



**Site Name: Kilroosky Lough Cluster SAC**

**Site Code: 001786**

Kilroosky Lough Cluster straddles the border with Northern Ireland, and is located approximately 2 km north-west of Clones, Co. Monaghan. The site consists of three separate areas which contain several calcium-rich, clean water (oligo-mesotrophic) lakes and their marginal fen vegetation.

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):

[3140] Hard Water Lakes
[7210] <i>Cladium</i> Fens*
[7230] Alkaline Fens
[1092] White-clawed Crayfish ( <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> )

The lough cluster includes Kilroosky, Burdautien, Summerhill and Dummy's Loughs, which are of interest for their classic marl lake water chemistry and extensive calcicole plant communities. Marl lakes are relatively low in nutrients, high in calcium and have good water quality. These types of lakes are rare due to their sensitivity to pollution, and have been recognised as being of international importance through their listing on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. Such hard water lakes are characteristically rich in stoneworts. Stonewort species recorded from Kilroosky include *Chara hispida*, *C. pedunculata*, *Nitella flexilis* and the regionally rare *Chara rudis*.

Kilroosky Lough is a marl lake surrounded by fen and species-rich, freshwater marsh. Of particular note is the occurrence of a fringe of Great Fen-Sedge (*Cladium mariscus*) – *Cladium* fen is a habitat type listed with priority status on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. Although with a more restricted distribution at the site, and perhaps existing in transition with other habitats in some areas, the presence of areas of alkaline fen are also notable. Plant species of regional or local importance recorded from fens within the site include Cowbane (*Cicuta virosa*), Fen Bedstraw (*Galium uliginosum*), Fen Pondweed (*Potamogeton coloratus*), Few-flowered Spike-rush (*Eleocharis quinqueflora*), Tufted-sedge (*Carex elata*) and Grass-of-parnassus (*Parnassia palustris*). Eight species of orchid, including the uncommon Marsh Helleborine (*Epipactis palustris*), have also been recorded.

In a small area of Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*) and Goat Willow (*Salix caprea*) wet woodland on the western shore, Round-leaved Wintergreen (*Pyrola rotundifolia*) has

been recorded amongst the wetland ground flora. This is a rare species in Ireland and one that is listed in the Red Data Book.

Kilroosky Lough also contains a population of White-clawed Crayfish, a species that is indicative of clean unpolluted water and one which is becoming increasingly rare throughout its geographical range. It is protected under the Wildlife Act, 1976 and is listed on Annex II of the E.U. Habitats Directive.

Burdautien Lough, just to the north of Kilroosky, is a more enriched lake with a fringe of reedswamp and fen dominated by Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*), with sedges (*Carex diandra*, *C. paniculata*, *C. flacca* and *C. disticha*), Cowbane, cottongrasses (*Eriophorum* spp.) and Quaking-grass (*Briza media*). The fen vegetation includes a fringe of Great Fen-sedge.

Dummy's Lough is another marl lake which lies just to the west of Kilroosky and is surrounded by marsh and wet woodland. The lake supports a thick band of Lesser Bulrush (*Typha angustifolia*), a regionally rare species, and is fringed by fen communities comprised of Great Fen-sedge, Common Reed, Bottle Sedge (*Carex rostrata*), Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*), Marsh Cinquefoil (*Potentilla palustris*), and occasional small sedge-rich areas.

A section of Summerhill Lough is included within the site. A large sedge-dominated fen occurs on the north-eastern side of this lake and includes such species as Marsh Arrowgrass (*Triglochin palustris*) and an abundance of stoneworts (*Chara* spp.). A zone of Great Fen-sedge also occurs at this lake. Behind the fen is a zone of wet grassland and scrub comprised of Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) and Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*).

Ramages Lough, to the south-east of Kilroosky, supports a good example of a freshwater swamp. Over half of this lake is colonised by Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*) and Common Reed, with frequent Bottle Sedge, Water Horsetail (*Equisetum fluviatile*) and scattered willows (*Salix* spp.).

Kilroosky Lough Cluster is of ecological interest for its diversity of habitats and species. It is of particular conservation significance for its hard water lakes, areas of alkaline fen and of *Cladium mariscus* fen, all habitats that are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive, the last-named with priority status. Furthermore, the site supports a population of White-clawed Crayfish, a species that is listed on Annex II of this Directive.