SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: CRONAGUIGGY BOG

SITE CODE: 001176

Cronaguiggy Bog NHA contains two small areas of intact lowland blanket bog located east of Lough Anure, 4km south of Gweedore town in the townlands of Cronaguiggy and Meencorwick in Co. Donegal. There is a northern area of bog located between the Gweedore River and a local road and a southern area of bog located south of Bunawack Burn. The altitude range of this site is 40m to 60m. Bedrock geology is granodiorite.

The northern portion of the site is a flat expanse of blanket bog with a domed centre dominated by Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*) with Black Bog-rush (*Schoenus nigricans*), Deergrass (*Trichophorum caespitosum*), Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) and Bog-myrtle (*Myrica gale*). White Beak-sedge (*Rhynchospora alba*), Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*) and Hare's-tail Cottongrass (*Eriophorum vaginatum*) are also frequent. Some hummocks of bog moss (*Sphagnum capillifolium)*, mosses *Leucobryum glaucum* and *Racomitrium lanuginosum* and the lichen *Cladonia portentosa* are present.

A small domed area in the centre of the bog is dominated by Black Bog-rush with Purple Moor-grass, Hare's-tail Cottongrass and White Beak-sedge. The bog is generally damp and spongy or quaking with good bog moss cover on lawns (*Sphagnum magellanicum, S. papillosum* and *S. capillifolium)* and in wetter areas bog mosses (*S. auriculatum* and *S. cuspidatum*) and Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*). There are scattered hummocks of bog mosses *Sphagnum papillosum* and *S. capillifolium* with Heather, Cross-leaved Heath, lichens (*Cladonia* spp.), cottongrasses (*Eriophorum* spp.) and White Beak-sedge. Pool remnants appear to be drying out and are infilling with White Beak-sedge, Common Cottongrass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*) and Bogbean. Oblong-leaved Sundew (*Drosera intermedia*) a rather uncommon species, and the moss *Campylopus introflexus* and lichen *Cladonia portentosa* occur around these pools.

The northern portion of bog has a semi-natural margin with Bog-myrtle, Heather and Purple Moor-grass tussocks giving way to a river margin dominated by rushes (*Juncus* spp.), Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) and Bogbean.

The southern portion of bog consists of a small plateau of blanket bog surrounded by degraded bog and heathy rocky outcrops. Black Bog-rush, Purple Moor-grass and Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*) dominate. Deergrass is also common and some remnant *Sphagnum* hummocks occur. A pool system occurs, the margins of which are very wet and quaking with a good cover of the bog mosses *Sphagnum papillosum* and *S. capillifolium* with some scattered Bog-myrtle and the liverwort *Pleurozia purpurea*. The pools show signs of drying out with some of them turning algal. However, there are some extensive pools with areas of *Sphagnum cuspidatum* and Bogbean which also feature small islands dominated by Heather. Areas of White

Beak-sedge surrounded by remnant hummocks of Heather, Cross-leaved Heath and lichens occur. There are also some bare peat areas with scattered Black Bog-rush, Deergrass and Bog Asphodel. This area has been damaged by overgrazing but is included in order to protect the pool system.

Irish Red Data Book species, Red Grouse and breeding Dunlin, have been recorded on the site.

Much of the blanket bog within the northern section of bog is dry and rather overgrazed. Drainage and grazing within the site and on adjoining lands continues to be a problem, as do turbary activities (machine and peat cutting). Burning is also of concern.

Cronaguiggy Bog NHA is a site of some conservation significance consisting of lowland blanket bog. The site has a good assemblage of characteristic lowland blanket bog species, some intact wet areas and areas of active regeneration. Blanket bog habitat is a globally scarce resource and is largely confined to coastal regions with cool, wet, oceanic climates at temperate latitudes. North-west Europe contains some of the best-developed areas of blanket bog in the world. Lowland blanket bog comprises less than 3% of the world's peatlands. In Europe this type of blanket bog is restricted to Ireland, Britain, Norway and Iceland. The lowland blanket bog that occurs in Ireland is considered to be an extreme hyperoceanic variant of the habitat type, found nowhere else in the world except on the coastal fringes of north-west Scotland.