

## SITE SYNOPSIS

**SITE NAME: CLONREHER BOG NHA**

**SITE CODE: 002357**

Clonreher Bog NHA is located 6km south of the town of Mountmellick in the townlands of Clonreher, Rossnagad and Clonsoghey, Co.Laois. It is situated just west of the Mountmellick to Portlaoise road (N80). This site comprises a raised bog that includes both areas of high bog and cutover bog. The site is bounded by the N80 to the east and the abandoned railway line (Mountmellick Branch) to the west. It can be accessed from bog tracks off the N80, to the north-east and south-east of the site.

Much of the high bog has vegetation typical of a Midland Raised Bog, dominated by bog moss (*Sphagnum*) species, over which grow Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*), Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*), Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*) and Bog Rosemary (*Andromeda polifolia*).

To the north and south of the intact dome are expanses of cutaway bog, which are no longer in use and which are now overgrown with Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*) and Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*). In some areas Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) and/or Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*) are colonising and creating patches of scrub. There is an extensive area of scrub along the abandoned railway line to the west.

Current landuses on the site include peat-cutting and agriculture. Active peat-cutting occurs to the south and north. Damaging activities associated with these landuses include drainage at the bog margins and burning on the high bog in connection with peat-cutting. Frequent burning is detrimental to the bog as it causes dessication of the surface and removal of semi-natural vegetation. These activities have resulted in the loss of habitat, damage to the hydrological status of the site, and pose a continuing threat to its viability.

Clonreher Bog NHA is a site of considerable conservation significance comprising as it does a raised bog, a rare habitat in the E.U. and one that is becoming increasingly scarce and under threat in Ireland. This site supports a good diversity of raised bog microhabitats and its southerly location, is of ecological interest. Ireland has a high proportion of the total E.U. resource of raised bog (over 50%) and so has a special responsibility for its conservation at an international level.

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