

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: CAPIRA/DERREW BOG NHA

SITE CODE: 001240

Capira/Derrew Bog NHA is located 5 km north of Portumna, in the townlands of Capira, Derrew, Gortrea (Fairfield), Kilmalinoge, Corr and Oldstreet in Co. Galway. The site comprises a raised bog that includes both areas of high bog and cutover bog.

This site is the remnant of a larger bog that has now been cutover and reclaimed for agriculture. The site is in close proximity to Ardraigue Bog NHA (1224) and Meeneen Bog NHA (310). Although this bog only has algal pools it is wet and quaking in places with hummocks throughout the high bog. There are vegetated mounds found in the centre and north of the high bog. Cutover is found all around the high bog and the south of the site is dominated by deciduous forestry with dry woodland on an esker ridge in the extreme south.

Much of the high bog has vegetation typical of a Midland Raised Bog, consisting of Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Cottongrass (*Eriophorum* sp.), Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*), Bog-rosemary (*Andromeda polifolia*) and Cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccos*). The vegetation on the bog is uniform and dominated by Ling Heather and Carnation Sedge (*Carex panicea*) with Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*), Deergrass and White Beak-sedge (*Rhynchospora alba*). There are large mounds on the high bog, which are visible on the aerial photographs that are dominated by Ling Heather and Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*). Some smaller mounds also occur with Bog-myrtle (*Myrica gale*), Ling Heather and lichens (*Cladonia* sp.). The bog surface is wet and quaking in the centre and has good bog moss cover throughout. Hummocks of the bog mosses *Sphagnum capillifolium* and *S. papillosum* are common and *S. magellanicum* is also frequent, the hummock forming bog moss *S. imbricatum* was less common as was *S. subnitens*. Many hollows contain the aquatic bog moss *S. cuspidatum* and Great Sundew (*Drosera anglica*) and Round-leaved Sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*) have been recorded on the bog. *Sphagnum* hummocks that are drying out and are often dominated by Ling Heather are common in the south of the site and the one *S. fuscum* hummock was recorded in this area. In this region of the bog there are algal hollows and lawns of Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*), also indicating that the bog is drying out. An old drain on the north-west margin of the high bog is in-filled with the bog mosses *Sphagnum cuspidatum* and *S. magellanicum* with Cottongrasses and Sundew species. In the south of the site Birch (*Betula* sp.) is encroaching onto the high bog and wet woodland occurs on cutover between the high bog and an esker ridge. Dry woodland with Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Oak (*Quercus* sp.) occurs on the esker ridge in the extreme south of the site.

Current landuses on the site include peat-cutting and agriculture. Active peat-cutting is taking place all along the eastern and western margins of the high bog. Areas of cutover all around the site have been reclaimed for agriculture, but there are only a

few fields of improved grassland within the site. Damaging activities associated with these landuses include drainage throughout the site and burning of the high bog. All these activities have resulted in the loss of habitat, damage to the hydrological status of the site, and pose a continuing threat to its viability.

Capira/Derrew 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. This site supports a good diversity of raised bog microhabitats, including hummocks. 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.