



Site Name: Killeglan Grassland SAC

Site Code: 002214

Killeglan grassland is situated in Co. Roscommon, approximately 9.5 km north of Ballinasloe. The underlying geology is Upper Carboniferous Limestone. A shallow rendzina type soil formation has developed in places between the outcropping limestone boulders and the shattered limestone formations. The topography of the site is undulating.

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):

[6210] Orchid-rich Calcareous Grassland*
--

The calcareous grassland vegetation at this site is species-rich and comprises low-growing plants such as Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Wild Thyme (*Thymus praecox*), Cat's-ear (*Hypochoeris radicata*), Mouse-ear Hawkweed (*Hieracium pilosella*), Devil's-bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*), Mountain Everlasting (*Antennaria dioica*), Carlina Thistle (*Carlina vulgaris*), Dandelion (*Taraxacum* agg.), sedges (*Carex* spp.), Ribwort Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), Bulbous Rush (*Juncus bulbosus*), Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), Cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), Common Bent (*Agrostis capillaris*), Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*), Carnation Sedge (*Carex panicea*), Sheep's Sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*), Yellow-rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*), Daisy (*Bellis perennis*), Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), clovers (*Trifolium* spp.) and Selfheal (*Prunella vulgaris*).

Orchid species recorded from the site include the Red Data Book species, Green-winged Orchid (*Orchis morio*) and Early-purple Orchid (*Orchis mascula*), Common Spotted-orchid (*Dactylorhiza fuchsii*), Fragrant Orchid (*Gymnadenia conopsea*), Pyramidal Orchid (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*), Lesser Butterfly-orchid (*Platanthera bifolia*) and Autumn Lady's-tresses (*Spiranthes spiralis*).

On the out-cropping limestone Herb-Robert (*Geranium robertianum*), Wall-rue (*Asplenium ruta-muraria*), Hart's-tongue (*Phyllitis scolopendrium*), Wild Thyme, Cat's-ear, Mouse-ear Hawkweed, Mountain Everlasting, Fairy Flax (*Linum catharticum*) and many mosses and lichens are present. Patches of Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) and Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) occur, with occasional specimens of Yew (*Taxus baccata*).

Badger and Hare, both listed in the Irish Red Data Book, occur on this site. Birds recorded include Kestrel, Sparrowhawk, Pheasant, Stonechat, Wheatear and Raven.

Most of this site appears to be managed in a manner which is suitable for the continued conservation of the grasslands. Low numbers of cattle are grazed during winter and low numbers of sheep in summer and autumn. Horses are occasional grazers. The grasslands have been improved in the past and limestone boulders have been cleared and placed in heaps scattered throughout the site. The site is divided into a number of small field systems that are defined by dry stone walls. Neighbouring lands have recently been cleared of boulders and shattered pavement, and have been re-seeded and heavily fertilised. Reclamation within the site would pose a significant threat to the conservation interest of the grassland.

Overall, the site is of outstanding quality and provides an excellent example of the Annex I priority habitat orchid-rich calcareous grasslands. It plays host to an important population of the Red Data Book plant species Green-winged Orchid, along with a number of Red Data Book mammals.