

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: BRACKLAGH BOG NHA

SITE CODE: 000235

Bracklagh Bog NHA is located approximately 5 km west of Ballymoe, in the townlands of Ballaghaugeag East and Bracklagh in County Galway. The site comprises a raised bog that includes both areas of high bog and cutover bog.

The site consists of one main lobe, flanked on the north and north-western side by a small river, and on the south and south-western side by a mineral ridge. Reclaimed agricultural fields make up the boundary at the eastern side. This bog is of particular interest because it contains a number of different types of flushed areas. There is a quaking area with pools in the south. A large area of coniferous forestry has recently been planted on the western half of the bog.

The high bog vegetation is a mixture of Western and Midland Raised Bog type, with species such as Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*), Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*), Carnation Sedge (*Carex panicea*) and the liverwort *Pleurozia purpurea*. Cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccos*) and Bog-rosemary (*Andromeda polifolia*) are found, although not in abundance. There is good cover of bog mosses, with *Sphagnum papillosum* and *S. subnitens* being very common. A number of flushed areas have been recorded on the high bog. These consisted of areas dominated by Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*), Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) and Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*). At the southern side, there is a large Bog-myrtle (*Myrica gale*) dominated area. This was associated with a hummock/hollow and pool system. The pools contain species such as the bog moss *S. magellanicum* and the Great Sundew (*Drosera anglica*). The hummocks consist mainly of *S. imbricatum* and *S. subnitens*.

Current landuse on the site consists of a large coniferous forestry plantation on the western half of the bog, areas of active peat-cutting at the east and north-east of the high bog and some areas of cutover bog which have been reclaimed for agriculture. Drainage associated with these activities is drying out the bog, and has resulted in loss of habitat and damage to the hydrological status of the site, and poses a continuing threat to its viability. The high bog surface was completely burned in the spring of 1985, but no evidence of other burning episodes is apparent.

Bracklagh Bog NHA is a site of considerable conservation significance comprising as it does a raised bog, a rare habitat in the E.U. and one that is becoming increasingly scarce and under threat in Ireland. Ireland has a high proportion of the total E.U. resource of raised bog (over 50%) and so has a special responsibility for its conservation at an international level.

14.11.2002