

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: SILLAHERTANE BOG NHA

SITE CODE: 001882

Sillahertane Bog NHA is an area of upland blanket bog located towards the southern end of the Derrynasaggart Mountains approximately 12 km east of the town of Kilgarvan, in Co. Kerry. It lies within the townland of Sillahertane. The Cork/Kerry border forms the south-eastern boundary of the site. The site consists of a broad, upland valley drained by a tributary of the Roughty River. Altitude range is between 310 m and 480 m. Bedrock geology is Old Red Sandstone.

There is a wide diversity of vegetation types within the site. In general, the vegetation is flushed as indicated by the dominance of Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*). This most likely results from the relatively shallow peat cover on the site. Heath occurs on the north-eastern side and supports Viviparous Fescue (*Festuca vivipara*), Heath Rush (*Juncus squarrosus*), Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*), Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*), Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Wavy Hair-grass (*Deschampsia flexuosa*) and Great Wood-rush (*Luzula sylvatica*). Slopes are dominated by Purple Moor-grass with Cross-leaved Heath, Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*) and a ground cover of bog moss (*Sphagnum capillifolium*). A large flush dominated by Greater Tussock-sedge (*Carex paniculata*), Bottle Sedge (*Carex rostrata*), Bog-sedge (*Carex limosa*), Common Sedge (*Carex nigra*), Sharp-flowered Rush (*Juncus acutiflorus*) and bog moss (*Sphagnum recurvum*) occurs adjacent to a stream source.

On flatter ground, blanket bog communities of Hare's-tail Cottongrass (*Eriophorum vaginatum*), Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*), Purple Moor-grass and Cross-leaved Heath dominate with bog mosses (*Sphagnum capillifolium*, *S. papillosum*, *S. magellanicum* and *Campylopus atrovirens*). Some of these areas are colonised by a variety of lichens (*Cladonia gracilis*, *C. floerkeana*, *C. crispata* var. *cetrariiformis*) and the liverworts *Odontoschisma sphagnii* and *Lophozia ventricosa*.

Grazing and afforestation are potential threats to the nature conservation interest of the site. Increased access to the site as a result of new tracks created through the forestry may result in increased peat cutting and also increase the risk of accidental fires. Fertiliser and herbicide applications within the forestry plantation to the west of the site could impact on the site.

Sillahertane Bog NHA is a site of considerable conservation value consisting of a good example of an intact, upland blanket bog featuring botanically-rich flushes and heath types. 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.