

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: KILLEEN BOG NHA

SITE CODE: 000648

Killeen Bog NHA is situated approximately 4 km south-west of Birr, Co. Offaly, in the townlands of Corranduff, Clonmona, Ballagh, Tinlough, Derrinlieragh and Ballinduff in Co. Tipperary. The site comprises a raised bog that includes both areas of high bog and cutover bog. The site is surrounded by roads to the west and north and a mineral ridge to the east.

The site consists of a small basin bog with a flat wet surface that is quaking in places. Towards the north-eastern end there is a large complex of pools and hollows. Cutover occurs all around the site apart from in the south.

Much of the high bog has vegetation typical of a Midland Raised Bog, with such species as cottongrass (*Eriophorum angustifolium* and *E. vaginatum*), Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*), White Beak-sedge (*Rhynchospora alba*), Round-leaved Sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*) and Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*). Midland Raised Bog indicator species found on the bog include Bog-rosemary (*Andromeda polifolia*), Cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccos*) and the bog moss *Sphagnum magellanicum*. Toward the north-eastern end of the bog there is a large area of hummocks and pools. Some pools are filled with the bog moss *Sphagnum cuspidatum* but most have algae, Common Cottongrass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*) and Brown Beak-sedge (*Rhynchospora fusca*). Intervening hummocks have the bog mosses *Sphagnum imbricatum* and *S. capillifolium*. Other bog mosses found on the bog include *Sphagnum fuscum*, *S. subnitens* and *S. papillosum*. Towards the south-west, the bog is dominated by Carnation Sedge (*Carex panicea*), Bog Asphodel, Ling Heather, Deergrass, Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*) and the bog moss *Sphagnum tenellum*. The east of the site is bounded by a small area of birch woodland, that extends onto the mineral ridge.

Current landuse on the site consists of industrial peat-cutting around the north, east and south-east of the site with old peat-cuttings to the west and north-west. Areas of cutover to the south have been reclaimed for agricultural purposes. Damaging activities associated with these landuses include drainage and burning of the high bog. 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.

Killeen 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 hummock/hollow complexes and pools, as well as a number of scarce plant species. 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.