

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: ARRAGH MORE BOG NHA

SITE CODE: 000640

Arragh More Bog NHA is located approximately 9.5 km north-east of Borrisokane, mainly in the townlands of Arragh More, Derrybreen, The Island, Cloneska and Lismacrory in Co. Tipperary. The site comprises a raised bog that includes both areas of high bog and cutover bog. The site is partly bounded in the east by a road.

This site is the remnant of a large bog that was originally part of a system of interconnecting bogs. The bogs are now separated by roads and cutover that has been reclaimed for agriculture. Arragh More Bog is split by many mineral ridges, which is a general feature of the local landscape of mineral ridges running between areas of raised bog. On the high bog there are areas of hummocks and pools, especially towards the south. There is a wooded flush towards the north of the site and in this area coniferous forestry has been planted on the high bog. Cutover is found around much of the site and is forested in the north-west.

Much of the high bog has vegetation typical of a Midland Raised Bog, consisting of Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccos*), Bog-rosemary (*Andromeda polifolia*) and White Beak-sedge (*Rhynchospora alba*). In addition to the more common hummock-forming bog mosses, *Sphagnum capillifolium* and *S. papillosum*, some hummocks of the relatively scarce *S. imbricatum* and *S. fuscum* have been recorded. The majority of the bog has poor quality algal pools. However, a small area towards the south of the site has pools that contain the aquatic bog moss *S. cuspidatum*, and here hummocks of *S. imbricatum* occur more commonly. Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*) is common in the more degraded areas of the bog where the algal pools are more frequent. A small number of ridges with Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) are located towards the centre of the bog. There is a large flush in the north of the bog, but the coniferous forestry planted in the vicinity will have had a negative impact. Crowberry (*Empetrum nigrum*) has been found in the wettest flush areas and the bog moss *S. recurvum* has also been recorded. Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*), Bog Asphodel, and Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*) are found on marginal areas around the entire high bog. Coniferous forestry is planted on the high bog in the north-west of the site and the plantation continues onto the cutover in this area. Small areas of birch (*Betula* sp.) scrub are found on the cutover all around the site and in the west of the site there is an area of Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) dominated scrub.

Hen Harrier, a species that is listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive, has been recorded on this bog.

Current landuses on the site include peat-cutting, forestry and agriculture. Mechanised peat-cutting is mostly taking place in the east of the site. Coniferous forestry is on an area of high bog and cutover in the north-west of the site. Small areas of cutover around the site have been reclaimed for agriculture. Damaging

activities associated with these landuses include drainage throughout the site and burning of the high bog. The most damaging agricultural activity that is affecting the high bog is the pumping of farm slurry onto the centre of the bog. All of these activities have resulted in the loss of habitat and damage to the hydrological status of the site, and pose a continuing threat to its viability.

Arragh More 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 supports a good diversity of raised bog microhabitats, including hummocks, pools and a flush. 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.