

Peatland Passport
IRELAND



***Peatland
Heritage
Sites
to Visit
in
Ireland***



2 Peatland Passport: Ireland

Welcome - Fáilte

your journey of discovery starts here...

No trip to Ireland is complete without a visit to a bog. Our peatlands are spread throughout the country and a visit to one or more will provide you with a unique experience of Irish biodiversity, history, conservation and culture. Each site chosen in this passport has its own character and is part of the fabric of the landscape and the life of the local communities in which it is located. A visit to any site will take you off the beaten track to help you discover for yourself the true heart of Ireland - our beautiful bogs and fens.

There are many different types of peatland in Ireland for you to enjoy, depending on geographic region, terrain and vegetation. Two major types are bogs (which are mainly rain fed and nutrient poor) and fens (which are mainly fed by surface or ground water and tend to be more nutrient rich). Bogs in upland and western parts of the country are blanket bogs while those in the central plains are raised bogs. Irish peatlands are located on the western fringe of Europe and tend to be naturally open in character and vegetated with mosses, sedges and dwarf shrubs. Trees are relatively rare unlike the peatlands in continental Europe or further afield in the tropical regions of the world.



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Peatland Habitats & Wildlife

Peat develops in landscapes receiving lots of rain year round, in places with poor natural drainage and shallow slopes. Something different about peatlands is that plants that die there don't decompose because their waterlogged environment lacks air: they stay just as they are and with time form peat. The peat in a bog can be as much as 10m thick. As peat and vegetation grow upward, they eventually lose contact with the groundwater beneath; and receive their water only from rain which is a very poor source of the nutrients needed for plant growth.

Irish bogs present a difficult environment for living things. The plants that survive in bogs are very specialised and have found ways to adapt to their hostile environment. Grasses and sedges are abundant in damp places while small shrubs in the heather family grow in drier areas. But soft, springy bog mosses (*Sphagnum* species) dominate the vegetation. They form a living layer over the top of the bog between 10 and 50cm deep. This upper layer of moss is called the acrotelm: it protects the peat in the lower layer or catotelm and regulates the functioning of the bog. Bog mosses are important contributors to peat formation in Ireland and on a day to day basis they help to maintain high water levels on the bog.

Layers of dead, undecomposed plants below the protective, living acrotelm form brown peat. The catotelm can grow to 10m deep in Irish bogs. Successive increments of dead vegetation build up, and, as the years pass, those at the bottom turn black. Active peat grows upwards just 1mm a year. Peat comprises more than 90% water and so peatlands have a unique ability to store large amounts of water. Not only do peatlands store water but the thick layer of peat that defines their character is also an important store of carbon.

In peatlands, water, peat and vegetation are strongly interconnected. If any one of these components is removed, the peatland is fundamentally changed.



Why Peatlands are Important to Us?



Peatlands are beautiful landscapes with a unique biodiversity. Not only are they important for their biodiversity but they have key values for climate regulation and for human welfare.



Peatlands cover one fifth of the land area of Ireland, an area of 1.466 million hectares. Currently they are degrading as a result of turf cutting, land clearance, drainage, fire, dumping, nutrient pollution, invasive species, overgrazing and climate change. This degradation not only causes a reduction in biodiversity but it affects the direct benefits peatlands provide for Irish people. The protection and wise use of peatlands should be a national priority.



As one of Ireland's largest carbon stores, peatlands play a significant role in the regulation of greenhouse gas emissions and global climate.



Additionally peatlands have many other important functions and values including water regulation - especially flood control, extraordinary biodiversity, and the provision of a livelihood for communities. Peatlands are also used for forestry, agriculture as a source of peat for energy and horticulture and they provide turf for household heating. Unfortunately despite the benefits, Irish peatlands have been heavily over-utilised and degraded.



