarsh vegetation at Tramore is the occurrence of golden samphire (*Inula crithmoides*) which is normally a cliff plant.

The Back Strand is a site of some importance for shorebirds on the south coast with brent geese (485 in Sheppard) occurring in numbers of international value. Grey plover (233), dunlin (1,370), black-tailed (80) and bar-tailed godwit (414) are of national value. There are large populations of cockles in the mudflats and while these are sometimes collected there is no major fishery or aquaculture at present there.