SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: ROSCREA BOG

SITE CODE: 000583

Roscrea Bog lies in Co. Offaly, close to the border with Tipperary and Laois, north of the Limerick railway and about 3km west of Roscrea itself. It is not a true bog, but a fen, developed on poorly drained glacial drift over limestone and shales.

The northern section of the original site has been drained, thus affecting the northern and eastern margins of the site – Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) has now become established there.

Towards the centre of the site there exists more typical fen vegetation. Bog-myrtle (*Myrica gale*), Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*), Cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*) and herbs such as Devil's-bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*) and Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*) are found.

Closer to the centre it is wetter, with Black Bog-rush (*Schoenus nigricans*) sharing dominance with Purple Moor-grass. This indicates a high calcium status.

The wettest part of the site is at the centre of the fen, where although open water is not common, the area is still dominated by Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) and sedges (e.g. *Carex rostrata* and *C. paniculata*). Small clumps of birch (*Betula* spp.) and willow (*Salix* spp.) also occur here.

South of the railway, and bounded further south by a stream, a narrow strip of wet woodland, with Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), willows, Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), and Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) has developed over hydrologically disturbed fen. This represents a more natural successional community than the Gorse area.

Two rare species of snail *Vertigo genesii* and *Agriolimax laevis* have been recorded on the site. Also, wetland birds such as Reed Bunting, Snipe and Curlew have been seen.

Although now drier than it used to be, as a result of adjacent drainage, this site is still in a reasonably natural state and shows a good species richness and habitat diversity. Such habitats have come under increasing pressure in central Ireland, mainly from drainage. Further attempts at reclamation on this site would therefore be inappropriate.

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