

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: CORNAVEAGH BOG NHA

SITE CODE: 000603

Cornaveagh Bog NHA is located approximately 4 km north-north-east of Frenchpark, mainly in the townlands of Cornaveagh, Tonroe (also known as Feenagh) and Finisclin in Co. Roscommon. The site comprises a raised bog that includes both areas of high bog and cutover bog. The site is bounded in the south by the road between Breedoge and Ballybaun crossroads.

This site is the remnant of a larger bog that has now been cutover and reclaimed for agriculture. The site was formerly linked with Bella Bridge Bog NHA (591) but is now separated by an area of cutover. A mineral ridge is found in the east of the site. The hummocks on the bog are quite small as are the pools. A hollow in the east side of the bog contains a flush. Cutover is found mostly in the northern half of the site.

Much of the high bog has vegetation typical of a North-Western Raised bog, consisting of Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), cottongrass (*Eriophorum* sp.), Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*), Carnation Sedge (*Carex panicea*), and the moss *Racomitrium lanuginosum*. There is good bog moss (*Sphagnum* spp.) cover on the bog. The hummock-forming bog mosses *Sphagnum capillifolium* and *S. papillosum* have been recorded on the site as have the relatively scarce *S. imbricatum* and *S. fuscum*. Only small pools are still present on the bog and they contain the aquatic bog moss *Sphagnum cuspidatum* and Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*). There is a flush containing Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*) and Bog-myrtle (*Myrica gale*) in a hollow on the east side of the bog. Bog-myrtle is also found scattered throughout the rest of the bog. A section of old cutover in the south of the site has a dense area of scrub.

Current landuses on the site include peat-cutting and agriculture. Mechanised peat-cutting is taking place mostly in the east and south-west of the site. Areas of cutover all around the bog have been reclaimed for agriculture but there are only a few fields of improved grassland within the site. Damaging activities associated with these landuses include drainage throughout the site and burning of the high bog. All these activities have resulted in the loss of habitat and damage to the hydrological status of the site, and pose a continuing threat to its viability.

Cornaveagh 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 hummocks, pools and a flush. The site is also at the northern extreme for a western raised bog. 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.

14.11.2002