



Ramsar Information Sheet

Published on 7 March 2023

Update version, previously published on : 31 July 1986

Ireland Pettigo Plateau



Designation date	31 July 1986
Site number	334
Coordinates	54°36'58"N 07°56'44"W
Area	900,00 ha

Color codes

Fields back-shaded in light blue relate to data and information required only for RIS updates.

Note that some fields concerning aspects of Part 3, the Ecological Character Description of the RIS (tinted in purple), are not expected to be completed as part of a standard RIS, but are included for completeness so as to provide the requested consistency between the RIS and the format of a 'full' Ecological Character Description, as adopted in Resolution X.15 (2008). If a Contracting Party does have information available that is relevant to these fields (for example from a national format Ecological Character Description) it may, if it wishes to, include information in these additional fields.

1 - Summary

Summary

Pettigo Plateau Ramsar site is located in the north west of Ireland in county Donegal, to the east of the village of Laghy and west of Lough Derg. The Site comprises a remote and extensive complex of blanket bog with wet heath, lakes and pools in an area of low hills and broad basins. It lies at a height c. 150m and rises to several higher points between 190 and 300m. The bog is mostly undisturbed and has a good range of vegetation communities and microtopographical features, e.g. hummocks, inter-connecting pools and flushes. The principal lakes within the site are the Dunragh Loughs, Lough Barderg and the eastern half of Lough Golagh. The site is bounded by extensive conifer plantations and areas of turbary, with further bog to the north and west. The area is underlain by metamorphic gneiss and schist. Along with plant communities characteristic of blanket bog habitat the site and wider area supports a number of bird (Red Grouse, Merlin, Hen Harrier, Greenland White-fronted Geese) and mammal (Otter) species in the summer and/or winter months. The Ramsar Site is part of one of the few remaining extensive intact bogs in Donegal, with the Ramsar Site and wider area being listed as the second largest intact blanket bog system in the region.

The Ramsar Site overlaps entirely with the Pettigo Plateau Nature Reserve SPA which was designated for the presence of wintering Greenland White-fronted Goose. The Site sits within the boundaries of the larger Dunragh Loughs/Pettigo Plateau Special Area of Conservation (SAC), designated under the EU Habitats Directive, as it contains representative and unique examples of natural wetland types within the Atlantic biogeographic region - Wet Heath and Blanket Bogs (Active). The main body of the SAC is comprised of non forested peatlands, while permanent rivers and streams and permanent freshwater lakes form a significant component of it. The blanket bog, which forms a mosaic with wet heath and supports vegetation communities representative of both lowland and upland blanket bog. Part of the Dunragh Loughs/Pettigo Plateau Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which lies adjacent to Lough Golagh and the Ramsar Site is a Coillte Life Bog Restoration site. This was an afforested site which is being restored to blanket bog through removal of conifers and drain blocking.

The invasive *Rhododendron ponticum* is spreading on blanket bog in the general area and is likely to threaten the Ramsar Site.

2 - Data & location

2.1 - Formal data

2.1.1 - Name and address of the compiler of this RIS

Responsible compiler

Institution/agency	National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
Postal address	National Parks and Wildlife Service, 90 North King Street, Smithfield, Dublin, Ireland D07 N7CV

National Ramsar Administrative Authority

Institution/agency	National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
Postal address	National Parks and Wildlife Service, 90 North King Street, Smithfield, Dublin, Ireland D07 N7CV

2.1.2 - Period of collection of data and information used to compile the RIS

From year

To year

2.1.3 - Name of the Ramsar Site

Official name (in English, French or Spanish)

2.1.4 - Changes to the boundaries and area of the Site since its designation or earlier update

(Update) A. Changes to Site boundary Yes No

(Update) B. Changes to Site area the area has decreased

(Update) The Site area has been calculated more accurately

(Update) The Site has been delineated more accurately

(Update) The Site area has increased because of a boundary extension

(Update) The Site area has decreased because of a boundary restriction

(Update) For secretariat only. This update is an extension

2.1.5 - Changes to the ecological character of the Site

(Update) 6b i. Has the ecological character of the Ramsar Site (including applicable Criteria) changed since the previous RIS? Not evaluated

