

## SITE SYNOPSIS

**SITE NAME: AGHNAMONA BOG NHA**

**SITE CODE: 000422**

Aghnamona Bog NHA is located 2 km east of Roosky, in the townlands of Cornagillagh, Drumard, Meelragh, Aghnamona, Aghnahunshin in Co. Leitrim and Clooncolligan, Co. Longford. The River Shannon lies to the west of the site. The site comprises a relatively large raised bog that includes both areas of high bog and cutover, and it forms part of a bog complex within this area. The site is bounded by agricultural land on all margins.

The site comprises a large flat raised bog, separated into four lobes by a railway line and the main Longford/Carrick-on-Shannon road. The fragmented nature of the high bog has led to the overall desiccation of this habitat, particularly to the eastern lobes. Cutover bog occurs around much of the larger western lobe. Regeneration has occurred on some areas of cutover around the high bog margins. A large flush runs along the centre of the main western lobe. An area of coniferous plantation is present on the high bog to the north. A modified natural channel flows from the south end of the bog into the River Shannon to the west.

Much of the high bog has vegetation typical of the Midland Raised Bog type, consisting of Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) and cottongrasses (*Eriophorum* spp.). Other species present include Bog-rosemary (*Andromeda polifolia*) and Cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccos*). In places the high bog topography forms wet flats and hollows. An extensive flush runs the full length of the larger western lobe. A number of Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*) trees occur in association with the flush. Bog moss (*Sphagnum* spp.) cover is generally good in this area and forms spongy carpets towards the south. Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*) dominates towards the southern end of the bog. Bog Myrtle (*Myrica gale*) also occurs here.

Current landuse on the site consists of peat-cutting along some of the margins of the western lobe. An area of old cutaway to the east has been reclaimed for pasture. Damaging activities associated with these landuses include drainage and burning. Fire damage was recorded in the 1980s but since then there has been good bog moss regeneration on 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.

Aghnamona 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. The site supports a good diversity of raised bog microhabitats including hummock/hollow complexes, and there are some pools present. 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.

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