

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: CLONCROW BOG (NEW FOREST) NHA

SITE CODE: 000677

Cloncrow Bog (New Forest) NHA is situated approximately 1 km west of Tyrellspass, in the townlands of Cloncrow and Tyrellspass in Co. Westmeath. The site comprises a raised bog that includes both areas of high bog and cutover bog.

The site consists of a raised bog which has developed in a basin. The bog has good hummock/hollow microtopography, pools, quaking areas, a swallow hole, a small flush and forestry on high bog. The cutover supports humid grassland, improved grassland, small areas of Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*) woodland and scrub, and forestry.

Much of the high bog has vegetation typical of a Midlands Raised Bog and supports such species as Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Common Cottongrass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*), White Beak-sedge (*Rhynchospora alba*), Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*) and a range of bog mosses including *Sphagnum imbricatum*, *S. pulchrum*, *S. fuscum* and *S. cuspidatum*. Midland Raised Bog indicator species include Bog-rosemary (*Andromeda polifolia*) and Cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccos*).

The northern half of the bog is firm but wet and with a hummock/hollow microtopography, while in the southern and eastern sections the bog is wetter and spongy with good hummock/hollow microtopography, pools, inter-connecting pools, quaking areas and a flush. The pools and channels are filled with the aquatic bog moss *Sphagnum cuspidatum*, White Beak-sedge, Common Cottongrass and Bog Asphodel. The hummocks are composed of the bog mosses *Sphagnum fuscum*, *S. imbricatum*, *S. papillosum* and *S. capillifolium*. The tops of the hummocks support Ling Heather, Common Cottongrass, the moss *Hypnum jutlandicum* and lichens (*Cladonia* spp.) The bog moss *Sphagnum pulchrum* has been recorded in the far east of the site.

A small flush dominated by Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*) occurs in the middle of the south-eastern section of the bog. It supports a range of mosses including the bog mosses *Sphagnum fimbriatum*, *S. squarrosum* and *S. palustre*. A ridge on the high bog has Scot's Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*). The south-western section of the high bog has been afforested with Lodgepole Pine (*Pinus contorta*).

The cutover has a range of habitats including Downy Birch woodland, birch and Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) scrub, humid grassland, improved grassland, forestry and abandoned cutover. There are also small patches of mineral soil with grassland and forestry.

Current landuses on the site comprise active peat-cutting to the east of the high bog margin and afforestation on both the high bog and the cutover. Areas of cutover have been reclaimed for agricultural purposes around the site. The grassland is used for grazing. 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.

Cloncrow Bog (New Forest) 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 pools, quaking areas, hummock/hollow complexes, a swallow hole and a small flush, 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.