2.2 - Site location

2.2.1 - Defining the Site boundaries

b) Digital map/image
<2 file(s) uploaded>

Former maps

Boundaries description

The boundaries for this site were defined using the boundary of the Pettigo Plateau Nature Reserve which was established in 1984 and later became the EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) Pettigo Plateau Nature Reserve Special Protection Area (SPA). The Ramsar Site (Nature Reserve and SPA) lies within and is integral to the larger peatland complex of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) Dunragh Loughs/Pettigo Plateau Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Details of the SAC/SPA can be found on the NPWS website at: <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites>. Within this area a number of GIS data layers were used to define the Ramsar habitats within the site. These included:

- NPWS data (Site-Specific Conservation Objectives)
- CORINE (Co-Ordinated Information on the Environment) land cover data sets (2012).
- Bing Maps Aerial - © Harris Corp, Earthstar Geographics LLC © 2017 Intermap Earthstar Geographics SIO © 2017 Microsoft Corporation.
- Environmental Protection Agency of Ireland Rivers and Lakes layers data layers.

The mapped layers were subsequently inspected by a site visit to confirm the presence of the habitats. Habitat areas were subsequently estimated by reference to the available imagery and layers and should be considered representative but approximate.

The mapped area, as calculated from the GIS boundary, differs from the official boundary of the Ramsar site. This is due to historic mapping issues.

2.2.2 - General location

- a) In which large administrative region does the site lie?
- b) What is the nearest town or population centre?

2.2.3 - For wetlands on national boundaries only

- a) Does the wetland extend onto the territory of one or more other countries? Yes No
- b) Is the site adjacent to another designated Ramsar Site on the territory of another Contracting Party? Yes No

2.2.4 - Area of the Site

- Official area, in hectares (ha):
- Area, in hectares (ha) as calculated from GIS boundaries

2.2.5 - Biogeography

Biogeographic regions

Regionalisation scheme(s)	Biogeographic region
Marine Ecoregions of the World (MEOW)	Atlantic
EU biogeographic regionalization	Atlantic

Other biogeographic regionalisation scheme

British Isles
Palearctic (WWF Terrestrial Ecoregions), Northern British Isles (FEOW).

3 - Why is the Site important?

3.1 - Ramsar Criteria and their justification

Criterion 1: Representative, rare or unique natural or near-natural wetland types

Hydrological services provided

Blanket bogs cover approximately 13% of Ireland, contain in excess of 90% water and act as vast water reservoirs. The blanket bog habitat with associated pool systems and connected lake and river habitats which are present at this Ramsar site (and in the wider SAC) provide a number of key ecosystem and hydrological services. In terms of hydrological services blanket bogs host high status water bodies, regulate stream flow and act as source areas for high quality drinking water. An Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) funded study “Quantification of blanket bog ecosystem services to water”, was carried out jointly by researchers from Queen’s University Belfast and University College Dublin, and sought to raise awareness of the wider contributions provided by healthy blanket bog ecosystems to society and the environment, while also examining the wider cost of their degradation. The study found that habitat condition influences stream flow and water quality, with more intact areas of blanket bog having more stable flow and water quality regimes, and with more stable hydrogeological regimes in peat ensuring more consistent contributions of bog water to stream flow, while maintaining terrestrial biodiversity (EPA, 2021). See also <https://www.catchments.ie/blanket-bogs-hydrology-ecosystem-services-water/> The nature of a bog is controlled by hydrological processes, its existence depends upon retaining water and its characteristics depend upon the origin, volume, chemical quality and variability of water supply.

