



Site Name: Mullygollan Turlough SAC

Site Code: 000612

Mullygollan Turlough is located about halfway between Castleplunket and Tulsk in Co. Roscommon. It is in a noticeable basin, bordered by a rock outcrop to the north, and sloping, drift-covered fields to the south. A semi-permanent stream enters from the west and flows towards ponds and a swallow hole in rock. The floor of the turlough retains a high water table, with water remaining in the ditches in summer, and there is significant peat accumulation. Fen vegetation covers this peat.

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 contrast of wet and dry areas in this turlough gives good diversity in the vegetation, which consists of peaty communities in the centre, with more typical turlough vegetation around the edges. The former contains mainly sedges (including Bladder-sedge, *Carex vesicaria*, Bottle Sedge, *C. rostrata* and Water Sedge, *C. aquatilis*), with scattered Amphibious Bistort (*Polygonum amphibium*), Water Horsetail (*Equisetum fluviatile*) and cinquefoil species (*Potentilla* spp.), amongst others. This area gives way to vegetation with bedstraws (*Galium* spp.), Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*) and sedges. The pool areas generally support pondweeds (*Potamogeton* spp.) and other aquatic species.

Three bird species listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive winter at the site: Bewick's Swan, Whooper Swan and Golden Plover. The wetness of the ground vegetation favours breeding of waders; Redshank, Curlew, Lapwing and Snipe all nest at the site. The turlough also appears to provide good habitat for duck, particularly Wigeon. The swans and dabbling ducks feed on the fen vegetation from shallow water and relatively large numbers occur for such a small site.

Cattle are widespread and there is evidence of some damage to the drier vegetation, leading to the invasion of docks (*Rumex* spp.). There is also heavy fertilizer use in adjacent fields to the north-east of the turlough.

Mullygollan is an important turlough because of its semi-natural condition, and its high degree of physical and vegetation diversity. The occurrence of the scarce Water Sedge and Lesser Water-parsnip (*Berula erecta*), the former in its only known turlough site, are of interest. This, coupled with its birdlife, contribute to its overall importance.