

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: CLOONCULLAUN BOG NHA

SITE CODE: 000245

Clooncullaun Bog NHA is situated approximately 6 km east of Glenamaddy in the townlands of Clooncullaun, Timacat and Shanbally, Co. Galway. The site comprises a raised bog that includes both areas of high bog and cutover bog. The site is bounded by streams to the west and the south-east.

The site consists of a small basin bog with a flat, wet surface which is quaking in places. Towards the north-east there is a complex of pools, hummocks and hollows and to the south-west and south-east there are two areas with small hummocks and algal pools. Three flushes with swallow holes occur on the bog. Cutover is found all around the site apart from the middle of the southern margin.

Much of the high bog has vegetation typical of a Western Raised Bog, with species including cottongrasses (*Eriophorum angustifolium* and *E. vaginatum*), Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*) and Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*). Western Raised Bog indicator species found on the bog include Carnation Sedge (*Carex panicea*), the liverwort *Pleurozia purpurea* and the mosses *Campylopus atrovirens* and *Racomitrium lanuginosum*. Midland Raised Bog indicator species also found on the bog include Bog-rosemary (*Andromeda polifolia*) and the bog moss *Sphagnum magellanicum*. Pools and hummocks occur in the wettest part of the bog to the north-east. The bog moss *Sphagnum cuspidatum* fills the pools while the hummocks are comprised of bog mosses, including the scarce *Sphagnum fuscum* and *S. imbricatum*. Algal, tear pools and low hummocks occur in the south-western and south-eastern lobes. While most of the pools and tear pools contain algae, some support the bog moss *Sphagnum cuspidatum* and Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*). *Sphagnum fuscum* has also been found here.

The flushes and associated swallow holes support Purple Moor-grass (*Molina caerulea*), Ling Heather, Field Wood-rush (*Luzula campestris*) and Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*). The flush nearest the central track has a subterranean stream.

The cutover supports a range of habitats including regenerating cutover, Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) scrub, humid grassland and areas of both old peat cutting and active peat cutting. The regenerating cutover supports the bog mosses *Sphagnum cuspidatum*, *S. papillosum* and *S. capillifolium*, rushes (*Juncus* spp.) and cottongrasses. Some regenerating cutover also supports Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*). There are extensive areas of humid grassland to the east and west, with Purple Moor-grass, Soft Rush and the moss *Polytrichum commune*. Gorse scrub occurs on old cutover to the west, while the eastern cutover region is grazed and has a high cover of bryophytes and a variety of sedge (*Carex* spp.) species.

Red Grouse, a species that is becoming increasingly rare in Ireland has been recorded on the site.

Current landuse on the site comprises active peat-cutting around the north, east and south-eastern margins of the site; areas of old peat-cutting occur to the west, south-east and east of the site. Areas of cutover have been reclaimed for agricultural purposes to the south, east and west of the site. Damaging activities associated with these landuses include drainage and burning of the high bog. These are all activities that have resulted in loss of habitat and damage to the hydrological status of the site, and pose a continuing threat to its viability.

Clooncullaun 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. This site supports a good diversity of raised bog microhabitats, including hummock/hollow complexes and pools, as well as a number of scarce plant species. 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.