

## SITE SYNOPSIS

**SITE NAME: UMRYCAM BOG NHA**

**SITE CODE: 002406**

Umrycam Bog NHA is a lowland blanket bog located in the townland of Umrycam, approximately 4 km north-east of Buncrana and south-east of the main road from Buncrana to Carndonagh, Co. Donegal. The site is bounded on its eastern side by the Owenboy River and on its southern and western sides by rush pasture. A tributary of the Owenboy River and the main road from Buncrana to the village of Drumfree form the northern boundary of the site. A section of the track bed of the old railway line from Buncrana to Carndonagh cuts through the site in a north-east to south-west direction. The bog is situated at an altitude range of between 60 m and 80 m. The bedrock geology consists of quartzite.

The blanket bog vegetation is dominated by Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*). This reaches 50% cover and a height of up to 50 cm in places. Other blanket bog species include Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*), Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*), Round-leaved Sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*), White Beak-sedge (*Rhynchospora alba*), Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*), Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*) and the moss *Polytrichum commune*. The lichen *Cladonia portentosa* occurs on the bog surface. Bog moss reaches between 80% and 90% cover in places and develops quaking lawns or runnels of *Sphagnum recurvum* and *S. cuspidatum*. There are extensive hummock/hollow areas with large intact hummocks of *Sphagnum capillifolium*, *S. papillosum* and *S. subnitens*.

The old railway embankments are colonised with a mosaic of scrub and dry heath. The scrub consists of dense Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*) and willows (*Salix* spp.). Dry heath on the railway embankments includes Ling Heather, with 90% cover in places, Broad Buckler-fern (*Dryopteris dilatata*), Hard Fern (*Blechnum spicant*), Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*), Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*), Devil's-bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*) and a diverse moss flora including *Polytrichum commune*, *Rhytidiadelphus loreus*, *Pseudoscleropodium purum*, *Hypnum jutlandicum* and *Hylocomium splendens*.

The old railway track bed is wet in places, due to runoff from the embankments, and is colonised with a mixture of grassland, heathland and wetland species, including stands of Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*), Devil's-bit Scabious, Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*), Lesser Spearwort (*Ranunculus flammula*), Purple Moor-grass, Water Horsetail (*Equisetum fluviatile*), Sweet Vernal-grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*) and White Clover (*Trifolium repens*).

The site is currently not subject to adverse grazing pressure, peat-cutting or forestry developments. There has however been recent burning of the bog vegetation on both sides of the track that runs through the site. The bare peat in this burnt area is being recolonised by typical blanket bog species including Purple Moor-grass, Carnation

Sedge (*Carex panicea*), Deergrass, Bog Asphodel and abundant Ling Heather seedlings.

Umrycam Bog NHA is a site of considerable conservation significance comprising a large area of relatively intact lowland blanket bog. Blanket bog habitat is a globally scarce resource. It 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.

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