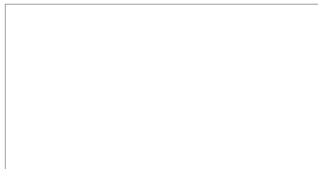


1 Abbeyleix Bog Laois

Image © Abbeyleix Bog Facebook

Abbeyleix Bog is a raised bog bisected by an old railway line. The bog is being actively managed for conservation and all of its drains have been blocked. *Sphagnum* or bog mosses are regenerating slowly. Extensive walk ways (Killamuck Loop and Collin's Bog Loop) through the different habitats present in this site including raised bog, lagg, cutaway bog, wet carr woodland and meadows provide a great opportunity to see wildlife. www.abbeyleixbog.ie

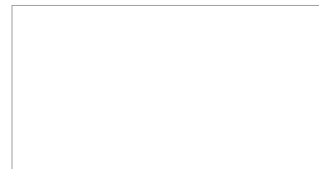
Location Abbeyleix Bog is located off the N77 on the southern periphery of Abbeyleix town
GPS N52.90605 W-7.35332
Contact Abbeyleix Bog Project: info@abbeyleixbog.ie



Ballinamuck Bog Longford 2

Image © Ballinamuck Enterprise Co-Operative

Location 1km outside Ballinamuck village on the L50581
GPS N53.85556 W-7.68442
Contact Ballinamuck Enterprise Co-Operative: gaigue@eircom.net

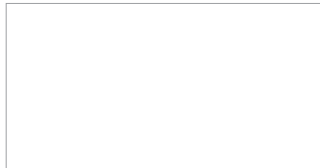


Ballinamuck (Edenmore) Bog contains a wealth of bog, scrub woodland, conifer plantation and cutover bog habitats and is a marvelous place to see wildlife and unwind as you walk the bog road that tracks through this wild place. Flat areas of the bog are wet and support up to 10 different species of bog moss. The effects of turf cutting are evident with tear pools on the bog dome formed by cracking of the peat with increased slopes due to drainage at the margins of the high bog. www.discoverireland.ie



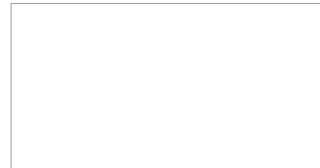
Lodge Bog is a raised bog and is part of the Bog of Allen Complex. The site contains hummocks and hollows of *Sphagnum* mosses and is made up of almost 98% water. Heathers, Lichens, Mosses and Sedges are found in abundance including insect eating sundews. Curlew can be heard calling on the bog in Spring. The rare large heath butterfly breeds on Lodge Bog. Swampy birch woodlands rich in blueberries are also found on the site. www.ipcc.ie

Location 6km from Allenwood or 10km from Rathangan on the R414
GPS N53.28238 W-6.93078
Contact Bog of Allen Nature Centre: bogs@ipcc.ie



Location 8 kilometres northwest of Ballycastle on the R314
GPS N54.30833 W-9.45619
Contact Céide Fields Visitor Centre: ceidefields@opw.ie and grtta.byrne@opw.ie

Céide Fields is a system of fields that are 5000 years old and which are buried by blanket bog. Remains of stone field walls, houses and tombs are preserved beneath the bog over an extensive area. The archaeologist - Seamus Caulfield has interpreted this site. It story of the everyday lives of a prehistoric farming people, their society, spiritual beliefs and their struggle against a changing environment. www.museumsof-mayo.com/ceide.htm and www.heritageireland.ie



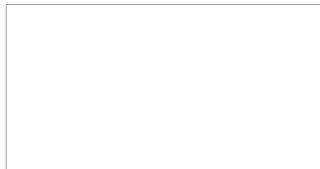
5 Clogher Bog Mayo



Image © Clogher Heritage

Clogher Bog contains a wonderful variety of birdlife, plant and animal life. The bog is just part of a varying landscape of hedgerows, woodland and fen which can be explored from quiet country lanes and bog tracks. This living, breathing, unspoilt bogland is teeming with wildlife. The views of the Party Mountains to the south and the unmistakable cone of Croagh Patrick to the west are amazing.
www.clogherheritage.com

Location Carrowmore South, (12km south of Castlebar and east of Ballintubber Abbey).
GPS N53.76312 W-9.24645
Contact Clogher Heritage: clogherenvigroup@eircom.net

