

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: BOGGERAGH MOUNTAINS NHA

SITE CODE: 002447

Boggeragh Mountains NHA consists primarily of upland blanket bog habitat and is located 10 km south-west of Mallow in Co. Cork. The site consists of three sub-sites extending across the Boggeragh Mountains: Seefin to the west; Inchamay South and Annagannihy in the centre; and Glenaknockane in the east. All three sub-sites are mainly surrounded by mature forestry, with cutover bog, streams, roads or tracks forming the remaining boundaries. The site lies at an altitude range of between 300 m and 486 m. Bedrock geology is Old Red Sandstone.

Blanket bog habitat is found across the three sub-sites on peat depths of at least 2 m. Other habitats present include heath on the slopes of the hills, headwaters and a number of small flushes and streams.

At the Seefin site, the blanket bog vegetation is characterised by Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*) with Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*), Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*), frequent Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*) and Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*). There are large, intact hummocks of the moss *Racomitrium lanuginosum* together with the lichen *Cladonia portentosa* and a liverwort *Pleurozia purpurea*. Occasional hummocks of bog mosses (*Sphagnum capillifolium* and *S. papillosum*) occur in this area. Bog moss cover is low – less than 10% – but in general the bog surface is wet and intact. Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*), Heath Bedstraw (*Galium saxatile*) and the moss *Hypnum jutlandicum* also occur. Heath Milkwort (*Polygala serpyllifolia*), Great Wood-rush (*Luzula sylvatica*) and *Polytrichum commune* (a moss) are present on the northern side of the ridge where grazing pressure is low. In the south of the site, towards the track, a mosaic of wet heath and upland grassland dominated by rushes (*Juncus* sp.) has formed on shallower peat.

At Annagannihy and Glenaknockane, Purple Moor-grass and Bog Asphodel with occasional Ling Heather, Cross-leaved Heath, Tormentil and Bog Pimpernel (*Anagallis tenella*) dominate the vegetation. Other species present include Bilberry, Common Cottongrass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*), Hare's-tail Cottongrass (*Eriophorum vaginatum*), Broad Buckler-fern (*Dryopteris dilatata*), Devil's-bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*) and Goldenrod (*Solidago virgaurea*). In this area, bog moss cover is < 5% with sparse hummocks of Bog Moss *Sphagnum papillosum*. To the north of the sub-site at Inchamay South bog moss cover increases to 70% and in places to 100% with hummocks of *Sphagnum papillosum* and *S. capillifolium*. Other mosses present include *Hypnum jutlandicum*. The vegetation here is dominated by Ling Heather and occasionally reaches 30 - 40 cm in height; in places Purple Moor-grass is locally dominant. Streams occur at the north-western boundary of this sub-site. Their banks are dominated by Purple Moor-grass, Great Wood-rush, Creeping

Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), Ling Heather, Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*) with occasional Cross-leaved Heath and Bilberry. The bog moss *Sphagnum recurvum* is found in flushed areas beside the forestry at Inchamay South.

Golden Plover, a Red Data Book species, occurs on the site.

Landuse on the site includes peat cutting: this is extensive in the area around Knockcraugh Mountain with some also within the site at Seefin. There are deep drains through the bog at Knockcraugh. Intensive grazing by sheep occurs at Seefin. An anemometer is installed at Seefin indicating an investigation into the possibility of a future windfarm at the site. Most of the adjoining lands are under mature conifers or have extensive peat cuttings.

Boggeragh Mountains NHA is a site of considerable conservation significance. It contains excellent blanket bog habitat on peat depths of at least 2 m. Other habitats present include heath on the slopes of the hills, headwaters and a number of small flushes and streams. 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.