Site Name: Brackloon Woods SAC

Site Code: 000471

This wood is situated approximately 4 km east of Croagh Patrick Mountain and 7 km south-west of Westport, Co. Mayo. The area is underlain by soils derived from schist and gneiss. Brackloon Wood is an Old Oak Wood. The Owenee River forms the eastern boundary of the site and a number of small streams run through the wood forming small patches of marshy ground.

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):

[91A0] Old Oak Woodlands

The wood is relatively species-rich with Sessile Oak (*Quercus petraea*), Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Wych Elm (*Ulmus glabra*), Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*) and Rusty Willow (*Salix cinerea* subsp. *oleifolia*) occurring. Some areas have been planted with Sitka Spruce (*Picea sitchensis*).

Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) form the shrub layer. The dominant herb layer species include Great Wood-rush (*Luzula sylvatica*), Hard Fern (*Blechnum spicant*) and Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*). Wetter areas contain Yellow Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*), Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), Water Horsetail (*Equisetum fluviatile*), Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*) and Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*). The Narrow-leaved Helleborine (*Cephalanthera longifolia*), an orchid of damp woods, has been recorded from the site. This species is protected under the Flora (Protection) Order, 1999. The bryophyte and lichen floras are well-developed.

Badger, a Red Data Book species, is known from the site.

Sheep grazing and the spread of Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*) pose the most serious threats to the value of site. Although this woodland has been fragmented by coniferous plantations, the basic structure persists and Brackloon Woods remain an area of considerable ecological importance.