



Site Name: Carrownagappul Bog SAC

Site Code: 001242

Carrownagappul Bog is a large raised bog situated about 3 km north of Mount Bellew, in east Co. Galway. Numerous bog roads, tracks and drains extend into the centre of the site. Peat extraction occurs frequently along the margins of the site and along the bog roads.

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):

[7110] Raised Bog (Active)*
[7120] Degraded Raised Bog
[7150] Rhynchosporion Vegetation

Active raised bog comprises areas of high bog that are wet and actively peat-forming, where the percentage cover of bog mosses (*Sphagnum* spp.) is high, and where some or all of the following features occur: hummocks, pools, wet flats, *Sphagnum* lawns, flushes and soaks. Degraded raised bog corresponds to those areas of high bog whose hydrology has been adversely affected by peat cutting, drainage and other land use activities, but which are capable of regeneration. The Rhynchosporion habitat occurs in wet depressions, pool edges and erosion channels where the vegetation includes White Beak-sedge (*Rhynchospora alba*) and/or Brown Beak-sedge (*R. fusca*), and at least some of the following associated species, Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*), sundews (*Drosera* spp.), Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*) and Carnation Sedge (*Carex panicea*).

There is a large area of uncut high bog at this site, though much of this is classified as degraded raised bog largely because it is affected by peripheral drainage. The degraded surface is relatively species poor, with Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Bog Asphodel and Carnation Sedge tending to dominate. Other frequent vascular plants include Hare's-tail Cottongrass (*Eriophorum vaginatum*), Deergrass and Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*). The *Sphagnum* cover in degraded raised bog areas is generally low, typically covering less than 30% ground cover. In these drier bog conditions the main *Sphagnum* tends to be *S. capillifolium*, a species which is tolerant of drier conditions. The hypnoid moss *Hypnum cupressiforme* and the lichen *Cladonia portentosa* also tend to be more frequent in areas of degraded bog.

There is still, however, a substantial area of active raised bog present at Carrownagappul, and it is notably wet with quaking areas. Here, the best examples of Rhynchosporion vegetation are found amongst the wet flats and numerous pools.

This vegetation is typified by the aquatic moss *Sphagnum cuspidatum*, as well as *S. auriculatum*, Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*), Great Sundew (*D. anglica*), White Beak-sedge and Common Cottongrass (*E. angustifolium*).

The site contains a number of different kinds of flushes, including an excellent example of a wooded swallow-hole flush system. A small area of permanent open water has an abundance of stoneworts.

Red Grouse, a scarce and declining species in Ireland, is found on the site. Hen Harrier, a species listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive, visits the site on occasion, mostly in winter.

Carrownagappul Bog contains a relatively large area of good quality active raised bog. This habitat is listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive as being rare in Europe and it is one for which Ireland has a special responsibility. It is listed with priority status in the Habitats Directive. This site also contains good examples of degraded raised bog and Rhynchosporion vegetation.