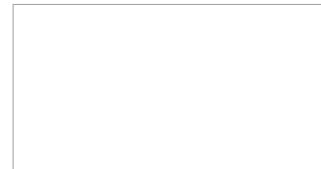


Corlea Bog Longford 6



Image © www.tourireland.com

Location 3km west of Kenagh village off the R397
GPS N53.61232 W-7.84462
Contact Corlea Trackway Visitor Centre Centre: ctrackwayvisitor-centre@opw.ie

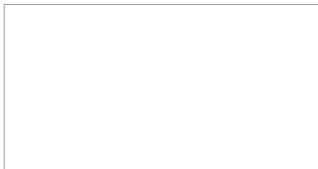


Corlea Bog is a remnant raised bog which encloses a famous Iron Age (148B.C.) bog tither or trackway. A boardwalk across the bog follows the original route of this archaeological feature which was excavated by the late Professor Barry Raftery. Heathers, Lichens, Mosses and Sedges are found on the bogland. Inside the visitor centre, an 18-metre stretch of the original oak road is on permanent display.
www.heritageireland.ie

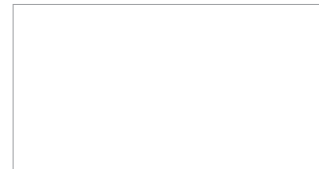


Cuilcagh Mountain Park is 265ha in extent and contains internationally important areas of pristine blanket bog. It is a refuge for rare or endangered plants and birds. Golden plover breed in this area and Greenland white-fronted geese occasionally roost here. Other birds in the area are the merlin, ring ouzel and dunlin. Some of the more common plants are *Sphagnum* mosses, heathers and sundew. Rare plants include starry saxifrage, stiff sedge, alpine clubmoss, and dwarf willow. www.marblearchcavesgeopark.com/

Location Marble Arch Road, west of the A509/N3
GPS N53.61232 W-7.84462
Contact Marble Arch Caves Visitor Centre: info@marblearchcavesgeopark.com



Location Doonbeg is on N67 between Kilkee and Milltown Malbay. Park at church.
GPS N52.73010 W-9.53098
Contact dcd@doonbeginfo.com

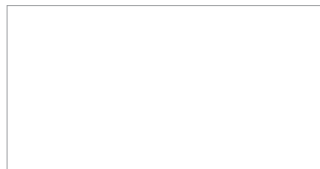


Doonbeg Bog is an extensive area of raised bog habitat. There are some intact domes of raised bog but a large proportion of the bog is cutaway. Both machine and hand cutting of turf is carried on in this region and there are plenty of opportunities to enjoy the cultural traditions as well as the flora and fauna that has regenerated in areas where cutting is finished. Such areas can be dominated by bog cotton. www.doonbeginfo.com

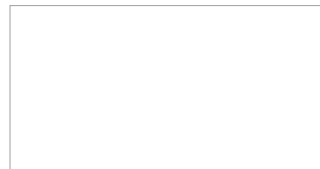


An alkaline fen located beside the Church in Fenor village. The bog lies in a depression overlooked by Ballyscanlon Hill which rises to an elevation of 148m. The bog is a storehouse of natural variety with wet woodland dominated by willow and alder, undulating greater tussock sedge vegetation and flat wet wild flower areas. Over 200 species of plant, bird, insect and animal have been recorded on the site. The fen is owned and managed by IPCC and MFDA. www.ipcc.ie

Location 5km west of Tramore just off the Dungarvan Road R675 in Fenor Village
GPS N52.16181 W-7.22456
Contact Rita Byrne: thomas.brendan.byrne@gmail.com



Location 7.5km south west of Kells off the N52
GPS N53.68483 W-6.94971
Contact Matt Murtagh Causey Farm: info@causey.ie or IPCC: bogs@ipcc.ie



Girley Bog is a raised bog surrounded by birch woods. The bog is rich in *Sphagnum* or bog mosses which form hummocks and hollows. There are fine views from the dome of the bog to the Slieve na Cailliagh hills, where the Loughcrew passage tombs are located. Lizards, newts and frogs can be found in the bog. Orchids are common on grassland paths along the loop walk and bog plants such as sundew, bog asphodel, bog rosemary and bog cotton are abundant. www.causey.ie and www.ipcc.ie

