

Site Name: Carrowkeel Turlough SAC

Site Code: 000475

Carrowkeel turlough lies between Ballinrobe and Claremorris, Co. Mayo, about 2 km from the Robe River. It is contained within a linear basin which is orientated north-east to south-west. There are no obvious signs of successful external drainage, though some surplus water may be taken away at the south-west corner. At the southern end of the turlough, which is generally deeper than the rest of the basin, there is a long-lasting lake (Poll Oilean na gCorr).

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*

For its size, Carrowkeel turlough has a high diversity of vegetation types. This is partly due to the presence of permanent water in at least part of the turlough basin. Consequently, the turlough offers an excellent series of communities which are linked to water depth and quality. The vegetation in the lake consists of a stand of Common Club-rush (*Scirpus lacustris*), with abundant Fine-leaved Water-dropwort (*Oenanthe aquatica*), Amphibious Bistort (*Polygonum amphibium*), Water Horsetail (*Equisetum fluviatile*) and the mosses *Drepanocladus revolvens* and *Calliergon giganteum*. Areas of open water have Thread-leaved Water-crowfoot (*Ranunculus trichophyllus*), Lesser Marshwort (*Apium inundatum*) and Broad-leaved Pondweed (*Potamogeton natans*).

At the north-east end of the turlough basin a small scraw includes Floating Sweet-grass (*Glyceria fluitans*), Water Horsetail, Bladder-sedge (*Carex vesicaria*), Fine-leaved Water-dropwort, Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*) and Greater Spearwort (*Ranunculus lingua*). There is also a distinct zone of Common Spike-rush (*Eleocharis palustris*), Unbranched Bur-reed (*Sparganium emersum*) and Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), on which both Water-plantain (*Alisma plantago-aquatica*) and Narrow-leaved Water-plantain (*A. lanceolatum*) grow. This vegetation type is generally rare in turloughs.

Also of note is the occurrence of the scarce Marsh Stitchwort (*Stellaria palustris*), which is found scattered throughout several different communities in the turlough.

There is low grazing pressure throughout most of the site, though some of the fields in the north-east are closely grazed by sheep.

The catchment is very small and therefore the turlough is relatively oligotrophic (nutrient-poor) in character, at least at its northern end. A more eutrophic (nutrient-rich) band occurs across the centre of the basin, perhaps linked to the presence of a farm at the north-east corner. Despite this possible enrichment, the range of vegetation types, the presence of some uncommon plant species and the relatively natural state of the turlough itself, makes this site of conservation interest.