

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: DERREENNATRA BOG NHA

SITE CODE: 002105

Derreenatra Bog NHA contains intact and regenerating areas of lowland blanket bog, and is located 3 km south-west of Ballydehob, in south-west Co. Cork. The bog is low-lying at an altitude between 40 m and 60 m and is mostly contained within two hollows below the level of the road. The road from Ballydehob to Skull forms the southern boundary. A minor road heading north bisects the site. The smaller section is bordered on its northern and eastern side by forestry plantation. The larger section is bordered on its northern side by a trackway and by low hills on the west. Bedrock geology is Old Red Sandstone.

The site is a good example of regenerating cutover bog with some intact areas. It is of high conservation value as it is the only known location in Co. Cork for the protected plant species, Slender Cottongrass (*Eriophorum gracile*), which is protected under the Flora Protection Order of 1999. A healthy population of the plant occurs in the regenerating cutover. Bog mosses are abundant, accounting for up to 80% ground cover. These mosses include *Sphagnum cuspidatum*, *S. papillosum*, *S. recurvum*, *S. palustre*, and *S. subnitens*. Wet lawns support White Beak-sedge (*Rhynchospora alba*), Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*) and Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*).

Pools and flushed areas support species such as Marsh Horsetail (*Equisetum palustre*), Sharp-flowered Rush (*Juncus acutiflorus*), Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*), Bottle Sedge (*Carex rostrata*) and Great Sundew (*Drosera anglica*). In larger bog pools Marsh St. John's-wort (*Hypericum elodes*) and White Water-lily (*Nymphaea alba*) occur.

On higher banks in the western part of the site and along the edges of the road additional bog or heath species occur including Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*), Bell Heather (*Erica cinerea*), Heath Spotted-orchid (*Dactylorhiza maculata*) and Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*). Species characteristic of damp slightly enriched conditions such as Purple-loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), Marsh Lousewort (*Pedicularis palustris*), Marsh Cinquefoil (*Potentilla palustris*), Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*) and Royal Fern (*Osmunda regalis*) are also found along the edges of the road. Small patches of scrub also occur with willows (*Salix* spp.) and gorse (*Ulex* sp.).

The main threat to the site is a possible expansion of adjacent forestry plantations, particularly on the eastern section of the bog. However, given the very wet nature of the site as a whole, additional planting may be regarded as uneconomical. The wet surface across most of the site also reduces the threat from grazing animals.

Derreenatra Bog NHA is good example of regenerating wet lowland blanket bog with intact areas. It is of very high conservation value on account of its diverse

lowland blanket bog flora and also because it is the only known location in Co. Cork for the protected plant species, Slender Cottongrass, which is protected under the Flora (Protection) Order, 1999. Blanket bog habitat is a globally scarce resource and 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.