

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: KILLURE BOG NHA

SITE CODE: 001283

Killure Bog NHA is situated approximately 2 km north-west of Ballinasloe, in the townlands of Killure Castle and Killcloony, County Galway. The site comprises a raised bog that includes both areas of high bog and cutover bog. The bog is bisected by a road. The eastern margin of the site is bounded by the Bunowen River, while the west, north and south of the bog are bounded mainly by local access roads.

The site consists of two sections of high bog. The western section comprises an area of quaking bog with hummocks and pools occurring in the centre. There is a flush on the eastern margin of the western section. Two other flushes appear on the aerial photographs. The eastern section has been afforested. Cutover and drainage channels occur all around the margins of the high bog.

Much of the high bog has vegetation typical of a Midlands Raised Bog. The vegetation consists of Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) frequent to abundant Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*), Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*) and Cottongrass (*Eriophorum vaginatum*). The western indicator Carnation Sedge (*Carex panicea*) occurs to the east of the western subsection. Midland indicators present at the site include Cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccos*) and the bog moss (*Sphagnum magellanicum*). Other bog mosses present include *Sphagnum papillosum*, hummock-forming *S. fuscum* and *S. imbricatum*.

The central area of the western high bog is quaking, with large and small pools with open water and large areas of bog mosses *Sphagnum cuspidatum* and *S. auriculatum* and between the pools a wide variety of other bog mosses are present. Great Sundew (*Drosera anglica*) and Oblong-leaved Sundew (*D. intermedia*) are also present in pools. The pools become larger and interlocking in the south-east of this area and become more like a quaking flush with large carpets of *Sphagnum* between pools including *Sphagnum magellanicum* and vigorous *S. papillosum*. There is an extensive flush area in the mid-east of the high bog. It consists of scattered and sometimes dense Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*).

Current landuse on the site consists of peat-cutting around the southern edge of the high bog and forestry. Areas of cutover have been reclaimed for agricultural purposes. Peat-cutting on the site has also increased in area and intensity within the last decade through the use of mechanised methods for peat extraction. Damaging activities associated with these landuses include drainage throughout the site (both old and recent) and extensive burning of the high bog. Forestry on the high bog is reaching maturity and should be harvested soon. These are all 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.

Killure 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 hummock/hollow complexes, pools and flushes, as well as a number of scarce plant species. 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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