

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: CARROWMORE LAKE SPA

SITE CODE: 004052

Carrowmore Lake is a large, fairly shallow, oligotrophic/mesotrophic lake in Co. Mayo. The lake generally has a stony bottom and shoreline, and overlies Dalradian schists and quartzite. Stands of emergent, swamp vegetation occur, especially in sheltered areas. The shallow waters support species such as Common Spike-rush (*Eleocharis palustris*), Shoreweed (*Littorella uniflora*), Bulbous Rush (*Juncus bulbosus*) and Perfoliate Pondweed (*Potamogeton perfoliatus*). Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*) and Yellow Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*) are frequent along the shore, with stands of Common Club-rush (*Scirpus lacustris*) and Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*). The lake has one substantial island, Derreens Island, and several small islands; these are dominated by a grassy sward. Carrowmore Lake is set in a landscape dominated by blanket bogs.

The site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, of special conservation interest for the following species: Sandwich Tern.

There is a long established breeding colony of gulls and terns on Derreens Island. Sandwich Tern formerly had a large nesting population (164 pairs in 1984). The colony is thought to have moved to an island in Broad Haven Bay but birds still regularly visit the lake and nesting may occur again in the future. Arctic Tern has also nested in the past. Black-headed Gull and Common Gull both nest (37 and 59 pairs respectively in 2000).

A population of Greenland White-fronted Goose winters on the surrounding bogs and at times uses the lake for roosting and/or feeding. The number of birds using the site is fairly small, with Wigeon (62), Mallard (38), Pochard (72), Tufted Duck (90), Scaup (5), Goldeneye (10), Red-breasted Merganser (4) and Cormorant (12) occurring in winter – all figures are three year mean peaks from 3 winters during the period 1995/96 to 1999/2000.

Carrowmore Lake SPA is of ornithological importance on account of the nationally important tern colony that once occupied the site. The occurrence of Greenland White-fronted Goose is of note as this species is listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive (as are the tern species). Part of Carrowmore Lake SPA is a Wildfowl Sanctuary.

30.5.2015