

Site Name: Ballintra SAC

Site Code: 000115

Ballintra Hill is situated 8 km south of Laghy, Co. Donegal. It is a low hill with almost bare limestone near the summit and scrub woodland on its sides. Areas of calcareous grassland also occur within 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):

[4030] Dry Heath [8240] Limestone Pavement*
--

The summit of the hill is covered with pulverized limestone and supports a sparse flora which includes Blue Moor-grass (*Sesleria albicans*), Common Milkwort (*Polygala vulgaris*), Fairy Flax (*Linum catharticum*), Common Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Burnet Rose (*Rosa pimpinellifolia*), Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Juniper (*Juniperus communis*) and Quaking-grass (*Briza media*).

On the areas of deeper soil, which are more peaty in nature, a heathy vegetation occurs with abundant Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Bell Heather (*Erica cinerea*), Mountain Everlasting (*Antennaria dioica*) and Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*).

Coppiced scrub covers much of the hill-side. The main species are Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). The ground flora is rich in Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Pignut (*Conopodium majus*) and Wood-sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*).

Common Rock-rose (*Helianthemum nummularium*) occurs within the site. This species occurs at only one location in Ireland, although it is widespread in Britain. It is listed in the Irish Red Data Book and is protected under the Flora (Protection) Order, 1999.

Grazing by sheep and cattle is widespread in the area. The peaty soils near the base of the hill are particularly badly affected by poaching.

This site is of national importance as it is the only known Irish locality for the Common Rock-rose. It is also one of the most northerly Irish outposts of typical limestone flora.