Other ecosystem services provided

Blanket bogs provide a range of ecosystem services (in addition to hydrological). • they provide a refuge for a rich biodiversity of species including several rare plants, birds and invertebrate species. • are commonly used as rough grazing land for sheep and cattle, grouse shooting, deer stalking and fishing. • they preserve prehistoric farming landscapes beneath the peat as well as a diverse range of artefacts within the peat mass. • the patterns of pools on the flatter areas of blanket bog is of particular conservation significance. The pools support a specialised range of mosses (especially species of Sphagnum) and plants and they provide essential feeding habitats for wetland birds. • within their peat layers, blanket bogs preserve a record of their own growth and development and on a larger scale, they provide insights into regional vegetation change, climate change, atmospheric pollution and act as chronometers for other events such as volcanic eruptions. • they accumulate and store millions of tonnes of carbon and have a vital function in controlling the green house gases that cause climate change. • their utilisation for recreation can have positive benefits on the health of people. See <http://www.ipcc.ie/a-to-z-peatlands/blanket-bogs/> <https://www.wildatlanticnature.ie/>

Other reasons

In their natural state peatlands act as long-term sinks for atmospheric carbon dioxide. A persistently high water table is necessary for this function. Peatlands are the most important long-term carbon store in the terrestrial biosphere. It is highly likely that continued global warming will impact this habitat in the future. In Ireland the long-term carbon storage function of 47% of our original peatland area has been severely diminished through domestic and mechanical peat extraction (Irish Peatland Conservation Council).

Criterion 2 : Rare species and threatened ecological communities

Optional text box to provide further information

Includes bird species that are:
 - Red listed in Ireland's national Red List (Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland (BoCCI) published by Colhoun and Cummins (2013)
 - Classified as VU or higher in IUCN Global and European regional list
 - Listed in Annex I of the European Union Birds Directive

3.2 - Plant species whose presence relates to the international importance of the site

While no internationally rare or threatened plant species have been recorded at this site it supports a diverse range of plant communities with characteristic species of the habitats present. In addition there are a number of regionally scarce plants are found in association with bog, heath and lakes on the site, e.g. Cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccos*), Cowberry (*Vaccinium vitisidaea*) and the bog mosses, *S. fuscum* and *S. imbricatum*.

3.3 - Animal species whose presence relates to the international importance of the site

Phylum	Scientific name	Species qualifies under criterion				Species contributes under criterion				Pop. Size	Period of pop. Est.	% occurrence ¹⁾	IUCN Red List	CITES Appendix I	CMS Appendix I	Other Status	Justification
		2	4	6	9	3	5	7	8								
Others																	
CHORDATA/ MAMMALIA	<i>Lutra lutra</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				NT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Annex II (Habitats Directive)	Annex II listing
Birds																	
CHORDATA/ AVES	<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Annex I (Birds Directive), Amber listed (Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland)	Annex listing, small flock wintering on traditional blanket bog habitat.
CHORDATA/ AVES	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Annex I (Birds Directive), Amber listed (Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland)	Annex listing
CHORDATA/ AVES	<i>Falco columbarius</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Annex I (Birds Directive), Amber listed (Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland)	Annex listing
CHORDATA/ AVES	<i>Falco peregrinus peregrinus</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Annex I (Birds Directive)	Annex I listing
CHORDATA/ AVES	<i>Lagopus lagopus</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Red listed (Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland)	National BoCCI list
CHORDATA/ AVES	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Annex I (Birds Directive)	Annex listing

1) Percentage of the total biogeographic population at the site

Pettigo Plateau Ramsar Site is a designated Special Protection Area due to the presence of wintering Greenland White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons flavirostris*) which is an Annex I species (EU Birds Directive). At the time this site was designated it was being utilised by a Greenland White-fronted Goose population. In the 1980s, the Greenland White-fronted Goose flock utilising this site largely deserted the bogs in favour of coastal grassland sites, e.g. Durnesh Lough SPA. Greenland White-fronted Goose still occurs within this site and it is one of the few places where this species continues to utilise peatland habitats.

Several other Annex I EU Birds Directive species use the site, including the Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*), Merlin (*Falco columbarius*), Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) and Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) (DELHG 2005). According to NPWS (2013) Merlin and Golden Plover breed here, other typical bogland birds which breed here include Red Grouse (*Lagopus lagopus*) and Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*). Red Grouse has declined in Ireland in recent years and is now a Red-listed species.

