

## SITE SYNOPSIS

**SITE NAME: CARRANE HILL BOG NHA**

**SITE CODE: 002415**

Carrane Hill Bog NHA is an upland blanket bog located approximately 2 km east of Lough Arrow, to the west of Geevagh Village, and 5 km to the south-west of Drumkeerin village in Co. Sligo. It is situated mostly within the townlands of Carrowmore, Carrownadargny, Carrowcashel, Tullanure and Straduff, with an altitude range of between 242 m and 455 m. The site takes in the rocky outcrops on the upper slopes of Carrane Hill. The bedrock in this area is thought to be mainly limestone with some shale observed under thin peat.

The site runs in a north-west to south-east direction along a ridgeline, with Carrane Hill in the centre. There are good areas of blanket bog throughout, interspersed by rocky outcrops with dry heath vegetation, pools and flushes.

The blanket bog vegetation is characterised by the presence of Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Common Cottongrass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*), Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*), Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*) and Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*), along with mosses (*Sphagnum* spp.), *Pleurozium schreberi*, liverworts including *Mylia taylori* and lichens (*Cladonia portentosa*, *C. ciliata* and *C. uncialis*). Some areas of bare peat are being recolonised by Common Cottongrass, Carnation Sedge (*Carex panicea*) and lichens (*Cladonia macilenta* and *C. subcervicornis*). Bog pools are colonised with bog mosses, including *Sphagnum cuspidatum* and *S. auriculatum*, and Round-leaved Sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*). Extensive areas have large hummocks of the moss *Racomitrium lanuginosum*.

On the rocky outcrops on the upper slopes of Carrane Hill there is a diverse lichen community with species including *Cladonia* sp., *Rhizocarpon geographicum* and other crustose species. Crowberry (*Empetrum nigrum*) and Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*) occur amongst the Ling Heather. Areas of dry heath also occur on the upper slopes and are dominated by Ling Heather, Bilberry, Star Sedge (*Carex echinata*), Great Woodrush (*Luzula sylvatica*), Heath Bedstraw (*Galium saxatile*), Heath Rush (*Juncus squarrosus*), Hard Fern (*Blechnum spicant*), Mat-grass (*Nardus stricta*) and the mosses *Polytrichum commune* and *Hylocomium splendens*.

Current landuse on the site consists of peat cutting, grazing and forestry, some of which has failed. Damaging activities associated with these land uses include drainage and extensive and frequent burning of the bog. There are quad tracks along the ridgeline. These activities have resulted in loss of habitat and damage to the hydrological integrity of the site and may pose a continuing threat to its conservation prospects.

Carrane Hill Bog NHA is a site of considerable conservation significance comprising an excellent example of upland blanket bog. Blanket bog habitat is a globally scarce resource. It is largely confined to coastal regions at temperate latitudes with cool, wet, oceanic climates. North-west Europe contains some of the best-developed areas of blanket bog in the world. The most extensive areas are found in Ireland and Britain. Upland blanket bogs, due to their exposure to severe climatic conditions at high elevations, are particularly vulnerable to erosion by human activities and extensive areas are currently undergoing active erosion due mainly to overgrazing. The current area of intact upland blanket bog in Ireland represents only a fraction of the original resource, due to the combined impacts of afforestation and overgrazing, and intact examples are therefore extremely valuable for nature conservation. Their long-term survival requires sensitive management.

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