

Site Name: Kiltiernan Turlough SAC

Site Code: 001285

Kiltiernan Turlough lies in a linear depression running south-westwards from the main Galway-Limerick road, north-west of Ardrahan in Co. Galway. It has a flattish basin which lies approximately 2 m below road level, and includes about eight further depressions which are joined in times of high water. The site includes a low ridge on the south-eastern side. Towards the west the topography becomes flatter and the basin breaks into separate hollows.

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):

[3180] Turloughs*

This site comprises a relatively dry turlough with a limited, though regular, flood in winter. The vegetation is mostly species-poor grassland dominated by White Clover (*Trifolium repens*), Silverweed (*Potentilla anserina*) and Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), with some areas of species-rich grassland found in the western half. Beside the road, the rocky outcrops support limestone grassland and there are narrow fringes of scrub along each side of the basin. The scrub is predominantly of Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), but some Buckthorn (*Rhamnus catharticus*) and Alder Buckthorn (*Frangula alnus*), a rare Red Data Book species, also occur.

The grassland occurring in the main depressions of this site have been modified by trampling and over-grazing. Here the main species found are Northern Bedstraw (*Galium boreale*) and Creeping Cinquefoil (*Potentilla reptans*), which grow in clumps with much Silverweed and Greater Plantain (*Plantago major*). Hollows in this vegetation contain Common Sedge (*Carex nigra*) and Amphibious Bistort (*Polygonum amphibium*). In the less intensified eastern section of the site the Red Data Book species Fen Violet (*Viola persicifolia*) occurs.

Lapwing, Pochard, Teal and Wigeon have been recorded at the site, and other bird species may visit from the nearby Tullaghnafrankagh Lough.

Land use on the site comprises grazing, particularly in the eastern half, with some areas of tillage found in the west.

Kiltiernan Turlough is an example of a partly modified, relatively dry turlough, without any accumulation of peat. It includes a variety of typical dry turlough vegetation types and is notable for the presence of the rare plant species, Alder

Buckthorn and Fen Violet. Turloughs are important habitats that are listed with priority status on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive and, as such, are of considerable conservation significance.