



Site Name: Meentygrannagh Bog SAC

Site Code: 000173

Meentygrannagh Bog is situated approximately 15 km south-west of Letterkenny in Co. Donegal. The site is located on a gently sloping hillside, stretching from the summits of Arbatt, Meenirroy and Altinierin Hills, eastwards to a small tributary of the Elatagh River. The site is underlain by quartzite and pelite bedrock.

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):

[7130] Blanket Bogs (Active)*
[7140] Transition Mires
[7230] Alkaline Fens
[1393] Slender Green Feather-moss (<i>Drepanocladus vernicosus</i>)

The areas of blanket bog are dominated by Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*), Common Cottongrass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*), Hare's-tail Cottongrass (*E. vaginatum*) and Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), with excellent hummocks and pool areas rich in bog mosses (*Sphagnum* spp.).

The blanket bog grades into an area of transition mire and fen communities. The transition mire is characterised by wet quaking areas dominated by sedge species, including *Carex limosa*, *C. lasiocarpa* and *C. rostrata*, as well as Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*) and a rich bryophyte cover (both bog mosses and other mosses such as *Scorpidium scorpioides*). Calcicole species, indicative of alkaline fen, present on the site include the sedge *Carex lepidocarpa*. The transition mire is notable for the occurrence of the moss *Drepanocladus vernicosus*, a species protected under the Flora (Protection) Order 1999 and listed on Annex II of the E.U. Habitats Directive.

The extremely rare moss, *Homalothecium nitens*, has also been recorded from this site, along with several other lower plant species of note, i.e. *Sphagnum imbricatum*, *S. fuscum*, *S. warnstorffii*, *S. teres* and *S. recurvum*, and the lichens *Peltigera membranacea* and *Cladonia glauca*.

A characteristic peatland fauna occurs, with Red Grouse, Irish Hare and Common Frog all breeding within the site.

The main land use within the site is sheep grazing, but the main threat is afforestation, with extensive areas adjacent to the site already planted. Part of the fen was drained in 1998 but reinstated by the owner in 1999 at the request of

Dúchas/NPWS. This site is interesting because it contains a diversity of bog habitats within a small area. The juxtaposition of domed valley bogs with fen is unusual in Donegal and indeed in blanket bog regions generally, while the western half of the site contains one of the best examples of highland saddle bogs in the county.