

## SITE SYNOPSIS

**SITE NAME: ANNAGHBEG BOG NHA**

**SITE CODE: 002344**

Annaghbeg Bog NHA is located 5 km south-east of Ahascragh, mostly in the townlands of Addergoole West, Addergoole North, Gortbrackmoor and Annaghbeg in Co. Galway. The site comprises a raised bog that includes both areas of high bog and cutover bog.

This raised bog was originally part of an extensive system of bogs that, with the exception for Annaghbeg, have now been cutover. Annaghbeg Bog is in close proximity to Crit Island NHA (254) and Killure Bog NHA (1283). Although this bog has no pools it is wet and quaking in places with hummocks throughout the high bog. Cutover is found all around the high bog.

Much of the high bog has vegetation typical of a Midland Raised Bog, consisting of Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*), Cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccos*) and Bog-rosemary (*Andromeda polifolia*). The vegetation on the bog is uniform and dominated by Carnation Sedge (*Carex panicea*), Deergrass, Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*) and White Beak-sedge (*Rhynchospora alba*). Close to the centre of the bog the surface is wet and quaking, bog moss cover is at its highest and Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*) is present. Hummocks of the bog mosses *Sphagnum capillifolium* and *S. papillosum* are common and *S. magellanicum* is also frequent, the hummock forming bog moss *S. imbricatum* was less common. Away from the centre of the bog *Sphagnum* cover is low. Bog Asphodel dominates to the south of the site, in areas that have been recently burnt, and towards the south-east Ling Heather becomes more dominant on dryer hummocks. In the east of the site there is an old townland boundary drain that is in-filled with the aquatic bog moss *S. cuspidatum*, Bog Asphodel and White Beak-sedge. In the adjacent drain Sundew (*Drosera* sp.) was also recorded. The high bog is surrounded by cutover, much of which has been reclaimed as agricultural grassland, however small areas in the east and north-west have patches of Gorse (*Ulex* sp.) scrub.

Common frog, a species listed in the Red Data Book, has been recorded on the site.

Current landuses on the site include peat-cutting and agriculture. Active peat-cutting is taking place in the west and south of the site. The cutting in the south seems to be more intensive and commercial. Areas of cutover all around the bog have been reclaimed for agriculture and much of the grassland seems to have been improved. 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.

Annaghbeg 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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