



Site Name: Ballycullinan Lake SAC

Site Code: 000016

Ballycullinan Lake is a calcareous lake situated approximately 2 km south of Corrofin in Co. Clare. The site includes a series of smaller lakes to the north-east of Ballycullinan; Cragmoher Lough, Drumcavan Lough and Shanvally Lough. Large reedbeds, sedge swamp, stands of Great Fen-sedge (*Cladium mariscus*) and fen surround these lakes. Limestone pavement and scrub woodland occupy the northern part of the site.

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):

[7210] <i>Cladium</i> Fens*

At Ballycullinan Lake, the area of open water is of particular interest for the presence of the alga *Cladophora sauteri*. This forms spherical aggregations that sometimes become buoyant and float. Otherwise they are found on marl or rocks on the lake bed.

The large areas of reedbed around the lakes are composed of Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) and Great Fen-sedge. Behind them, Bottle Sedge (*Carex rostrata*) is frequent, growing in marl deposits with stoneworts (*Chara* spp.) and the moss *Fontinalis antipyretica*. The adjacent marsh vegetation is characteristic of a limestone lake and contains Yellow Water-lily (*Nuphar lutea*), Water Plantain (*Alisma plantago-aquatica*), Lesser Spearwort (*Ranunculus flammula*), Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*), Marsh Ragwort (*Senecio aquaticus*), Tufted Forget-me-not (*Myosotis laxa* subsp. *caespitosa*), Greater Tussock-sedge (*Carex paniculata*), Water Dock (*Rumex hydrolapathum*) and the moss *Calliergon giganteum*.

In-flowing ditches allow Reed Canary-grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), Brooklime (*Veronica beccabunga*), Yellow Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*) and Bog Stitchwort (*Stellaria alsine*) to colonise in places.

On sloping limestone pavement Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) scrub is the dominant vegetation, with Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and occasional Yew (*Taxus baccata*). The uncommon plant Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*) occurs in scrub woodland in the northern part of the site. A species-rich calcareous grassland occurs in mosaic with the limestone pavement.

The site is of conservation value for its range of calcareous wetland habitats, particularly for the presence of *Cladium* fen. The occurrence of limestone pavement adds greatly to the importance of the site.