

Site Name: Slieve Fyagh Bog SAC

Site Code: 000542

Slieve Fyagh Bog is located about 6 km north-east of Bangor in Co. Mayo. It is bounded on the north by the Glenamoy River, on the east and west by forestry plantations, and on the south by the Glencullin River. Slieve Fyagh itself is a plateau of shales and sandstone rocks, reaching an elevation of approximately 300 m.

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):

[7130] Blanket Bogs (Active)*

The plateau supports mountain blanket bog vegetation, unusual for this part of Mayo, where most of the mountains are covered by heath or acid-grassland vegetation. The flatter parts of the plateau have numerous lakes and blanket bog pools, inter-connected by quaking areas dominated by bog mosses (*Sphagnum* spp.). The largest lake, Lough Naguroge, is colonised by Bottle Sedge (*Carex rostrata*) and Water Lobelia (*Lobelia dortmanna*). The scarce orchid, Lesser Twayblade (*Listera cordata*), occurs along its rocky shores.

Several streams descend from the plateau to the lower-lying ground below. These provide suitable habitat for aquatic lichen and moss species, such as *Dermatocarpon fluviatile* and *Fontinalis squamosa*. The stream banks are grassy, with species such as Sweet Vernal-grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*) and Great Wood-rush (*Luzula sylvatica*). The mosses *Campylium stellatum* and *Philonotis fontana* occur where flushes seep from mineral soils.

Extensive areas of lowland blanket bog occur on the sloping terrain below the plateau, typified by the occurrence of Black Bog-rush (*Schoenus nigricans*), Common Cottongrass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*), Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*), Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*), White Beak-sedge, (*Rhynchospora alba*) and Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*). Pool systems occur below the northern slopes of Slieve Fyagh, the best examples being found at Bellagelly Bog. The pools support aquatic plants such as Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*), Pipewort (*Eriocaulon aquaticum*) and Lesser Bladderwort (*Utricularia minor*).

Further downslope, particularly in the vicinity of farmland, the blanket bog is heavily grazed by sheep, and peripheral areas are cut for turf. Serious peat erosion is occurring over much of the low-lying areas, where the peat is criss-crossed by erosion channels.

Slieve Fyagh Bog is important for the occurrence of mountain blanket bog, a habitat that is uncommon in this region. The extensive lowland blanket bog that surrounds the plateau is damaged and under threat from over-grazing and peat erosion.