



**Site Name: Dunmuckrum Turloughs SAC**

**Site Code: 002303**

This site is located about 2 km south-west of Ballyshannon in Co. Donegal. It consists of a series of low-lying winter-flooded depressions set in an undulating landscape of limestone hills.

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):

[3180] Turloughs*
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The most westerly of the depressions, in Lugnav townland, supports typical turlough vegetation, reflecting the zonation caused by periodic flooding. The wettest areas at the base contain small patches of open water surrounded by marsh plants. At the eastern end there is some stonewort (*Chara* sp.), Horned Pondweed (*Zannichellia palustris*), Common Duckweed (*Lemna minor*) and the moss *Fontinalis antipyretica*. The western pools are distinguished by the presence of Thread-leaved Water-crowfoot (*Ranunculus trichophyllus*), Blue Water-speedwell (*Veronica anagallis-aquatica*), Water-cress (*Nasturtium officinale*) and Lesser Marshwort (*Apium inundatum*). Exposed muds behind these areas support Equal-leaved Knotgrass (*Polygonum arenastrum*), Shepherd's-purse (*Capsella bursa-pastoris*), Marsh Yellow-cress (*Rorippa palustris*) and Marsh Cudweed (*Gnaphalium uliginosum*), amongst others.

A permanently wet area of scraw (i.e. floating) vegetation at the lowest part of this turlough is dominated by Bottle Sedge (*Carex rostrata*), Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*) and Common Spike-rush (*Eleocharis palustris*). This grades into a wet, sedge-dominated sward, with species such as Common Sedge (*Carex nigra*), Brown Sedge (*C. disticha*) and a wide range of wetland herbs. At the upper levels of flooding the vegetation grades into a leached limestone grassland, with patches of Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) scrub woodland. Notable species here include Adder's-tongue (*Ophioglossum vulgatum*), Grass-of-parnassus (*Parnassia palustris*) and an abundance of the moss *Cinclidotus fontinaloides* on all the inundated rocky surfaces.

Further east, in Dunmuckrum townland, lies a smaller turlough basin with a permanent marsh at the base, mostly dominated by sedges (*Carex nigra* and *C. rostrata*) and Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*). A shorter grazed grassland vegetation surrounds this with Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), Jointed Rush (*Juncus articulatus*) and Autumn Hawkbit (*Leontodon autumnalis*), amongst others.

Two further depressions lie just to the east, straddling the disused railway line. Although seasonally flooded, these basins are smaller and drier, and support mainly grassland vegetation dominated by Creeping Bent.

The site is of conservation importance as it represents the mostly northerly turlough known in the country, if not globally. Turlough habitat is listed with priority status in Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive.