

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: DOON LOUGH BOG NHA

SITE CODE: 000337

Doon Lough Bog NHA is situated approximately 3 km north-east of Broadford, Co. Clare in the townlands of Doorus, Cloonlough Beg, Teerovannan Mountallon, Killaderry, Gortnagonnella, Doon Lough and Doon. The site comprises a raised bog, that includes both areas of high bog and cutover bog, woodlands, lakes, marsh, fen and wet meadows. The site is bounded by roads to the west, south and east. The high bog is bounded by mineral ridges to the west and east and wet grassland to the south.

The raised bog on the site consists of a small, relatively intact basin bog with a distinct dome. Towards the centre there is a hummock/hollow complex. Cutover is found all around the high bog and includes areas of regenerating cutover bog, humid grassland and Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*) scrub.

Much of the high bog has vegetation typical of a Western Raised Bog, with such species as Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Common Cottongrass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*), White Beak-sedge (*Rhynchospora alba*), Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*), Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*) and Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*). Bog mosses present include the hummock-formers *Sphagnum imbricatum*, *S. fuscum*, *S. capillifolium* and *S. papillosum*, as well as *S. cuspidatum* which is found in hollows. Many of the hollows are colonised by algae. Bog-rosemary (*Andromeda polifolia*), a midlands raised bog indicator species is also found on the bog.

The cutover supports a range of habitats including regenerating cutover, birch scrub, wet grasslands and areas of old peat cutting. The cutover is mostly abandoned and there has been some scrub encroachment in a few areas. There is excellent regeneration of the cutover, with bog moss cover in places up to 80% and including an abundance of hummocks of *Sphagnum papillosum* and *S. capillifolium*.

The site also includes a large lake system with a variety of fringing habitats, which include scrub, woodland, marsh, and wet grassland. The emergent vegetation is usually confined to the more sheltered extensions of the lake with Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) and Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*) locally abundant. Birch and willow (*Salix* spp.) woodland and scrub occur in areas close to the lake edge. Similarly wooded islands are present on the lake. Mixed woodland forms a large portion of the site particularly to the east of Doon Lough. Much of the woodland is located on sloping ground with a distinct change from deciduous trees to conifers further upslope. On the lower ground mature Sessile Oak (*Quercus petraea*) dominates, along with Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and to a lesser extent Mountain Ash (*Sorbus aucuparia*). Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) occur regularly. Further upslope Scot's Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) and Norway Spruce (*Picea abies*) occur in large stands between distinct bands of deciduous trees.

Current landuse on the site includes angling, amenity use, peat cutting and agriculture. There has been active peat-cutting around the raised bog in the recent past but it is

very limited. Areas of cutover have been reclaimed for agricultural purposes to the south, east and north of the site in the past. Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*), an invasive species, grows on parts of the bog. Damaging activities associated with peat-cutting and agricultural reclamation include drainage and burning of the high bog. These are activities that have resulted in loss of habitat and damage to the hydrological status of the site, and pose a continuing threat to its viability.

Doon Lough 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. The site is especially important due to its location, as it is one of the most westerly raised bogs in the country. 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.