

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: SLIEVE BOG NHA

SITE CODE: 000247

Slieve Bog NHA is situated about 5 km east of Dunmore, in the townlands of Slieve, Woodfield, Cluid and Carrowkeelanahglass Co. Galway. The site comprises a raised bog that includes both areas of high bog and cutover bog. The south and east margins of the site are bounded by the Yellow River, the northern and western sections by roads.

The site consists of one dome of sloping bog associated with subsidence caused by drainage. Intact dome peat is restricted to the south-east. Tear pools are found to the west of the site. There are two extensive flush systems within the extensive drainage system found on the bog. Cutover bog occurs all around the margins of the high bog except where the bog slopes down to the river where the edge is semi-natural.

Much of the high bog has vegetation typical of the Western Raised Bog type, consisting of Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Cottongrass (*Eriophorum* spp.), Carnation Sedge (*Carex panicea*), Common Lousewort (*Pedicularis sylvatica*) and the bryophytes *Campylopus atrovirens*, *Racomitrium lanuginosum* and *Pleurozia purpurea*. The intact dome in the south-east is uniformly wet and contains the relic of a good hummock/hollow system. Small hummocks of bog mosses *Sphagnum capillifolium*, *S. subnitens* and the rare *S. pulchrum* are found here. Hollows are poorly vegetated with a lot of bare peat. *Sphagnum papillosum*, *S. cuspidatum*, *S. pulchrum* and the liverwort *Odontoschisma sphagni* occur in small depressions but not in pools. A long sinuous flush dominated by Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*), Ling Heather and Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*) flows out towards the north-east margin. The other flush consists of a series of swallow holes which support a vegetation of tall Ling Heather, Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*). Active cutover is mainly bare peat with Common Cottongrass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*) and Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*); old cutover is dominated by Purple Moor-grass and Ling Heather. Some drains filled with the bog moss *Sphagnum cuspidatum* also occur.

Red Grouse, a species that is becoming increasingly rare in Ireland, has been recorded on this bog.

Current landuse on the site consists of active peat-cutting, with mechanised peat extraction occurring on 60% of the site's perimeter. This has resulted in extensive drainage, with 60% of the bog (north-west section) becoming severely damaged by deep drainage on the dome. In addition, there has been fire damage to undrained areas in the recent past and bog mosses have been slow to recover on the site. Erosion of the peat occurs along the north-west perimeter. The south-east intact area shows signs of a lowering water table.

Slieve Bog NHA is a site of considerable conservation significance comprising as it does a raised bog, a rare habitat in the E.U. and one that is becoming increasingly scarce and under threat in Ireland. This site supports a diversity of raised bog microhabitats including hummock/hollow complexes, pools and flushes as well as *Sphagnum pulchrum* a nationally rare plant. Areas of cutover bog and a semi-natural margin between the bog and the Yellow River also occur on the site. Ireland has a high proportion of the total E.U. resource of raised bog (over 50%) and so has a special responsibility for its conservation at an international level.

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