

## SITE SYNOPSIS

**SITE NAME: TOOREEN BOG NHA**

**SITE CODE: 002436**

Tooreen Bog NHA is a lowland blanket bog situated approximately 2 km south-east of Cleggan and 6.5 km to the west of Letterfrack, Co. Galway. It is situated within the townlands of Sheeauns and Tooreen. Ballynakill Lough borders the site on the north, conifer plantations occur on the south and grazed acid grasslands occur on the lower slopes to the west and east. The altitude range of this site is between 15 m and 165 m. Bedrock geology of the area is granite and sandstone overlain by shallow glacial till.

The site occurs on the slopes above Ballynakill Lough. This is a large area of ungrazed blanket bog with large, flat expanses of peat on two main plateaux. The western part of the site is mainly flat and close to sea – level, but the site rises gently towards the south-eastern corner to an altitude of 165 m. Other habitats present include flushes, headwaters and quaking areas.

Blanket bog vegetation is characterised by the presence of lawns of Black Bog-rush (*Schoenus nigricans*), Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*) White Beaked-sedge (*Rhynchospora alba*) on wet quaking areas with Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*) and bog mosses (*Sphagnum auriculatum* and *S. cuspidatum*) in pools. Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*), Lousewort (*Pedicularis sylvatica*) and Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*) occur on drier peat. Other species present include Common Cottongrass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*) and Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*). Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*) is occasional in more sheltered areas. There are large intact hummocks of *Racomitrium lanuginosum* and *Leucobryum glaucum* on the western slopes together with bog mosses (*Sphagnum capillifolium* and *S. magellanicum*), lichens *Cladonia portentosa* and *C. uncialis* and liverwort *Pleurozia purpurea*. The Round-leaved Sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*) and Great Sundew (*Drosera anglica*) are found in pools. Occasional Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) occurs in flushes.

There is some evidence that deer graze the site, however there is no sign of damage. Current landuse outside the site consists of peat cutting, grazing and forestry. Damaging activities associated with these land uses include drainage of the margins of the bog. These activities may impact on the hydrological integrity of the site and could pose a threat to its conservation.

Tooreen Bog NHA is a lowland blanket bog of considerable conservation value. It is largely intact and supports plant communities that occur only on areas of wet 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.

20.1.2004