



Site Name: Rosturra Wood SAC

Site Code: 001313

Rosturra Wood comprises part of what was formerly a large stand of Sessile Oak (*Quercus petraea*) woodland. It is situated about 3 km east of Woodford, Co. Galway and consists of two separate areas. In the 1930s and 1940s much of the wood was cleared and planted with coniferous species. However, the wood retains significant remnants of the original stands of Sessile Oak and its associated ground flora. The wood is situated on rich loamy soils and consequently the size and quality of the hardwood and the diversity of the ground flora is greater than in most Irish Sessile Oak woods.

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):

[91A0] Old Oak Woodlands

The canopy of Rosturra Wood consists of large trees of Sessile Oak, with occasional Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*) and Hazel (*Corylus avellana*). The ground flora consists of Hard Fern (*Blechnum spicant*), Great Wood-rush (*Luzula sylvatica*), Wood-sedge (*Carex sylvatica*) and Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*). Yew (*Taxus baccata*) and Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) are present, and sometimes locally abundant, in the understorey.

The rare and legally protected (Flora (Protection) Order, 1999), Narrow-leaved Helleborine (*Cephalanthera longifolia*) occurs in both sections of the wood.

Almost half of Rosturra Wood is designated as a Statutory Nature Reserve.

Oak woods are rare in Ireland and those found on rich soils which are not the result of planting are even more rare. The remnants of original oak wood at Rosturra Wood (and at the neighbouring Derrycrag Wood and Pollnacknockaun Wood) are part of what was, until 1940, the largest area of natural oak wood in the country. Oak and Yew woodland such as that found at Rosturra Wood are habitats of considerable conservation significance and are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. The presence of the rare species Narrow-leaved Helleborine adds further to the conservation value of the site.