



Site Name: Barroughter Bog SAC

Site Code: 000231

Barroughter Bog is a relatively small raised bog, situated on the shores of Lough Derg in Co. Galway, a few kilometres east of Woodford, and bounded in the north by the Cappagh River. The bog has a good dome, which is slightly hollowed towards the eastern side. The north-eastern corner (cut off by an old drain and track) and a narrow area in the south-east are fairly dry due to drainage and burning.

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
[7150] Rhynchosporion Vegetation

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. The Rhynchosporion habitat occurs in wet depressions, pool edges and erosion channels where the vegetation includes White Beak-sedge (*Rhynchospora alba*) and/or Brown Beak-sedge (*R. fusca*), and at least some of the following associated species - Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*), sundews (*Drosera* spp.), Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*) and Carnation Sedge (*Carex panicea*).

Part of the central area of the peat dome contains active raised bog, with such species as Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Hare's-tail Cottongrass (*Eriophorum vaginatum*), Deergrass, Bog Asphodel and Carnation Sedge. Within wet, quaking areas of the active bog, Rhynchosporion is represented. This habitat tends to be dominated by White Beak-sedge, Common Cottongrass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*), Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*), sundews and a good cover of bog mosses, including *S. cuspidatum* and the relatively rare *S. pulchrum*. A small flushed area occurs in the centre and towards the edge of the quaking area. This flush adds diversity to the bog, with a few small Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*) trees, Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*), Crowberry (*Empetrum nigrum*) and Cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccos*) occurring in abundance, and a range of moss species.

Degraded raised bog is the dominant habitat on the uncut high bog surface at this site. It is generally associated with the more marginal areas of the high bog where drainage effects, due to peripheral peat-cutting, are most pronounced. These degraded areas are usually dominated by more robust plant species such as Heather, Common Cottongrass, Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*), Bog Asphodel, Carnation Sedge and Deergrass. Bog-rosemary (*Andromeda polifolia*) and *Sphagnum magellanicum*, both of which are good indicators of midland raised bogs, are frequent. The cover of *Sphagnum* moss is generally low and there are no well-developed hummocks present. It is thought that recent fire damage may be responsible for the low cover of *Sphagnum*.

The site also includes some wet grassland along the Cappagh River and an area of rocky grassland in the north.

A threat to the extent and quality of the central and most interesting habitat is present in the form of active "hopper" turf extraction around 90% of the bog's perimeter. This is especially serious along the south-west facing edge, where the quaking area lies quite close to the perimeter. Burning has caused some drying out of the bog surface. The area of outstanding habitat (i.e. the very wet, quaking area) in the centre of the bog could be extended if burning was prevented, especially towards the south-west.

Barraughter Bog is a raised bog of considerable conservation value. Given its relatively small size, the area of outstanding quaking habitat is remarkably large. Its proximity to the shores of Lough Derg, with its succession from open water through extensive reed beds and marginal scrub, to raised bog, adds to its importance. It is also the only raised bog on the shores of Lough Derg.