

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: CORVEEN BOG NHA

SITE CODE: 001108

Corveen Bog NHA is an upland blanket bog located on the north-facing slopes of Tievalehid Mountain, 6 km west of Gortahork and 7 km north-east of Bunbeg in the Gweedore region of Co. Donegal. The site is situated in the townlands of Corveen, Glashagh, Magheroarty, Ardsmore Mountain, Ardsbeg and Derryconnor. The site lies at altitudes between 120 m and 430 m and is exposed to the Atlantic Ocean on its western side. Several north-south trending ridges, separated by small basins and valleys and containing a number of lakes, occur on the site. The bedrock of the site consists of granodiorite, a base-rich granite.

The plateau area of the bog is relatively dry and dominated by Black Bog-rush (*Schoenus nigricans*), Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*), Hare's-tail Cottongrass (*Eriophorum vaginatum*) and Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*), with frequent moss (*Campylopus atrovirens* and *C. brevipilus*) in the hollows. Several, well-developed pool systems occur. The pools are steep-sided and narrow and are colonised by bog mosses (*Sphagnum cuspidatum* and *S. auriculatum* var. *auriculatum*), Lesser Bladderwort (*Utricularia minor*), Common Cottongrass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*) and Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*). Inter-pool areas support hummock/hollow communities of bog mosses (*Sphagnum capillifolium*, *S. papillosum*, and *S. subnitens*), moss (*Racomitrium lanuginosum*), Greater Sundew (*Drosera anglica*), Round-leaved Sundew (*D. rotundifolia*) and Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*). Areas of very good bog moss cover feature large hummocks (*Sphagnum capillifolium*, *S. papillosum*, *S. magellanicum*) and channels containing *Sphagnum auriculatum* var. *auriculatum* and *S. auriculatum* var. *inundatum*. Flowering plant species found here include Bog Pimpernel (*Anagallis tenella*), Heath Bedstraw (*Galium saxatile*), Heath Milkwort (*Polygala serpyllifolia*) and Marsh Violet (*Viola palustris*). The dwarf shrub Bog-myrtle (*Myrica gale*), indicative of flushing, also occurs here. Long-stalked Yellow-sedge (*Carex lepidocarpa*) is also recorded.

Excellent wet heath habitat occurs on the steep slopes of Tievalehid Hill. Several Irish Red Data Book species, including Merlin, Golden Plover, Red Grouse and Irish Hare, are found within the site. Snipe is also reported.

The main landuse within the site is sheep grazing. Machine cutting of peat also occurs, with some hand cutting by sleán on the margin. There are many drainage channels associated with the turbary plots that may affect the water levels of the bog within the site. Lough Lagha is used for water abstraction for the Gweedore Area under a Group Water Scheme. Shooting is reported to occur on the site and some dumping occurs locally around the site margins.

Corveen Bog NHA is a site of considerable conservation significance. It contains a good example of an upland blanket bog with a considerable diversity of flora and fauna and well-developed pool and hummock systems. It is the only reasonably intact area of blanket bog remaining in the Gweedore district. Blanket bog habitat is a globally scarce resource. It is largely confined to coastal regions at temperate latitudes with cool, wet, oceanic climates. North-west Europe contains some of the best-developed areas of blanket bog in the world. The most extensive areas are found in Ireland and Britain. Upland blanket bogs, due to their exposure to severe climatic conditions at high elevations, are particularly vulnerable to erosion by human activities and extensive areas are currently undergoing active erosion due mainly to overgrazing. The current area of intact upland blanket bog in Ireland represents only a fraction of the original resource, due to the combined impacts of afforestation and overgrazing, and intact examples are therefore extremely valuable for nature conservation. Their long-term survival requires sensitive management. The presence of Long-stalked Yellow-sedge at this site is of note as it is of restricted occurrence in county Donegal. The lichen (*Cladonia digitata*) was recorded on Corveen in 1990 and was then a new record for this species for East Donegal. The site provides suitable habitat for Merlin, Red Grouse, Golden Plover, Snipe, Irish Hare and deer, all of which increase the conservation value of the site.

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