3.4 - Ecological communities whose presence relates to the international importance of the site

RIS for Site no. 334, Pettigo Plateau, Ireland

Name of ecological community	Community qualifies under Criterion 2?	Description	Justification
Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix [4010]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Wet heath	Annex I (Habitats Directive)
Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Blanket bog	Annex I (Habitats Directive)

4 - What is the Site like? (Ecological character description)

4.1 - Ecological character

Pettigo Plateau Ramsar Site is one of the few remaining extensive intact blanket bogs in Donegal, and is part of a wider blanket bog complex which is listed as the second largest in this region. The site contains a mosaic of upland and lowland non-forested peatlands, a habitat of very limited extent within the Atlantic biogeographic region, and which provides a representative and unique example of this near-natural wetland type. The lakes at this site are of the oligotrophic (naturally nutrient-poor) type and contain a typical flora of Oligotrophic lakes which also listed in the E.U. Habitats Directive. A number of regionally scarce plants are found in association with bog, heath and lakes on the site.

Pettigo Plateau Ramsar Site supports populations of a number of species which are vulnerable. Several Annex I EU Birds Directive species use the site, including Greenland White-fronted Geese (*Anser albifrons flavirostris*), Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*), Merlin (*Falco columbarius*), Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) and Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*). According to NPWS (2013) Merlin and Golden Plover breed here, other typical bogland birds which breed here include Red Grouse (*Lagopus lagopus*) and Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*). Red Grouse has declined in Ireland in recent years and is now a Red-listed species.

The site supports the following species which are protected under national and/or European protected species legislation: Otter (*Lutra lutra*), Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*), Common Lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*), Badger (*Meles meles*) and Irish Hare (*Lepus timidus*). All the above species are protected under the Irish Wildlife Act (1976). The Otter, while widespread in Ireland, is declining internationally. It is listed as a near-threatened with a decreasing population trend on the IUCN Red List. Red Deer (*Cervus elaphus*) have moved onto the site in the last 20 years although the numbers of this species are low (approx. 10 - 20 individuals) which reflects the fact that this species prefers the cover provided by the forestry. The Red Squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*) has been recently recorded in the area of commercial forestry adjoining the eastern boundary of the site (Ralph Sheppard, Pers comm.) and the Pine Martin (*Martes martes*) has been recorded from the same area.

The Site is surrounded on by extensive conifer plantations and areas of turf cutting. *Rhododendron ponticum* and invasive exotic shrub is abundant in the wider area and threatens the site.

The site is located within the Dunragh Loughs/Pettigo Plateau SAC, designated as a EU Natura 2000 site (Special Area of Conservation) due to the presence of representative and unique examples of near-natural wetland type within the biogeographic region i.e. Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix* and Blanket bogs (Active). The latter is a priority habitat under the Habitats Directive.

4.2 - What wetland type(s) are in the site?

Inland wetlands

Wetland types (code and name)	Local name	Ranking of extent (1: greatest - 4: least)	Area (ha) of wetland type	Justification of Criterion 1
Fresh water > Lakes and pools >> Tp: Permanent freshwater marshes/pools	Lakes	2	25	Representative
Fresh water > Marshes on peat soils >> U: Permanent Non-forested peatlands	Blanket bog and wet heath	1	666	Unique

4.3 - Biological components

4.3.1 - Plant species

Other noteworthy plant species

Phylum	Scientific name	Position in range / endemism / other
BRYOPHYTA/SPHAGNOPSIDA	<i>Sphagnum fuscum</i>	
BRYOPHYTA/SPHAGNOPSIDA	<i>Sphagnum imbricatum</i>	
TRACHEOPHYTA/MAGNOLIOPSIDA	<i>Vaccinium oxycoccos</i>	
TRACHEOPHYTA/MAGNOLIOPSIDA	<i>Vaccinium vitis-idaea</i>	

Invasive alien plant species

Phylum	Scientific name	Impacts	Changes at RIS update
TRACHEOPHYTA/MAGNOLIOPSIDA	<i>Rhododendron ponticum</i>	Actual (minor impacts)	increase

Optional text box to provide further information

A number of regionally scarce plants are found in association with bog, heath and lakes on the site, e.g. Cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccos*), Cowberry (*Vaccinium vitisidaea*) and the bog mosses, *S. fuscum* and *S. imbricatum*.