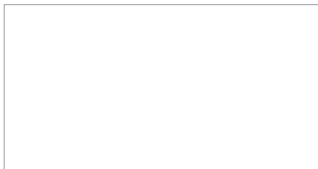
11 Griston Bog Limerick



Image © www.ballyhouraoutdoorclassroom.com

Griston Bog contains raised bog and fen habitats. The bog comes alive with plants and insects in summer. The Blue Emperor Dragonfly, numerous butterflies and 75 bird species survive here, including Hen Harrier, Barn Owl and Kingfisher. Long Eared Owls nest nearby and hunt the bog in the evenings. Plants include Ling Heather and Hare's Tail Cotton Grass. Frogs, Lizards and Newts are common.
www.ballyhouraoutdoorclassroom.com

Location 1 km south Ballylanders on the road to Glenroe. Turn off R513 at McDermott's Pub.
GPS N52.36091 W-8.35294
Contact Ballyhoura Heritage & Environment: booking@bally-houraoutdoorclassroom.com

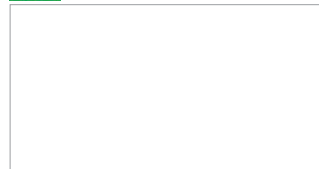


Kerry Bog Village Kerry 12



Image © www.kerrybogvillage.ie

Location On the N70 Ring of Kerry between Killorglin and Glenbeigh
GPS N52.07349 W-9.88177
Contact Kerry Bog Village Museum: info@kerrybogvillage.ie



The Kerry Bog Village, located on the beautiful Ring of Kerry gives you a fascinating insight into how people lived and worked in Ireland in the 18th Century. See the bog ponies and experience a walk on a Kerry bog with all its interesting wildlife.
www.kerrybogvillage.ie

13 Lough Boora Parklands Offaly



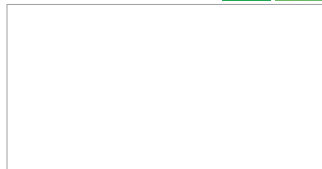
Lough Boora Parklands are a beautiful landscape at the centre of Ireland - a paradise for outdoor enthusiasts.

Through a creative combination of nature and the human hand new habitats are emerging on the cutaway bogs of Co. Offaly. Lands cloaked with great raised bogs for 10,000 years are at the dawn of a new era. Bogs harvested by Bord na Móna for energy since the 1940s are establishing as unique and welcoming habitats for a wide range of flora and fauna.
www.loughbooraparklands.ie

Location 7km from Blueball on R357 to Cloghan/Shannonbridge.

GPS N53.220527 W-7.727165

Contact Lough Boora Parklands:
info@loughbooraparklands.com



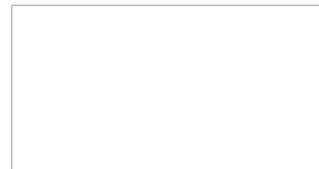
Mountallen Bog Roscommon 14



Location On the R280 from Manorhamilton to Drumshambo close to the junction with the R285 to Keadue.

GPS N54.071124 W-8.073148

Contact Tommy Earley
Tel: 086-2536672



Lough Allen Bog is uniquely set on the shores of Lough Allen.

There are a variety of habitats to see here including raised bog, grassland and lake shore.

Species of note at this site include the rare Irish Ladies

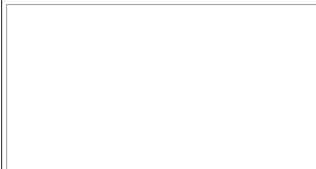
Tresses Orchid and the endangered Marsh Fritillary butterfly. The site is in private ownership and it is essential that intending visitors contact the owner by telephone prior to their visit (Tommy Earley on Tel: 086-2536672).

