

Site Name: Cregduff Lough SAC

Site Code: 001251

Cregduff Lough is a small coastal lake located 1 km south-west of Roundstone village in Co. Galway. The lake occupies a hollow in rocky, heath-covered, undulating terrain. The bottom of the lake is unconsolidated muddy material and about 60% of the water surface is covered by a scraw of reedswamp vegetation (i.e. it is floating). Encroachment by vegetation has progressed to such a level that there are virtually no areas of open water remaining in the northern half of the lake.

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 [1833] Slender Naiad (<i>Najas flexilis</i>)

At Cregduff Lough there are a variety of vegetation types. Close to the open water there is reedswamp vegetation dominated by Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*), Common Club-rush (*Scirpus lacustris*) and Branched Bur-reed (*Sparganium erectum*). In the northern part of the lake there is an extensive scraw system with Slender Sedge (*Carex lasiocarpa*), Bottle Sedge (*Carex rostrata*), Common Reed and Common Club-rush. Areas of open water support a variety of submerged aquatic plants, the most commonly occurring being Alternate Water-milfoil (*Myriophyllum alterniflorum*) and Various-leaved Pondweed (*Potamogeton gramineus*).

The site contains two Red Data Book plant species that are also legally protected under the Flora (Protection) Order, 1999 - Slender Naiad (*Najas flexilis*) and Slender Cottongrass (*Eriophorum gracile*). Slender Naiad, a submerged aquatic species, is also listed on Annex II of the E.U. Habitats Directive. Slender Cottongrass occurs commonly on the site, especially in the northern half of the lake, and the site holds one of the largest Irish populations of this species.

Surrounding the lake is a large area of species-rich coastal heath that is dominated by Western Gorse (*Ulex gallii*), and with species such as Bell Heather (*Erica cinerea*), St. Dabeoc's Heath (*Daboecia cantabrica*) and Green-ribbed Sedge (*Carex binerovis*) occurring commonly.

Cregduff Lough is an excellent example of an infilling lake, and one that supports a good diversity of vegetation types ranging from open water communities, to quaking transition mire, to species-rich freshwater marsh vegetation. The site is of major conservation significance because of the presence of habitats and species listed in the

E.U. Habitats Directive. The populations of Slender Naiad and Slender Cottongrass add considerably to the value of the site. Additionally, the surrounding area of coastal heath is a fine example of this habitat type.