

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: DERRYOOBER BOG NHA

SITE CODE: 002379

Derryoover Bog NHA is a lowland blanket bog situated approximately 2 km east of Lough Derg and 5 km south of Woodford in east Co. Galway. It lies within the townlands of Derrygoolin South, Derrygoolin North, Derryoover West and Coos North. The site contains an extensive area of lowland blanket bog that has formed in depressions between low-lying hills and lies between an altitude range of 50 m to 100 m. It is bounded to the north by forestry and a minor track, to the east by minor roads and enclosed agricultural land, to the south by the Coos River and commercial forestry and to the west by enclosed agricultural land and a minor track. The bedrock geology consists of Old Red Sandstone.

A number of streams run through the site and drain into Lough Derg. A former lake, Black Lough, is now overgrown by a reed bed. The hill of Coos North provides a watershed and the bog at Derrygoolin South is a headwater bog.

Blanket bog vegetation is dominated by Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*), Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*), Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) and Bog-myrtle (*Myrica gale*). There are frequent hummocks of bog mosses (*Sphagnum* spp.) with Round-leaved Sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*). There are also hummocks of the moss *Leucobryum glaucum* with Hare's-tail Cottongrass (*Eriophorum vaginatum*). Between the hummocks are lawns of White Beak-sedge (*Rhynchospora alba*), Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*), Carnation Sedge (*Carex panicea*), Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*) and Many-stalked Spike-rush (*Eleocharis multicaulis*). Other species include Common Cottongrass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*).

On the low hills with shallower peat, the vegetation is dominated by Ling Heather with Deergrass, Purple Moor-grass, Cross-leaved Heath, Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*), Common Cottongrass, lichen *Cladonia portentosa* and scattered bushes of Bog-myrtle and Western Gorse (*Ulex gallii*).

There are pools towards the south east of the site, close to the Coos River. These pools support Brown Beak-sedge (*Rhynchospora fusca*), Oblong-leaved Sundew (*Drosera intermedia*), Common Cottongrass and the bog moss *Sphagnum auriculatum*. Lawns of White Beak-sedge, Cross-leaved Heath and Sharp-flowered Rush (*Juncus acutiflorus*) surround the pools.

Red Grouse, an Irish Red Data Book species, has been recorded on the site.

Current landuse on the site consists of grazing and burning. In the south-east, just north of the Coos River, there are excavation scars and evidence of cattle poaching close to the track. The land to the north and south of this is afforested with conifer plantations. This could have an adverse effect on the hydrology of the site and on the

water quality of Lough Derg as the bog provides a catchment through which several streams flow into the lake.

Derryoover Bog NHA is a site of high conservation value supporting excellent blanket bog habitat. Blanket bog is a globally scarce resource. It is largely confined to coastal regions with cool, wet, oceanic climates at temperate latitudes. North-west Europe contains some of the best-developed areas of blanket bog in the world. Lowland blanket bog comprises less than 3% of the world's peatlands. In Europe this type of blanket bog is restricted to Ireland, Britain, Norway and Iceland. The lowland blanket bog that occurs in Ireland is considered to be an extreme hyperoceanic variant of the habitat type, found nowhere else in the world except on the coastal fringes of north-west Scotland.

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