4.3.2 - Animal species

Other noteworthy animal species

Phylum	Scientific name	Pop. size	Period of pop. est.	% occurrence	Position in range /endemism/other
CHORDATA/MAMMALIA	<i>Cervus elaphus</i>				
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>				
CHORDATA/MAMMALIA	<i>Lepus timidus hibernicus</i>				
CHORDATA/MAMMALIA	<i>Martes martes</i>				
CHORDATA/MAMMALIA	<i>Meles meles</i>				
CHORDATA/MAMMALIA	<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>				
CHORDATA/REPTILIA	<i>Zootoca vivipara</i>				

Optional text box to provide further information

According to NPWS (2013) other typical bogland birds which breed here include Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*).

4.4 - Physical components

4.4.1 - Climate

Climatic region	Subregion
C: Moist Mid-Latitude climate with mild winters	Cfb: Marine west coast (Mild with no dry season, warm summer)

4.4.2 - Geomorphic setting

a) Minimum elevation above sea level (in metres)

a) Maximum elevation above sea level (in metres)

Entire river basin

Upper part of river basin

Middle part of river basin

Lower part of river basin

More than one river basin

Not in river basin

Coastal

Please name the river basin or basins. If the site lies in a sub-basin, please also name the larger river basin. For a coastal/marine site, please name the sea or ocean.

The Derg and Oughtcarn river waterbodies drain the Ramsar site and are part of the LeaghanyRiver_SC_010 sub catchment and the Foyle catchment. These rivers eventually reach Lough Foyle. The Bridgetown waterbody drains along its southern boundary and this river eventually reaches Donegal Bay.

4.4.3 - Soil

Organic

(Update) Changes at RIS update No change Increase Decrease Unknown

No available information

Are soil types subject to change as a result of changing hydrological conditions (e.g., increased salinity or acidification)? Yes No

Please provide further information on the soil (optional)

The soils on the site are mainly ombrotrophic acid peats, with small areas of peaty podzols and Lithosols. The cool wet climate of Ireland gives rise to Podzol formation by leaching of exchangeable base ions, reducing chemical weathering and inhibited humus decomposition. This has resulted in the relatively poor nutrient status of the subsoil's.

4.4.4 - Water regime

Water permanence

Presence?	Changes at RIS update
Usually permanent water present	No change

Source of water that maintains character of the site

Presence?	Predominant water source	Changes at RIS update
Water inputs from surface water	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change
Water inputs from groundwater	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change
Water inputs from precipitation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change

Water destination

Presence?	Changes at RIS update
Marine	No change

Stability of water regime

Presence?	Changes at RIS update
Water levels largely stable	No change

Please add any comments on the water regime and its determinants (if relevant). Use this box to explain sites with complex hydrology:

The site is characterised by numerous small to medium sized Oligotrophic lakes including Dunragh Lough, Lough Boyle and Lough Golagh, with interconnecting and out flowing streams. The northern half of the site drains to Lough Derg and eventually Lough Foyle while the southern half drains west into Donegal Bay via a number of small streams which feed into a number of larger river systems. The plateau acts as a significant reservoir for maintaining flow in a number of downstream river systems.

4.4.5 - Sediment regime

Sediment regime unknown

4.4.6 - Water pH

Acid (pH<5.5)

(Update) Changes at RIS update No change Increase Decrease Unknown

Unknown

4.4.7 - Water salinity

Fresh (<0.5 g/l)

(Update) Changes at RIS update No change Increase Decrease Unknown

Unknown

4.4.8 - Dissolved or suspended nutrients in water

Oligotrophic

(Update) Changes at RIS update No change Increase Decrease Unknown

Unknown

4.4.9 - Features of the surrounding area which may affect the Site

Please describe whether, and if so how, the landscape and ecological characteristics in the area surrounding the Ramsar Site differ from the site itself: i) broadly similar ii) significantly different

Surrounding area has greater urbanisation or development

Surrounding area has higher human population density

Surrounding area has more intensive agricultural use

Surrounding area has significantly different land cover or habitat types

Please describe other ways in which the surrounding area is different:

The site is largely surrounded by commercial conifer plantations. There is forestry to the north, south and west of the site. Sheep grazing occurs on some of the land adjoining the site. Lough Derg which adjoins the eastern boundary of the site is a popular pilgrimage retreat.

