



**Site Name: Killyconny Bog (Cloghbally) SAC**

**Site Code: 000006**

Killyconny Bog is a raised bog situated approximately half way between Virginia and Kells on the Cavan/Meath border and some 8 km from each. It is underlain by Lower Palaeozoic shales and consists of two small basins which have coalesced over a low drumlin ridge. There are few raised bogs in the north-east region and Killyconny Bog seems to be one of the best developed. Though some marginal drainage and cutting has taken place, the central part of the bog is relatively intact.

The site is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) selected for the following habitats and/or species listed on Annex I / II of the E.U. Habitats Directive (\* = priority; numbers in brackets are Natura 2000 codes):

[7110] Raised Bog (Active)* [7120] Degraded Raised Bog
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Active raised bog comprises areas of high bog that are wet and actively peat-forming, where the percentage cover of bog mosses (*Sphagnum* spp.) is high, and where some or all of the following features occur: hummocks, pools, wet flats, *Sphagnum* lawns, flushes and soaks. Degraded raised bog corresponds to those areas of high bog whose hydrology has been adversely affected by peat cutting, drainage and other land use activities, but which are capable of regeneration.

Much of the bog is very wet and there are many areas of pool and hummock formation. The pools support the bog moss *Sphagnum cuspidatum*, and a good growth of algae in summer. Wet areas about the pools support other *Sphagnum* mosses such as *S. magellanicum*, while *S. papillosum*, *S. fuscum*, *S. capillifolium* and *Hypnum cupressiforme* are important components of hummocks. A range of vascular plants typical of raised bogs are found, including cottongrasses (*Eriophorum angustifolium* and *E. vaginatum*), heathers (*Calluna vulgaris* and *Erica tetralix*), Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*) and White Beak-sedge (*Rhynchospora alba*). Also occurring on the site is Bog-rosemary (*Andromeda polifolia*) which is found almost exclusively on raised bogs and which is rare in north-east Ireland.

While the surface of the bog is generally homogeneous some higher areas with dense tussocks of Hare's-tail Cottongrass (*Eriophorum vaginatum*) are found; these provide shelter for Hares. There are also lines of water movement, shown by the occurrence of Common Sedge (*Carex nigra*) and Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*).

The degraded bog is largely restricted to the margins of the high bog areas where drainage effects are most pronounced. In general, much of the degraded bog surface

is dominated by Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) and Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*) with Bog Asphodel and White Beak-sedge dominating in the wetter areas. Typically these species form mono-dominant, species-poor stands. In the driest areas of degraded raised bog there is some colonisation by plant species such as Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*) and Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*).

The uncut high bog area is surrounded by extensive cutover surfaces and a portion of this cutover has been planted with conifers.

Bird species found on the bog include Meadow Pipit and Curlew, and sometimes also Kestrel and Long-eared Owl which hunt over it for prey items such as beetles, Pygmy Shrew and Common Frog.

Killyconny Bog is of considerable conservation value, being one of the largest extant areas of relatively intact raised bog in the north-east of the country. The site contains good examples of the E.U. Habitats Directive Annex I priority habitat active raised bog and the non-priority habitat degraded raised bog (capable of regeneration).