

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: CARRICKYNAGHTAN BOG NHA

SITE CODE: 001623

Carrickynaghtan Bog NHA is situated approximately 4 km south of Athlone on the west of the River Shannon, mainly in the townlands of Cloonown and Carrickynaghtan in Co. Roscommon. The site comprises a raised bog that includes both areas of high bog and cutover bog. The site is mostly bounded by reclaimed grassland and tracks.

The raised bog consists of a large, but very dissected area, with numerous tracks crossing the site. There are large areas of cutover separating two intact portions of high bog at the north and south of the site. The northern portion contains pools, although many are algae-filled.

Much of the high bog vegetation is typical of raised bogs in Ireland, containing species such as Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*) and bog mosses (*Sphagnum* spp.). At the northern part of the site there is a large relatively intact area of high bog. This has a number of pools, of which many are algae-filled, but some have the bog moss *Sphagnum cuspidatum*. The surface is not quaking and is dominated by Ling Heather, with Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*) and Cottongrass species, mainly *Eriophorum vaginatum*. The White Beak-sedge (*Rhynchospora alba*) is common, especially in wet hollows. There is an absence of well-developed hummocks, but instead there are low undulating carpets of bog mosses.

Current landuse consists of peat-cutting throughout much of the site. There is much drainage associated with this, and with old areas of peat-cutting. Large portions of the bog have been burnt repeatedly in the past. Some areas of old cutover have been reclaimed for agriculture and numerous trackways have been built through the site. These activities have resulted in loss of habitat and damage to the hydrological status of the site, and pose a continuing threat to its viability.

Carrickynaghtan Bog NHA is a site of considerable conservation significance comprising as it does a raised bog, a rare habitat in the E.U. and one that is becoming increasingly scarce and under threat in Ireland. It is one of the few remaining raised bogs which developed on the former floodplain of the River Shannon. Ireland has a high proportion of the total E.U. resource of raised bog (over 50%) and so has a special responsibility for its conservation at an international level.

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