4.5 - Ecosystem services

4.5.1 - Ecosystem services/benefits

Provisioning Services

Ecosystem service	Examples	Importance/Extent/Significance
Wetland non-food products	Peat	Medium

Regulating Services

Ecosystem service	Examples	Importance/Extent/Significance
Maintenance of hydrological regimes	Groundwater recharge and discharge	Low
Pollution control and detoxification	Water purification/waste treatment or dilution	Low
Climate regulation	Local climate regulation/buffering of change	Medium
Climate regulation	Regulation of greenhouse gases, temperature, precipitation and other climatic processes	Medium

Cultural Services

Ecosystem service	Examples	Importance/Extent/Significance
Recreation and tourism	Nature observation and nature-based tourism	Medium
Spiritual and inspirational	Inspiration	High
Spiritual and inspirational	Cultural heritage (historical and archaeological)	High
Spiritual and inspirational	Contemporary cultural significance, including for arts and creative inspiration, and including existence values	High
Spiritual and inspirational	Spiritual and religious values	High
Spiritual and inspirational	Aesthetic and sense of place values	High
Scientific and educational	Important knowledge systems, importance for research (scientific reference area or site)	Medium
Scientific and educational	Long-term monitoring site	Medium

Supporting Services

Ecosystem service	Examples	Importance/Extent/Significance
Biodiversity	Supports a variety of all life forms including plants, animals and microorganisms, the genes they contain, and the ecosystems of which they form a part	Medium
Soil formation	Sediment retention	Low
Soil formation	Accumulation of organic matter	Low
Nutrient cycling	Storage, recycling, processing and acquisition of nutrients	Medium
Nutrient cycling	Carbon storage/sequestration	Medium

Within the site:

Outside the site:

Have studies or assessments been made of the economic valuation of ecosystem services provided by this Ramsar Site? Yes No Unknown

4.5.2 - Social and cultural values

- i) the site provides a model of wetland wise use, demonstrating the application of traditional knowledge and methods of management and use that maintain the ecological character of the wetland
- ii) the site has exceptional cultural traditions or records of former civilizations that have influenced the ecological character of the wetland
- iii) the ecological character of the wetland depends on its interaction with local communities or indigenous peoples
- iv) relevant non-material values such as sacred sites are present and their existence is strongly linked with the maintenance of the ecological character of the wetland

<no data available>

4.6 - Ecological processes

<no data available>

5 - How is the Site managed? (Conservation and management)

5.1 - Land tenure and responsibilities (Managers)

5.1.1 - Land tenure/ownership

Public ownership

Category	Within the Ramsar Site	In the surrounding area
National/Federal government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Private ownership

Category	Within the Ramsar Site	In the surrounding area
Other types of private/individual owner(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Other

Category	Within the Ramsar Site	In the surrounding area
Commoners/customary rights	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Provide further information on the land tenure / ownership regime (optional):

The site is a statutory Nature Reserve (Pettigo Plateau) and is owned by the state and managed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service. A further 66 ha adjacent to the site and within the Dunragh Loughs/Pettigo Plateau SAC is owned by the state forestry company (Coillte).

A small area to the north and outside of the site in the townland of Croagnameal is under forestry. This land is owned by Green Belt. A small area on Dunragh Hill to the east of Dunragh Lough is forested. This land is owned by Coillte, the Irish state owned forestry service. Most of the remainder of the site is owned by private landowners. Some of this may be held in commonage

The surrounding area is owned by both Coillte, the Irish state owned forestry service and by multiple private owners.

5.1.2 - Management authority

Please list the local office / offices of any agency or organization responsible for managing the site:

National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS), Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
Donegal County Council.
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment.

