

## SITE SYNOPSIS

**SITE NAME: PULLEEN HARBOUR BOG NHA**

**SITE CODE: 002416**

Pulleen Harbour Bog NHA is located 3.5 km south-west of Castownbearhaven, Co. Cork. The site comprises a small area of lowland blanket bog and associated habitats situated on either side of a small minor road which leads to Pulleen Harbour. The site occurs adjacent to the sea and has an altitude range of between 15 m and 46 m. Bedrock geology consists of siltstones of the Old Red Sandstone formation.

Blanket bog within the site occurs in small basins between low rocky ridges. The bog is generally shallow and occurs within a mosaic of old cutaway bog and some wet and dry heath. The vegetation comprises a deep, undisturbed sward of Black Bog-rush (*Schoenus nigricans*) tussocks, Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*), Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), cottongrasses (*Eriophorum* spp.) and Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*), with Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*), Bog-myrtle (*Myrica gale*) and Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*). The moss understorey is soft and spongy throughout the site, with large hummocks of bog moss (*Sphagnum capillifolium*). Small pools containing *Sphagnum auriculatum* and *S. cuspidatum* occur in wet flats. Flushed channels are common on gentle slopes within the site and are characterised by rushes (*Juncus effusus*, *J. articulatus*) and Marsh Violet (*Viola palustris*). Overall, blanket bog habitat is very intact with very few patches of bare peat. It appears to have been unburnt in recent years and is only occasionally grazed.

Deeper blanket bog with a notable abundance of Black Bog-rush and wet flats containing White Beaked-sedge (*Rhynchospora alba*) occurs adjacent to two small lakes within the site. These lakes contain Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) and Great Fen-sedge (*Cladium mariscus*), with Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*) and Marsh St. John's-wort (*Hypericum elodes*), as well as floating rafts of White Water-lily (*Nymphaea alba*). There are also areas of old cutaway that have regenerated very well, containing dry banks colonised by Ling Heather and Bell Heather (*Erica cinerea*). Pockets of wet heath are common on shallower peat, with dry heath occurring on rocky knolls.

The site supports a diverse dragonfly fauna, as well as the Irish Red Data Book species Otter and Irish Hare.

Current landuse on the site consists of light sheep grazing on the southern part of the site. Peat cutting occurred within the site until relatively recently, to the north-east of the larger lake, but has now ceased. The spread of Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*) is a threat and there has been some encroachment at the north-eastern corner of the site.

Pulleen Harbour Bog NHA is a small but intact example of a lowland blanket bog, situated close to the sea and with a range of other habitats. 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.