

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: DOOGORT EAST BOG NHA

SITE CODE: 002381

Doogort East Bog NHA is an area of lowland blanket bog located approximately 2 km east of Doogort and 3 km north of Bunacurry on Achill Island, Co. Mayo. It lies within the townlands of Doogort East and Tonatanvalley. The site lies in a shallow plain encircled by low hills, notably Doogort Hill on the west. The northern margins of the site are bounded by agricultural land, the eastern margin is bounded by the Tonatanvalley townland boundary and the Tonatanvalley-Bunacurry Road. The southern boundary follows the headwaters of a stream. The site covers an altitude range of between 30 m and 210 m. Bedrock geology consists of schist and gneiss.

The site includes areas of cutover bog with regenerating bog vegetation and a lake to the south-east. There are also flushes and streams within the site.

Much of the bog is characteristic by species such as Black Bog-Rush (*Schoenus nigricans*), Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*), Cross-Leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*), Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), White Beak-sedge (*Rhynchospora alba*), Common Cottongrass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*), Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*), Round-leaved Sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*) and Lousewort (*Pedicularis sylvatica*). Bog mosses (*Sphagnum* spp.) form a spongy mat in places while lichens (*Cladonia* spp.) occur in abundance. Hummocks of the moss *Racomitrium lanuginosum* occur in the centre of the site and the liverwort *Pleurozia purpurea* is also present. There are hollows colonised by Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*) and moss *Campylopus atrovirens* and the bog moss *Sphagnum contortum* also occurs.

The lake in the south-east corner of the site supports Pipewort (*Eriocaulon aquaticum*), Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*) and Bulbous Rush (*Juncus bulbosus*) and a marginal flush that is extensive in parts. The flush contains bog mosses *Sphagnum recurvum* and *S. cuspidatum*, Carnation Sedge (*Carex panicea*), Marsh Pennywort (*Hydrocotyle vulgaris*), Oblong-leaved Sundew (*Drosera intermedia*), Yellow Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*) and Many-stalked Spike-rush (*Eleocharis multicaulis*).

The slopes of the low-rising hills to the west of the site support a mosaic of blanket bog and dry heath. Species noted include Ling Heather, Devil's-bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*), Hard Fern (*Blechnum spicant*) and the lichens *Cladonia uncialis* and *C. portentosa*.

Current landuse on the site consists of active mechanical peat cutting, carried out to the north-east. Damaging activities associated with this include habitat loss and changes to the hydrological status of the bog.

Doogort East Bog NHA is a site of considerable conservation significance consisting of lowland blanket bog which supports a good diversity of blanket bog microhabitats,

including hummock/hollow complexes, bog pools, lakes, flushes and regenerating cutover as well as heath-covered slopes. Blanket bog habitat 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.