



Site Name: Kilduff, Devilsbit Mountain SAC

Site Code: 000934

This upland site is situated approximately 6 km north-west of Templemore in Co. Tipperary. It comprises the summit of Devilsbit Mountain and much of the eastern side of the ridge which extends northwards to Kilduff Mountain. Most of the site lies above 250 m and the highest point is 480 m. Devilsbit Mountain is composed of Silurian grits.

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):

[4030] Dry Heath [6230] Species-rich <i>Nardus</i> Grassland*

The main habitats found within the site are upland grassland, heath and woodland. Heath dominates the upper slopes and the summit of Devilsbit Mountain, and the site contains small areas of good quality dry heath.

Upland acid grassland covers extensive areas, and is relatively herb-rich. There is a diversity of vegetation communities found, as well as plant species. Populations of the rare Small-white Orchid (*Pseudorchis albida*), a species which is protected under the Flora (Protection) Order, 1999, occur in such areas of unimproved grassland. Associated species include Sheep's-fescue (*Festuca ovina*), Great Wood-rush (*Luzula sylvatica*), Devil's-bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*) and Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*).

The central wooded area is a relic of former planting. Small groves of mature Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and oak (*Quercus* sp.) trees persist on the higher slopes. Naturally-regenerating Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) woodland with willow (*Salix* spp.) dominates a wet area traversed by streams near the eastern boundary of the site. Elsewhere on the site, woodland is mixed and comprises Beech, Alder, Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*).

Peregrine, a species listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive, breeds within the site.

The site is heavily grazed by cattle and sheep. Agricultural improvement and afforestation are the main threats, particularly to those areas of unimproved grassland found within the site.

The site is of conservation importance due to the presence of two habitats listed in Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive, dry heath and species-rich *Nardus* grassland, the latter being of priority status. The presence of the rare and protected Small-white Orchid adds significantly to the value of the site.