

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: MONGAN BOG SPA

SITE CODE: 004017

Mongan Bog is a midland raised bog of medium size situated immediately east of the monastic site of Clonmacnoise, Co. Offaly, and 12 km south of Athlone. It is situated in a basin, surrounded on part of its perimeter by high ground on mineral soil.

The bog has a well-developed microtopography of hummocks, pools and lawns. Species such as Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*), cottongrasses (*Eriophorum angustifolium*, *E. vaginatum*), Carnation Sedge (*Carex panicea*) and White Beak-sedge (*Rhynchospora alba*) are common. A good variety of bog mosses (*Sphagnum* spp.) and other bryophytes are found. Strips of cut-away bog, part of which is colonised by willows (*Salix* spp.) and birch (*Betula* sp.) scrub, occur along the margins of the peat dome.

At the time this site was identified for Special Protection Area (SPA) designation it was being utilised by Greenland White-fronted Goose from the internationally important River Suck population. Although Greenland White-fronted Goose does not currently utilise the site, this species is regarded as a special conservation interest for this SPA.

Mongan Bog is one of the raised bogs that was traditionally used as a feeding/roosting site by small numbers of the River Suck population of Greenland White-fronted Goose. These birds utilise the callows near the mouth of the Suck to Shannonbridge and as far as Clonmacnoise. The numbers of Greenland White-fronted Goose using this part of the range was always small (peak count of 26 in 1984/85) and geese have not been recorded using the site in recent years - the last record was 11 individuals in 1989/90.

The cutaway area of bog provides habitat for a range of bird species, including birds of prey, thrushes, warblers and finches. A study of the birds of Mongan Bog in 1985 recorded Mallard, Snipe, Skylark and Meadow Pipit breeding on the peat dome.

Mongan Bog is owned by An Taisce (the National Trust) and is a Ramsar Convention site, a Biogenetic Reserve and a Statutory Nature Reserve.

25.3.2014