

**Site Name: Carriggower Bog SAC**

**Site Code: 000716**

Carriggower Bog is situated on Calary plateau at the eastern edge of the Wicklow Mountains. The site is an area of wet bog and poor fen, flanked by the Vartry River on the south-western side.

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):

[7140] Transition Mires
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The bog was exploited for peat extraction until 100 years ago and the peat cuttings are now flooded. The remaining bog vegetation is characterised by bog moss (*Sphagnum* spp.) hummocks. Several species of *Sphagnum* are found including *S. recurvum*. On top of the hummocks Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) and Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*) are dominant. Between the hummocks, in the wet areas, Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*), Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*) and Common Cottongrass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*) are common, while Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*) is locally abundant.

Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*) and willow (*Salix* spp.) dominate an area of scrub at the centre of the site.

Very wet areas of transition mire occur on the south-western side of the site. The whole area is quaking and is characterised by a mosaic of sedges, grasses and rushes. Bottle Sedge (*Carex rostrata*) is the most abundant sedge, but others include White Sedge (*Carex curta*), Star Sedge (*Carex echinata*) and Carnation Sedge (*Carex panicea*). Purple Moor-grass and Sharp-flowered Rush (*Juncus acutiflorus*) are also present.

Towards the northern side of the site there are rock outcrops of quartzite which form low knolls. This area is partly covered by heath vegetation, dominated by Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), Bell Heather (*Erica cinerea*) and Heather, all of which are growing over a grassy sward grazed by sheep. The main grasses are Sweet Vernal-grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*), Creeping Soft-grass (*Holcus mollis*) and bent grasses (*Agrostis* spp.)

The mosaic of transition bog habitats supports a wide range of poor fen/bogland invertebrates, including a suite of wetland species of international importance (most within the Order Diptera).

Carriggower Bog is a notable site for wintering Snipe (117 – mean winter count 1996/97 to 2000/01) and Jack Snipe (16 – mean winter count 1996/97 to 2000/01). These numbers are probably of national importance and the site has consistently held the highest national count for Jack Snipe in recent years. The very wet bog is prime habitat for both of these species.

This site is of conservation importance because it shows a good transition between fen and bog vegetation (with the fen being colonised by characteristic bog species). Transition mire, which is present at the site, is listed in Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. The area holds a rich and varied flora, and it provides a habitat for some rare invertebrates. Carriggower Bog is the last remaining site in Wicklow from which some of these invertebrates are recorded. It also has ornithological interest, being an important site for Jack Snipe.