

Site Name: Lisduff Turlough SAC

Site Code: 000609

Lisduff Turlough is located just south of Athleague in Co. Roscommon, about 3 km from the River Suck. It lies in a shallow basin among low hills of glacial drift, with occasional rock outcrops. There is a semi-permanent over-ground inflow from the north-west arm of the turlough and the site is relatively wet. Some pools persist into the summer months and have a good development of fen peat. The ground water is highly calcareous and there is precipitation of marl.

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*

The vegetation of Lisduff turlough reflects the oligotrophic and strongly calcareous groundwater chemistry of the area. It is dominated by sedges (*Carex* spp.), except in the hollows that occur in a line on the eastern edge, where Amphibious Bistort (*Polygonum amphibium*) is found. The central pools contain Shoreweed (*Littorella uniflora*), Common Sedge (*Carex nigra*), Bulbous Rush (*Juncus bulbosus*) and the moss, *Scorpidium scorpioides*, and at their edges give way to Common Sedge, Carnation Sedge (*Carex panicea*) and Jointed Rush (*Juncus articulatus*), with some Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*) and Common Spike-rush (*Eleocharis palustris*). At the highest edges of the turlough, the vegetation grades to sedge heath, with scattered clumps of Black Bog-rush (*Schoenus nigricans*), Heath-grass (*Danthonia decumbens*) and Sea Plantain (*Plantago maritima*). Grassland dominated by Tall Fescue (*Festuca arundinacea*) is present at the southern end and the north-west corner, while patches of calcareous grassland occur around outcropping rock in the north-east.

The site is of ornithological importance for its waders and wintering wildfowl: Wigeon (310), Teal (97), Mallard (67), Pintail (5), Pochard (119), Golden Plover (143), Lapwing (250) and Curlew (70). The above figures are the average of 5 counts made over 3 seasons, 1984/85-1986/87. Bewick's Swan and Snipe also occur regularly at the site. Snipe, Redshank (1 pair) and Dunlin (1-5 pairs) nest at the site. Dunlin, Pintail, Pochard and Golden Plover are listed in the Red Data Book, the latter species and Bewick's Swan also on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive.

The site is little-modified by grazing or drainage, and there is little human influence on the site at present.

Lisduff Turlough has a good zonation of oligotrophic vegetation types, including some communities that are rare in turloughs. It is of high ecological value as one of the few turloughs in near-pristine condition. The birdlife of the site adds significantly to its importance.