

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: SRAHEENS BOG NHA

SITE CODE: 002403

Sraheens Bog NHA consists of upland blanket bog and wet heath and is located approximately 3 km west of Achill Sound and 3 km east of Dooega, on the eastern slopes and valley of Knockmore Mountain, Achill Island, Co. Mayo. The site is largely confined to the townland of Sraheens. The northern margin of the site is bounded by the Sraheens townland boundary near Sraheens Lough. The eastern margin is marked by a rocky ridge and the Sraheens River. The southern boundary meets the headwater of a stream and turns north to follow the headwaters of the Sraheens River. Altitude range is between 106 m and 266 m. Bedrock geology consists of quartzite.

Blanket bog occurs in the Sraheens River valley and also on the upper mountain slopes where it occurs in mosaic with wet heath vegetation. Cutover bog occurs in the valley of the Sraheens River.

Much of the blanket bog vegetation is co-dominated by Black Bog-rush (*Schoenus nigricans*) and Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*). Carnation Sedge (*Carex panicea*), Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*), Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*), Round-leaved Sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*), Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*), Many-stalked Spike-rush (*Eleocharis multicaulis*) and Common Cottongrass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*) also occur. Bog mosses (*Sphagnum cuspidatum*, *S. subnitens*, *S. compactum*) are also present. The moss *Racomitrium lanuginosum* is present throughout the site. The lichen *Cladonia portentosa* and liverwort *Pleurozia purpurea* also occur on the site.

On higher ground blanket bog vegetation grades into windswept wet heath with Ling Heather and Crowberry (*Empetrum nigrum*), Green-ribbed Sedge (*Carex binervis*), Heath Rush (*Juncus squarrosus*), Bell Heather (*Erica cinerea*) and Hard Fern (*Blechnum spicant*).

Current landuse on the site consists of grazing.

Sraheens Bog NHA is a site of considerable conservation significance containing blanket bog and wet heath. This site supports a good diversity of blanket bog microhabitats, including hummock/hollow complexes and regenerating cutover. 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.

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