Provide the name and/or title of the person or people with responsibility for the wetland:

Maurice Eakin

Postal address:

National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
90 North King Street,
Smithfield, Dublin,
Ireland
D07 N7CV

E-mail address:

maurice.eakin@housing.gov.ie

5.2 - Ecological character threats and responses (Management)

5.2.1 - Factors (actual or likely) adversely affecting the Site's ecological character

Agriculture and aquaculture

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	Changes	In the surrounding area	Changes
Livestock farming and ranching	Low impact	Medium impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change

Biological resource use

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	Changes	In the surrounding area	Changes
Logging and wood harvesting	Medium impact	High impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change

Human intrusions and disturbance

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	Changes	In the surrounding area	Changes
Recreational and tourism activities	Low impact		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change

Invasive and other problematic species and genes

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	Changes	In the surrounding area	Changes
Invasive non-native/ alien species	Medium impact		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	increase

Please describe any other threats (optional):

Threats are taken from NPWS (2015a, 2015b).
 There is serious invasion of Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*). The most established areas of the Rhododendron are to the south of the site and the shrubs are spreading northwards along the streams and lower ground where there is some shelter. The spread of this species can be observed on a regional scale.
 Peat extraction and drainage may be a threat to the site.

5.2.2 - Legal conservation status

Regional (international) legal designations

Designation type	Name of area	Online information url	Overlap with Ramsar Site
EU Natura 2000	Dunragh Loughs/Pettigo Plateau SAC Site Code: 001125.	https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/001125	whole
EU Natura 2000	PETTIGO PLATEAU NATURE RESERVE SPA: SITE CODE 004099	https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/spa/004099	whole
Other international designation	Biogenetic Reserve		whole

National legal designations

Designation type	Name of area	Online information url	Overlap with Ramsar Site
Nature Reserve	Pettigo Plateau Nature Reserve	https://www.npws.ie/nature-reserves/Donegal	whole

5.2.3 - IUCN protected areas categories (2008)

- Ia Strict Nature Reserve
- Ib Wilderness Area: protected area managed mainly for wilderness protection
- II National Park: protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation
- III Natural Monument: protected area managed mainly for conservation of specific natural features
- IV Habitat/Species Management Area: protected area managed mainly for conservation through management intervention
- V Protected Landscape/Seascape: protected area managed mainly for landscape/seascape conservation and recreation
- VI Managed Resource Protected Area: protected area managed mainly for the sustainable use of natural ecosystems

5.2.4 - Key conservation measures

Legal protection

Measures	Status
Legal protection	Implemented

Habitat

Measures	Status
Habitat manipulation/enhancement	Implemented
Hydrology management/restoration	Implemented
Land conversion controls	Implemented

Human Activities

Measures	Status
Regulation/management of wastes	Implemented
Regulation/management of recreational activities	Implemented
Research	Implemented
Harvest controls/poaching enforcement	Implemented
Livestock management/exclusion (excluding fisheries)	Implemented

Other:

The Pettigo Plateau Ramsar site lies within the Dunragh Loughs/Pettigo Plateau SAC and Pettigo Plateau SPA. Under European and national legislation, Ireland must maintain at favourable conservation status areas designated as Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas. The Government and its agencies are responsible for the implementation and enforcement of regulations that will ensure the ecological integrity of these sites. Conservation objectives of this site have been set for the SAC and SPA and are listed below; these can be accessed on NPWS.ie.

- To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected at favourable conservation status i.e. Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix; Blanket bogs (* if active bog).
- To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA: Greenland White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons flavirostris*

Legislation in the Republic of Ireland affords protection to bird species outside of designated sites e.g. all wild bird species are afforded protection by The Wildlife Act 1976. Waterfowl shooting is under license only, managed by the National Parks & Wildlife Service. It is Departmental policy that no hunting occurs on State-owned lands.

