

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: SLIEVECALLAN MOUNTAIN BOG NHA

SITE CODE: 002397

Slievecallan Mountain Bog NHA is an area of upland blanket bog located 9 km south-east of Miltown Malbay and 12 km north-east of Quilty village in west Co. Clare. The site is situated in the townlands of Boolinrudda, Glennageer, Letterkelly, Knockalassa, Magherabaun, and Doonsallagh East. It is surrounded by forestry plantations except on the south where it is bordered by re-vegetating cutover bog. The altitude range is between 300 m and 391 m and the bedrock geology consists of shale.

The blanket bog at the summit area of Slievecallan Mountain is dominated by Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*), Hare's-tail Cottongrass (*Eriophorum vaginatum*), Common Cotton-grass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*) and occasional Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*) and Devil's-bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*). There are shallow pools vegetated by Hare's-tail Cottongrass. The eastern slopes of Slievecallan have an abundance of hummocks colonised by Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Purple Moor-grass, Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*), Hare's-tail Cottongrass and Common Cottongrass. Devil's-bit Scabious, Heath Wood-rush (*Luzula multiflora*) and Tormentil are occasional. This eastern area is characterised on the upper slopes by abundant hummocks of bog mosses *Sphagnum subnitens* and *S. papillosum*. Heath Rush (*Juncus squarrosus*) is present but very locally. The western side of the summit is dominated by low growing Ling Heather, Purple Moor-grass, Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*) and cottongrasses. Hummocks of bog mosses (*Sphagnum papillosum* and *S. subnitens*) are frequent and the surface is wet and soft underfoot. Heath Milkwort (*Polygala serpyllifolia*), Tormentil, Devil's-bit Scabious, Carnation Sedge (*Carex panicea*) and Bilberry are occasional. The moss *Racomitrium lanuginosum* and lichens *Cladonia ciliata*, *C. portentosa* and *C. uncialis* are also present. A flushed area on the eastern slopes is vegetated by Purple Moor-grass, Devil's-bit Scabious and occasional rushes.

A small area of revegetating cutover with exposed peat banks is located near the summit. This area is vegetated by the moss (*Racomitrium lanuginosum*), the lichens (*Cladonia portentosa*, *C. ciliata* and *C. uncialis*), cottongrasses and Purple Moor-grass. Heath Milkwort and Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*) are frequent. Irish Red Data Book species, Golden Plover and Hen Harrier, occur on the site.

There are remnants of old peat cutting, a drainage ditch and fresh quad bike tracks near the summit of the mountain. A large track is excavated on the lower slopes exposing bedrock. Forestry plantations encroach on the lower slopes of this mountain.

Slievecallan Mountain Bog NHA is of considerable conservation value as it is a good example of an upland blanket bog. The site supports a diverse range of flora and fauna and is one of few intact areas of blanket bog in this part of the country. The

mountain is a significant landmark in the locality and is of high scenic value. Blanket bog habitat is a globally scarce resource. It is largely confined to coastal regions at temperate latitudes with cool, wet, oceanic climates. North-west Europe contains some of the best-developed areas of blanket bog in the world. The most extensive areas are found in Ireland and Britain. Upland blanket bogs, due to their exposure to severe climatic conditions at high elevations, are particularly vulnerable to erosion by human activities and extensive areas are currently undergoing active erosion due mainly to overgrazing. The current area of intact upland blanket bog in Ireland represents only a fraction of the original resource, due to the combined impacts of afforestation and overgrazing, and intact examples are therefore extremely valuable for nature conservation. Their long-term survival requires sensitive management.