

## THE CONVENTION ON WETLANDS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE ESPECIALLY AS WATERFOWL HABITAT (THE RAMSAR CONVENTION)

### CUILCAGH MOUNTAIN RAMSAR SITE

Area: 2,744.45 hectares

Geographic Co-ordinates: 07° 48' 17" W  
54° 13' 26" N

Cuilcagh Mountain is situated in County Fermanagh in the west of Northern Ireland along the International border with the Irish Republic. It is one of the largest expanses of blanket bog in Northern Ireland formed on a relatively high elevation upland landscape and bounded by limestone grassland to the north and montane habitats to the south. The extensive blanket bog which covers most of the site exhibits the full range of characteristic vegetation and structural features associated with this type of habitat.

The proposed Ramsar site boundary is entirely coincident with both that of the Cuilcagh Mountain Area of Special Scientific Interest and the Cuilcagh Mountain candidate Special Area of Conservation. The area of the proposed Ramsar site is 2,744.45 ha.

The site qualifies under criterion 1a of the Ramsar Convention by being a particularly good representative example of blanket bog, a globally restricted biotope.

The blanket bog exhibits a wide range of characteristic vegetation and structural features, with locally well developed pool, hummock and lawn features, acid flushes and bog bursts. The bog vegetation is locally characterised by luxuriant *Sphagnum* mosses but over most of the site dwarf-shrubs and graminoid species dominate, with the strong oceanic influence indicated by the constancy and the frequency of Bog Myrtle *Myrica gale*, the moss *Campylopus atrovirens* and the liverwort *Pleurozia purpurea*.

The site also qualifies under criterion 2a of the Ramsar Convention by supporting an appreciable assemblage of rare, vulnerable or endangered species.

Cuilcagh Mountain is one of the most important upland breeding sites in Northern Ireland for the Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*, an Irish Red Data Book species.

Other Red Data Book bird species occurring on the site include Merlin *Falco columbarius* and Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus* and the bog is occasionally used for feeding and roosting by Greenland White-fronted Geese *Anser albifrons flavirostris*.

The site also supports some notable species of aquatic invertebrates. These include several alpine species such as the water beetle *Dytiscus lapponicus* and the water boatman *Glaenocorisa propinqua*.

The site also supports a number of scarce or rare plant species, particularly bryophytes. However, these species are mostly not associated with wetland habitats. Higher plants include Dwarf Willow *Salix herbacea*, Starry Saxifrage *Saxifraga stellaris*, Stiff Sedge *Carex bigelowii*, Green Spleenwort *Asplenium viride*, Tunbridge Filmy Fern *Hymenophyllum tunbridgense*, Alpine Clubmoss *Diphasiastrum alpinum* and Stagshorn Clubmoss *Lycopodium clavatum*. Bryophytes include the mosses *Dicranodontium asperulum* and *Dicranum scottianum*, and the liverworts *Herbertus aduncus* ssp. *hutchinsiae*, *Bazzania tricrenata*, *Anastrepta orcadensis*, *Marsupela sphacelata* and *Gymnomitrium crenulatum*.