5.2.5 - Management planning

Is there a site-specific management plan for the site? Yes

Has a management effectiveness assessment been undertaken for the site? Yes No

If the site is a formal transboundary site as indicated in section Data and location > Site location, are there shared management planning processes with another Contracting Party? Yes No

5.2.6 - Planning for restoration

Is there a site-specific restoration plan? No, but restoration is needed

Further information

The site is part of the Wild Atlantic Nature Project (<https://www.wildatlanticnature.ie/>) which works with farmers, local communities and land owners to add value to the wide range of services provided from our Special Area of Conservation (SAC) network of blanket bogs and associated areas. These peatlands provide clean drinking water, store carbon, support biodiversity, produce high quality food and support resilient rural economies and livelihoods through farming, tourism, recreation and other activities. As part of the project, a pilot voluntary Results Based Payment Scheme (RBPS) will be linked to the quality of the habitat, thereby putting landowners and their skills, expertise and knowledge of their land central to the development of this project.

Coillte, the state owned forestry service has carried out restoration work adjacent to the site where commercial forestry had previously existed. This work has included the felling and windrowing of coniferous trees and the blocking of drains in an attempt to restore the blanket bog habitat. This work which commenced approximately 13 years ago (c 2004) was funded under an EU LIFE project. The site is currently monitored every 5 years to assess regeneration and it is actively managed to remove any natural regeneration of coniferous trees.

5.2.7 - Monitoring implemented or proposed

Monitoring	Status
Water regime monitoring	Implemented
Water quality	Implemented
Plant community	Implemented
Plant species	Implemented
Birds	Implemented

A requirement of the Water Framework Directive is that macro-invertebrates must be sampled in lake and river water bodies at least twice within a river basin cycle (6 years) in order to classify these water bodies. The site is sampled and monitored under this programme.

As a EU Natura 2000 site, it is required under Article 12 and 17 of the EU Birds and Habitats Directives respectively, that the status and trends of the conservation objectives within the site are monitored and reported on every 6 years.

The site is regularly inspected by the National Parks and Wildlife Service Conservation Rangers for the area.

6 - Additional material

6.1 - Additional reports and documents

6.1.1 - Bibliographical references

Colhoun, K. and Cummins, S. 2013. Birds of conservation concern in Ireland 2014-2019. Irish Birds 9: 523-544.

DEH LG (2005) National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Plan for 2005-2010 Dunragh Loughs & Pettigo Plateau cSAC, SPA & NR Site Code 1125 & 4099 Co. Donegal.

NPWS (2017a) Conservation Objectives: Dunragh Loughs/Pettigo Plateau SAC 001125. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

NPWS (2013). Site Synopsis for Dunragh Loughs/Pettigo Plateau SAC 001125. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2015a) Dunragh Loughs/Pettigo Plateau SAC 001125 Natura 2000 Form. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2017b) Dunragh Loughs/Pettigo Plateau SAC (site code 001125) Conservation objectives supporting document - blanket bogs and associated habitats. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2016) Conservation objectives for Pettigo Plateau Nature Reserve SPA [004099]. Generic Version 5.0. Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

NPWS (2012). Site Synopsis for Pettigo Plateau Nature Reserve SPA [004099]. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2015b) Pettigo Plateau Nature Reserve SPA [004099]. Natura 2000 Form. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

6.1.2 - Additional reports and documents

i. taxonomic lists of plant and animal species occurring in the site (see section 4.3)

<no file available>

ii. a detailed Ecological Character Description (ECD) (in a national format)

<no file available>

iii. a description of the site in a national or regional wetland inventory

<no file available>

iv. relevant Article 3.2 reports

<no file available>

v. site management plan

<no file available>

vi. other published literature

<no file available>

<no data available>

6.1.3 - Photograph(s) of the Site

Please provide at least one photograph of the site:



Pettigo Plateau (NPWS, 2017)



Pettigo Plateau (NPWS, 2017)



Pettigo Plateau (NPWS, 2017)



Pettigo Plateau (NPWS, 2017)



Pettigo Plateau (NPWS, 2017)



Pettigo Plateau (NPWS, 2017)



Pettigo Plateau (NPWS, 2017)

6.1.4 - Designation letter and related data

Designation letter

<1 file(s) uploaded>

Date of Designation