15 Peatlands Park Armagh



Peatlands Park raises awareness of peatland habitat issues. The peat here has been forming for 10,000 years. The park is rich in insects - butterflies, moths, dragonflies and damselflies and many woodland and wetland birds nest here. Badgers and hares are also present, while lizards and newts live in open bog areas. The Bog Garden contains much of the flora and fauna of peatland habitat. www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/biodiversity/habitats2/peatlands.htm
www.discovernorthernireland.com/Peatlands-Park-Dungannon-P2847

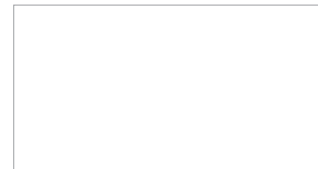
Location Exit 13 off the M1 (Northern Ireland) south of Lough Neagh onto Derryhubbert Road
GPS N54.48390 W-6.61516
Contact peat.info@doeni.gov.uk



Roundstone Bog 16 Galway



Location Between Clifden and Roundstone off the R341
GPS N53.45297 W-9.94940
Contact info@connemara-tourism.ie



Roundstone bog is a complex of Atlantic blanket bog and lakes. This great wilderness is of international, ecological and historical importance. It's edged by the Atlantic at the south and west and to the north, it is overlooked by the Twelve Bens mountain range. At its southeast corner the bog gives way to the craggy slopes of Errisbeg mountain. It's important for its nesting Grouse population and is home to a wide range of important bog flora such as St Dabeoc's Heath. www.connemara.ie

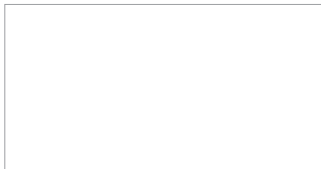
17 Sliabh Beagh/Braggan Monaghan/Tyrone/Fermanagh



Image © www.sliabhbeagh.com

Sliabh Beagh/Braggan is a mountainous area straddling the borders of Monaghan, Fermanagh and Tyrone. The point where the three counties meet, is known as "Three County Hollow" and offers panoramic views. Slieve Beagh has many low, smooth summits. The highest is at 380m. The area is mainly blanket bog, with many small lakes and streams throughout. In Northern Ireland, much of Slieve Beagh has been designated as a Special Area of Conservation.
www.knockatallon.com

Location Off the L1000 north west of Monaghan Town
GPS N54.32373 W-7.10128
Contact Sliabh Beagh Hotel & Tourism Centre:
 knockatallon@eircom.net



Key to Symbols Used in Passport

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------|---|-----------------------|
|  | Toilets |  | Open Year Round |
|  | Self-guiding Trail |  | Seasonal Opening |
|  | Bike Touring Route |  | Vending Machine |
|  | Boardwalk |  | Restaurant |
|  | National Loop Walk |  | Cafe |
|  | Hiking Trail |  | Disabled Access |
|  | Rubber Stamp |  | Driving Tour or Route |
|  | Tourist Information |  | Gardens |
|  | Bird Watching Hide |  | Education Programmes |
|  | Parking |  | Gift Shop |
|  | Shelter |  | Playground |
|  | Viewing Point |  | Visitor Centre |
|  | Dogs on a Lead |  | Bog Train |
|  | WiFi Available |  | Picnic Tables |

Guidelines for Safe Bog Visits

Although people can walk on peatlands, it is better to think of peatlands as water bodies with a high organic content. So please stick to the marked routes during your visit and help preserve and protect each site and its wildlife so that future generations can enjoy them too. We ask you to follow these guidelines:

- * It is dangerous to walk on a bog surface owing to hidden ditches, soft wet ground, tree stumps and brambles. Please use paths and boardwalks provided.
- * Dumping of rubbish and personal items is prohibited as they damage a bog and spoil the environment.
- * Walking pets without a lead, camping, fires and the use of motorised vehicles on bogs are prohibited as they disturb wildlife.
- * It is an offense to feed or molest wildlife or remove or otherwise disturb any natural feature or plant on a bog.
- * "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."
- * You can educate yourself further on how to lessen your impact on the environment by visiting www.leavenotraceireland.org.



Name

Address

**Thank you for Visiting the
Peatlands of Ireland**

Thank You to our Sponsors

IPCC wish to thank and acknowledge the support of our Friends of the Bog in the realisation of this Peatland Passport for Ireland. We wish to acknowledge and thank all of the peatland sites for joining the Peatland Network of Ireland.

Further Information

Accommodation: www.discoverireland.ie

Peatlands: www.ipcc.ie

Photograph Acknowledgements

Unless stated otherwise all photographs

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Bog of Allen Nature Centre, Lullymore
Rathangan, Co. Kildare, Ireland
www.ipcc.ie