

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: CONNEMARA BOG COMPLEX SPA

SITE CODE: 004181

The Connemara Bog Complex SPA is a large site encompassing much of the south Connemara lowlands of Co. Galway. The site consists of three separate areas - north of Roundstone, south of Recess and north-west of Spiddal. It is underlain predominantly by a variety of igneous and metamorphic rocks including granite, schist, gneiss and gabbro. The whole area was glaciated during the last Ice Age which scoured the lowlands of Connemara.

The Connemara Bog Complex SPA is characterized by areas of deep peat surrounded by heath-covered rocky outcrops. The deeper peat areas are often bordered by river systems and the many oligotrophic lakes that occur, resulting in an intricate mosaic of various peatland/wetland habitats and vegetation communities; these include Atlantic blanket bog with hummock/hollow systems, inter-connecting pools, Atlantic blanket bog pools, flushes, transition and quaking mires, as well as freshwater marshes, lakeshore, lake and river systems.

The site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, of special conservation interest for the following species: Cormorant, Merlin, Golden Plover and Common Gull.

Lough Scannive, located within Roundstone Bog, supports a nationally important breeding population of Cormorant (160 breeding pairs in 2001). Other breeding birds using the site include Merlin and Golden Plover. A partial survey in 2009 recorded 8 pairs of Merlin at various locations throughout the site; 15 breeding locations for this species were recorded at the site in an earlier survey undertaken in 1985/86. A survey of upland birds in 2004 recorded 27 pairs of Golden Plover within the site. The numerous lakes scattered throughout the site provide suitable breeding locations for Common Gull (45 pairs in 2000); a survey in 2010 recorded 40 pairs of this species at the site.

The site is also utilised by a wintering population of Greenland White-fronted Goose; small flocks of up to 30 birds have been recorded at various locations within the site.

Connemara Bog Complex SPA is of high ornithological importance, in particular for its nationally important breeding populations of Cormorant, Merlin, Golden Plover and Common Gull. It is of note that three of the regularly occurring species, Greenland White-fronted Goose, Merlin and Golden Plover, are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive.

30.11.2010