

Site Name: Croaghill Turlough SAC

Site Code: 000255

Croaghill Turlough is situated just to the east of Coolcam in Co. Galway, close to the Dunmore/Ballymoe road. It is a wet turlough, parts of which stay flooded into July. The topography is dominated by glacial deposits, in that eskers and drift slopes surround the turlough, and morainic deposits occur within the basin, giving it an undulating floor. This means that the vegetation of the basin floor has a complex pattern. The wetness of the turlough has led to the accumulation of deep peat, and a 3 m depth is recorded.

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):

[3180] Turloughs*

Croaghill turlough is eutrophic, with much Fine-leaved Water-dropwort (*Oenanthe aquatica*), Amphibious Bistort (*Polygonum amphibium*) and Common Spike-rush (*Eleocharis palustris*). Towards the edges of open water, Lesser Marshwort (*Apium inundatum*) and Broad-leaved Pondweed (*Potamogeton natans*) are common. In places, this grades into a community with Jointed Rush (*Juncus articulatus*) and Marsh Speedwell (*Veronica scutellata*). The central area of raised ground within the basin supports Reed Canary-grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), Hairy Sedge (*Carex hirta*) and Yellow Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*). The latter species is relatively unusual in turloughs. Elsewhere, raised ground is colonised by Reed Canary -grass, Creeping Willow (*Salix repens*) and Yellow Loosestrife (*Lysimachia vulgaris*). The edges of the basin are mainly grassland.

Northern Yellow-cress (*Rorippa islandica*), a species listed in the Irish Red Data Book, has been recorded at Croaghill.

Fifteen pairs of breeding Black-headed Gulls have been recorded on the site, as well as possible breeding Snipe, Redshank and Lapwing. Flocks of 150 Lapwing and 50 Mallard have been recorded (in July).

The main basin is subject to very little grazing because of its wetness and soft terrain. Surrounding land is used for hay, pasture and oats. In general, the site is relatively undisturbed. Threats to the site would include drainage of surrounding lands or the release of polluting substances, e.g. silage effluent, into the system - at present, the site seems naturally eutrophic.

Croaghill is of conservation significance as an interesting and varied turlough with good development of vegetation, including characteristic but relatively uncommon species. Turloughs are important habitats that are listed with priority status on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive.