

## SITE SYNOPSIS

**SITE NAME: UMMERANTARRY BOG NHA**

**SITE CODE: 001570**

Ummerantarry Bog NHA is an area of upland blanket bog located 20 km north-west of Crossmolina, near Crocknacally in north Co. Mayo. It largely lies within the townlands of Ummerantary, Altderg and Cluddaun. The altitude range of this site is 140 m to 230 m. Bedrock geology of the area is acidic (mainly granite or sandstone).

This site was originally part of an extensive system of upland blanket bog habitat that, with the exception of a number of designated nature conservation areas, have been largely destroyed by turbary or afforestation. The site is located on opposite sides of a hill that interconnect through an unafforested passage across the summit. Other semi-natural habitats occurring within the site are poor fens and flushes, rivers and streams and dry and wet heath.

Much of the bog has vegetation typical of upland blanket bog, consisting mostly of Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*), Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*), Deergrass (*Scirpus caespitosus*), Hare's - tail Cottongrass (*Eriophorum vaginatum*) and bog mosses (*Sphagnum* species). On the eastern slope the surface is damp to wet, bog moss cover is high and pools contain Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*). The western slope is somewhat drier, the top bearing heath-like vegetation and the lower slope, which is grazed by cattle, is without bog moss cover. The uncommon lichen *Cladonia arbuscula*, a species indicative of undisturbed good quality habitat, was recorded here. There is a gentle, near-flat area at mid-slope with characteristic blanket bog vegetation.

Breeding Golden Plover, a species listed in the Irish Red Data Book, occur on the site.

Current land uses on the site include grazing and forestry. Active large-scale peat cutting is taking place in the west and hand cutting occurs in the east of the site. Damaging activities associated with these land uses include drainage around the site for forestry and burning of the bog. These activities, if increased, can potentially result in the loss of habitat, damage the hydrological integrity of the site and pose a threat to its conservation potential.

Ummerantarry Bog NHA is a site of considerable conservation significance containing intact upland blanket bog and wet heath and featuring pool systems, flushes and undisturbed blanket bog in which the uncommon *Cladonia arbuscula* occurs. Blanket bog habitat is a globally scarce resource. It is largely confined to coastal regions at temperate latitudes with cool, wet, oceanic climates. North-west Europe contains some of the best-developed areas of blanket bog in the world. The most extensive areas are found in Ireland and Britain. Upland blanket bogs, due to their exposure to severe climatic conditions at high elevations, are particularly vulnerable to erosion by human activities and extensive areas are currently undergoing active erosion due mainly to overgrazing. The current area of intact

upland blanket bog in Ireland represents only a fraction of the original resource, due to the combined impacts of afforestation and overgrazing, and intact examples are therefore extremely valuable for nature conservation. Their long-term survival requires sensitive management.