

## SITE SYNOPSIS

**SITE NAME: CANGORT BOG NHA**

**SITE CODE: 000890**

Cangort Bog NHA is located 1 km north of Shinrone, mostly in the townlands of Quakerstown, Kilmurryely, Cangort Demesne and Kilfra in Co. Offaly and Co. Tipperary. The site comprises a raised bog that includes both areas of high bog and cutover bog. The site is partially bounded in the south by the local road between Shinrone and Ballingarry and in the east by a tributary of the Little Brosna River.

This raised bog was originally part of a larger area of bog that has now been cutover and reclaimed for forestry and agriculture. Cangort Bog has hummocks throughout most of the high bog and in places the surface of the bog is wet and spongy. There are pools on the high bog, but they are either tear pools or dominated by algae. Cutover is found all around the high bog. There is coniferous forestry on the cutover in the south of the site and deciduous woodland on cutover surrounds the remainder of the bog.

Much of the high bog has vegetation typical of a Midland Raised Bog, consisting of Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccos*) and Bog-rosemary (*Andromeda polifolia*). Bog mosses (*Sphagnum* spp.) are found over much of the bog and hummocks of the rare bog moss species *Sphagnum imbricatum* and *S. fuscum* have been recorded, as have the more common hummock forming bog mosses *S. capillifolium* and *S. papillosum*. The tops of hummocks are completely overgrown with lichens, in particular *Cladonia portentosa*, *C. tenuis*, *C. arbuscula* and *C. uncialis*. Lichens are abundant on the bog and the fact that there are large areas of mature Ling Heather covered in epiphytic lichens suggests that the bog has not been burnt for a long time. The surface of the bog is wet and spongy in places and there are occasional carpets of the bog moss *S. magellanicum* and tracts of Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*). The prominence of mosses other than *Sphagnum*, such as the moss *Hypnum jutlandicum*, on this bog is one unusual feature of the vegetation recorded for this bog. The pools found between the *Sphagnum* hummocks are mostly algal with only a small quantity of the aquatic bog moss *S. cuspidatum* recorded in them. Tear pools were recorded in the south-west of the site and *S. cuspidatum* is more common in these pools. White Beak-sedge (*Rhynchospora alba*) and Bog Sedge (*Carex limosa*) were recorded in the vicinity of the tear pools. Other species of note on the bog include Great Sundew (*Drosera anglica*), Bog-myrtle (*Myrica gale*), which is quite common in the north of the site, and Carnation Sedge (*Carex panicea*) which is common throughout the bog.

There is a track running across the site which has been colonised by Gorse (*Ulex* sp.) scrub and Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*). It has been observed that there is less bog moss on the eastern side of the track. Overall the vegetation complexes on the bog were considered to be atypical and of interest for this reason. The south and south-east of the cutover has been planted with coniferous forestry and disturbingly the forestry is spreading onto the high bog. In the east of the site there is an area of

mixed woodland with mature conifers inter-dispersed with Oak (*Quercus* sp.), Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and Horse-chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*). The rest of the cutover directly bordering the high bog is surrounded by semi-natural Birch woodland.

Current landuses on the site include forestry and agriculture. Coniferous forestry has been planted on the cutover in the south and south-east of the site. The only significant area of agricultural fields is in the north of the site. Damaging activities associated with these landuses include drainage throughout the site and burning of the high bog. All these activities have resulted in the loss of habitat, damage to the hydrological status of the site, and pose a continuing threat to its viability.

Cangort 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 good diversity of raised bog microhabitats, including hummocks. 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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