



Site Name: Ballyogan Lough SAC

Site Code: 000019

Ballyogan Lough is a complex of limestone pavement, scrub woodland, lake and fen situated about 10 km east of Corrofin, Co. Clare.

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] *Cladium* Fens*

[8240] Limestone Pavement*

The site lies within a wedge shaped basin with low hills on both sides. It is oriented on a north-east/south-west axis. The south-west end is largely dominated by scrub and limestone pavement while the north-east is largely fen. A bog road divides this fen from Ballyogan Lough, which lies in the centre of the site.

The dominant vegetation around the lake margin is Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*), with large stands of the Great Fen-sedge (*Cladium mariscus*) nearby. Black Bog-rush (*Schoenus nigricans*) is abundant some distance from the water, together with Bog-myrtle (*Myrica gale*), Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*) and several plant species of note including Marsh Helleborine (*Epipactis palustris*), Dioecious Sedge (*Carex dioica*), Blunt-flowered Rush (*Juncus subnodulosus*) and Lesser Tussock-sedge (*Carex diandra*). Adjacent damp fields contain frequent Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*). Further away from the lake, on the west side of the bog road, this fen-type vegetation gives way to extensive, abandoned cutover bog. Although some transitional areas are marshy, drainage to parts of this area at the north-east end of the site has facilitated the spread of drier heath plants such as Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*).

The scrub and limestone pavement, which is situated in the southern part of the site, is dominated by Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). Other plants of note include Yew (*Taxus baccata*) and Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*), both of which are relatively rare on site. Small-leaved Cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster microphyllus*) is frequent on the pavement where it has become fully naturalised. The site holds an exceptional invertebrate assemblage including many of the Burren-restricted species of insect and invertebrate.

The main threats to the site are from agricultural improvement, including drainage of wetlands and scrub removal from the limestone pavement areas. The site is nevertheless of conservation value for its diverse range of habitats, and notably the presence of *Cladium* fen.