

## SITE SYNOPSIS

**SITE NAME: TRISTIA BOG NHA**

**SITE CODE: 001566**

Tristia Bog NHA is an area of lowland blanket bog located approximately 5 km north-west of Bangor in county Mayo. It lies in the townlands of Fauleens, Srahataggle South and Tristia. The Bangor-Belmullet road marks the northern edge of the site. The former Foras Taluntais grass-meal site adjoins its western margin while plantation forestry bounds the eastern, south-western and north-western sides of the site. The altitude range of the site is 21 m to 122 m and it straddles the catchments of the Munkin and Owenmore Rivers and the catchment of Doolough Stream. Bedrock geology is gneiss, schist and quartzite.

The site forms an extensive, uniformly undulating blanket bog with bog pools containing small island hummocks. The vegetation includes Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Bog-myrtle (*Myrica gale*), Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*), Carnation Sedge (*Carex panicea*), Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*) and Common Cottongrass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*) with good bog moss cover including *Sphagnum capillifolium* and *S. cuspidatum*. Extensive blanket bog pool systems occur containing Water Lobelia (*Lobelia dortmanna*), Pipewort (*Eriocaulon aquaticum*), Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*) and bog moss *Sphagnum cuspidatum*. Quaking areas occurring between the pools are colonised by White Beak-sedge (*Rhynchospora alba*), Black Bog-rush (*Schoenus nigricans*), Round-leaved Sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*), Great Sundew (*D. anglica*) and a diversity of bog mosses including *S. capillifolium*, *S. subnitens*, and *S. papillosum*. Pool islands are vegetated with Royal Fern (*Osmunda regalis*), Ling Heather, Purple Moor-grass and Hare's-tail Cottongrass (*Eriophorum vaginatum*). A small flush supports Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*), Mare's-tail (*Hippuris vulgaris*), Bogbean, Marsh Pennywort (*Hydrocotyle vulgaris*), Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*), Bog Pondweed (*Potamogeton polygonifolius*), Common Marsh-bedstraw (*Galium palustre*), Marsh Cinquefoil (*Potentilla palustris*) and bog moss lawns.

A lake and islands occurs with deep bog moss hummocks at its margins. Bogbean is found with some *Sphagnum cuspidatum* in the shallowest water at its margin. The lake islands support cotton grasses, Ling Heather, Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*), Royal Fern, Purple Moor-grass, Soft Rush, Devil's-bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*) and Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*). The site also contains dry heath and acid grassland on peaty soil. Two major natural drainage channels flow through mineral soil and support a diverse range of species.

Relatively recent land uses on the site included localized peat cutting. Drainage associated with peat cutting could affect the hydrological integrity of the site. Sheep grazing is a significant problem in some areas of the site. Surrounding the site, plantation

forestry has the potential to impact on the ecology of the bog via the effects of drainage, fertilization and self-seeding of conifers onto the bog surface.

Tristia Bog NHA contains lowland blanket bog of considerable conservation interest. The site has several interesting and diverse features including characteristic blanket bog pools with island hummocks, lake, wet and dry heath, river and stream, flushes and exposed rock habitats. Blanket bog habitat is a globally scarce resource. It is largely confined to coastal regions with cool, wet, oceanic climates at temperate latitudes. North-west Europe contains some of the best-developed areas of blanket bog in the world. Lowland blanket bog comprises less than 3% of the world's peatlands. In Europe this type of blanket bog is restricted to Ireland, Britain, Norway and Iceland. The lowland blanket bog that occurs in Ireland is considered to be an extreme hyperoceanic variant of the habitat type, found nowhere else in the world except on the coastal fringes of north-west Scotland.