

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: MOYREEN BOG NHA

SITE CODE: 002361

Moyreen Bog NHA is an area of lowland blanket bog located 8 km south east of Glin, 7 km south of Loghill and 10 km south west of Foynes in the townland of Moyreen in north Co. Limerick. The site is bounded on the south by a road, on the south-west and east by forestry and on the north by an area of re-vegetating cutover grading into rushy fields with scrub. The altitude range of this site is 120 m to 130 m. Bedrock geology consists of shales.

This is a good example of a lowland blanket bog. The bog surface is dominated by Purple Moor-grass (*Molinea caerulea*) and Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) with abundant Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*), Bog Myrtle (*Myrica gale*) and occasional hummocks of the bog mosses *Sphagnum capillifolium* and *S. subnitens*. Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*), Carnation Sedge (*Carex panicea*) and Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*) are occasional as is lichen cover (*Cladonia* spp.).

Flats between hummocks are dominated by Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*) with Common Cottongrass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*), Hare's-tail Cottongrass (*E. vaginatum*), White Beak-sedge (*Rhynchospora alba*), Bog Myrtle, Bog Asphodel and the liverwort *Pleurozia purpurea*. Moss cover is dominated by bog moss *Sphagnum papillosum* with mosses *Hypnum jutlandicum*, occasional *Racomitrium lanuginosum* and the lichen *Cladonia ciliata*. Occasional bushes of Ling Heather occur. The bog surface is wet and quaking

Mature hummocks, colonised by Hare's - tail Cottongrass, Ling Heather, Bog Asphodel and Bog Myrtle underlain by bog mosses *Sphagnum subnitens*, *S. fuscum*, *S. papillosum* and *S. capillifolium*, the mosses *Hypnum jutlandicum* and *Campylopus introflexus* and lichens *Cladonia portentosa* and *C. uncialis*, are frequent. Round-leaved Sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*) is present. Wet flats are dominated by bog mosses *Sphagnum cuspidatum* and *S. auriculatum* with White Beak-sedge occurring in areas of standing water.

Along the bog margins, vegetation is dominated by Purple Moor-grass tussocks with willow scrub, Bog Myrtle, Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), Marsh Thistle (*Cirsium palustre*) and Devil's-bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*). The Royal Fern (*Osmunda regalis*) is present on cutover margins.

Red Grouse (an Irish Red Data Book species) and Common Frog occur on the site.

The site may have been burnt in the recent past and some areas have been afforested. There does not appear to be any recent peat-cutting activity. Drainage ditches are found along the margins of re-vegetating cutover on the southern and northern edges of the site.

Moyreen Bog NHA is of considerable conservation significance as it is a good example of a lowland blanket bog. It supports a wide range of lowland blanket bog species including a number of species of regional and international importance. Blanket bog is a rare habitat type in Co. Limerick. 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.