

## Safe Visit Guidelines

As you explore Girley Bog you can learn more by stopping at the many information signs located throughout the loop walk. Here are some tips to ensure you have a safe visit and to help protect Girley Bog and its wildlife so that future generations can enjoy it too.



- \* Dumping of rubbish and personal items is prohibited as they damage the bog and spoil the environment.
- \* Camping, fires and the use of motorised vehicles on the bog are prohibited as they disturb wildlife.
- \* Please keep pets on a leash as they can disturb wildlife.
- \* It is an offence to feed or molest wildlife or remove or otherwise disturb any natural feature or plant on the bog.
- \* It is dangerous to walk on the bog surface owing to hidden ditches, soft ground, tree stumps and brambles. Please use the loop walk trail and the boardwalks provided.
- \* "Pursuant to the provisions of the Occupiers' Liability Act 1995, the occupiers of these premises puts all visitors to his premises on notice that his sole duties to them are: (a) not to injure the visitor or damage the property of the visitor intentionally, and (b) not to act with reckless disregard for the visitor or the property of the visitor."

Learn more about peatlands by visiting the Bog of Allen Nature Centre run by the Irish Peatland Conservation Council. Visit [www.ipcc.ie](http://www.ipcc.ie) where you will find lots of information about Irish peatlands including a peatland passport offering you a selection of peatland sites that you can visit throughout Ireland.



## Getting to Girley Bog



Girley Bog is located 8km south west of Kells. Access and parking are available at the trail head for the Girley Bog National Loop Walk (No. 51) which is signposted from the N52.

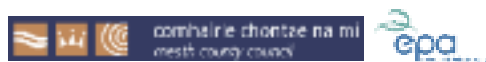
GPS: N53.68483 E-6.94971      Facilities:  
 Grid Ref: N 705 680  
 Area: 100ha  
 Status: Natural Heritage Area  
 No. 1580



Owners: private individuals, non governmental organisations and the Irish Government.  
 Conserving Girley Bog is a meitheal between private individuals and the following groups:



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 Tel: +353-45-860133. [www.ipcc.ie](http://www.ipcc.ie)



## Girley Bog, Meath Map & Guide



*Enjoy a walk through one of Ireland's wild peatlands and discover the variety of wildlife found on Girley Bog*



# Discovering Girley Bog - Formation, Wildlife & Conservation

Sundew one of Ireland's native insect eating plants can be found growing on *Sphagnum* moss on Girley Bog

## A Wilderness Preserved

Girley Bog from the Irish 'grellach' meaning a mire or marshy place is a dome-shaped raised bog which developed in a lake basin over a period of 10,000 years. The dome of the bog is surrounded by deciduous woodlands. At the end of the last ice age, a shallow lake was present where the bog is today. This lake gradually became totally overgrown with vegetation that slowly accumulated in the lake basin, without decomposing, to form peat. Bog mosses (species of *Sphagnum*) began to grow in this unique water-logged environment. These mosses soaked up rainfall like sponges. Over the millennia their remains accumulated in the lake basin to a depth of 10m creating the peat that now forms the typical 'high bog' of Girley.

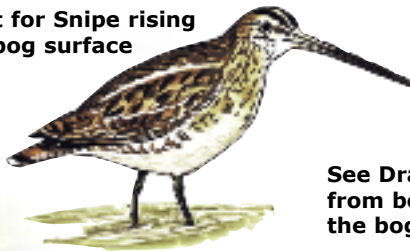


*"The unique character of Girley Bog is formed through a combination of vegetation, water and peat that have been associated together for 10,000 years."*

## Refuge for Wildlife

The surface of the bog is a mosaic of hummocks and hollows. In the wet hollows the water table is close to the surface and there are several species of bog moss or *Sphagnum* found here. Each species has a unique colour and together they can form a vibrant mosaic or carpet on the bog surface. The insectivorous Great Sundew (*Drosera anglica*) and Round-leaved Sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*) are also found. Many species of *Cladonia* lichen form cushions on the bog. Some of them grow in interesting shapes including antler horns, pyxie cups, matchsticks and bearded types. The most obvious shrubs on the bog are Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) on the dry hummocks and in the wetter areas Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*). Hare's-tail Cottongrass (*Eriophorum vaginatum*), Cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccus*) and Bog Rosemary (*Andromeda polifolia*) are also found. Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*) and Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*) are the two birds most often seen on the high bog. Ravens can be heard cawing as they patrol the skies above the bog and the surrounding woods. Frogs (*Rana temporaria*) are common on Girley Bog while Badgers, Foxes and Hares are sometimes seen criss-crossing the bog as they forage for food.

Watch out for Snipe rising from the bog surface



See Dragonflies that emerge from bog pools to hunt over the bog surface in the summer

Frogs are common on Girley bog



Listen for the Skylark as it sings while hovering high in the sky



## Conserving Girley Bog - A Meitheal



Drain blocking helps to restore water levels and encourages growth of the bog building *Sphagnum* mosses

Girley Bog has suffered a lot of damage over the years. In the past drains were opened and turf cutting and afforestation were common. Today a number of state agencies including the National Parks and Wildlife Service and Coillte, with non governmental organisations including the Irish Peatland Conservation Council and the Native Woodland Trust along with private individuals and local tourism attractions are working together to ensure the conservation of Girley Bog for future generations to enjoy. Turf cutting ceased on the bog in 2011, drain blocking is ongoing and trees are being removed from the bog dome. Native trees are being planted on green fields around the perimeter of the bog. A loop walk has been developed around the perimeter of the bog to ensure that no damage occurs from visitors who enjoy this wonderful site.

*Sphagnum* mosses also known as the 'Bog Builders' cover the surface of Girley Bog. As the mosses grow they form small cushions called hummocks, flat areas or lawns and depressions called hollows

See the vibrant yellow flowers of Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*) on Girley in the Summer. The seed head is deep orange, colouring the bog in Autumn