SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: DERRYCANAN BOG NHA

SITE CODE: 000605

Derrycanan Bog NHA is located 8 km north-east of Roscommon town, in the townlands of Derrycanan, Cloonbony, Cashelmeehan and Tuam, County Roscommon. The site comprises a relatively large raised bog that includes both areas of high bog and cutover bog. The northern, western and eastern boundaries are bounded by trackways and those to the south by a stream.

The raised bog habitat consists of a large dome of high bog divided into three sections by a trackway and a road. The high bog is flat with slopes associated with central drains and along the bog margins. The fragmented nature of the high bog has led to the overall desiccation of this habitat. Tear pools are present on the high bog and there is a large flush, possibly due to secondary wetting, in the north-east of the site. A smaller flush occurs in the southern section with associated swallow holes. Cutover bog occurs around all the margins of the high bog and there is regenerating cutover present either side of the central trackway.

Much of the high bog has vegetation typical of the Midland Raised Bog type, consisting of Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), cottongrass (*Eriophorum* spp.) and Carnation Sedge (*Carex panicea*). Bog mosses (*Sphagnum* spp.) form lawns, with *S. capillifolium, S. papillosum* and *S. magellanicum* occurring commonly. Other species present on the high bog include White Beak-sedge (*Rhynchospora alba*), Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*) and Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*). The high bog supports the relatively scarce hummock-forming bog mosses *Sphagnum fuscum* and *S. imbricatum.* Bog-rosemary (*Andromeda polifolia*) and Cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccos*) are also found on the site. Tear pools in the southern part of the high bog are in-filling with bog mosses such as *Sphagnum papillosum*, along with Common Cottongrass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*), Great Sundew (*Drosera anglica*) and Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*). Lichen cover is good on the high bog with *Cladonia portentosa* being particularly abundant. The large northern flush is dominated by Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*) along with Bog Asphodel and Common Cottongrass and an abundance of bog mosses and the moss *Polytrichum commune*. A series of swallow-holes occur in association with the small flush in the southern section, and here a lush growth of Ling Heather, Common Cottongrass, bog mosses and lichens is found.

There is extensive cutover to the east which is dominated by Purple Moor-grass and Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*) scrub. Old cutover to the north supports birch scrub Ling Heather and Purple Moor-grass, and is separated from agricultural land by a small birch wood. To the south-west small areas of old cutover dominated by Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) occur. The cutaway in the centre of the bog is actively regenerating and here bog mosses, Common Cottongrass, White Beak-sedge and Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*) occur.

Red Grouse, a species that is becoming increasingly rare in Ireland, has been recorded on the site.

Current landuse on the site consists of peat-cutting and agriculture, and coniferous forestry occurs to the south-east of the site. Damaging activities associated with these landuses include drainage and burning. The bog has been extensively drained, mainly in association with trackways, and while the site has been damaged by fire the vegetation has recovered well. There has been extensive reclamation to agriculture grassland in the east. 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.

Derrycanan Bog NHA is a site of considerable conservation significance, comprising as it does 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, flushes and regenerating cutover. 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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