

## SITE SYNOPSIS

**SITE NAME: GARRISKIL BOG SPA**

**SITE CODE: 004102**

Garriskil Bog SPA, a raised bog, is located 3 km west of Lough Derravaragh and 3 km east of Rathowen in Co. Westmeath. It is bounded to the south-east and south-west by the rivers Inny and Riffey. The bog is underlain by calcareous shales with a low permeability. A substantial area of uncut high bog remains though much of this is classified as degraded raised bog. Old cutaway bog surrounds the high bog and parts of this are dominated by Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*) scrub.

At the time this site was designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) it was known to be utilised by part of an internationally important population of Greenland White-fronted Goose centred around the midland lakes. The geese appear to have abandoned these peatland sites in favour of grassland sites elsewhere. Greenland White-fronted Goose is regarded as a special conservation interest for this SPA.

The site is within the range of the midland lakes Greenland White-fronted Goose flock, which is centred on four major lakes (Derravaragh, Iron, Owel and Ennell). The last record of Greenland White-fronted Goose at this site was in 1986/87 (43 individuals).

The site is within the breeding territory of a pair of Merlin. Nesting probably occurs outside of the site boundary, with the bog being used primarily as a foraging area.

Several wader species breed within the site – Snipe (an estimated 5 pairs), Curlew (2-3 pairs) and Redshank (2 pairs). Barn Owl has been recorded hunting along the margins of the bog, while Red Grouse is considered to occur occasionally.