

Wetlands designated, pursuant to Article 2(5) of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat, by Ireland, to be included in the list of Wetlands of International Importance, established under the terms of the Convention.

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The Raven Nature Reserve at Curracloe, County Wexford, Pettigo Plateau Nature Reserve, County Donegal and Slieve Bloom Mountains Nature Reserve, Counties Laois and Offaly each having being established as Statutory Nature Reserves under Section 15 of the Wildlife Act 1976 and the Owenduff Catchment, County Mayo which will soon be afforded statutory protection all of which are shown outlined in red on map Nos 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively are hereby designated by Ireland for inclusion in the list of Wetlands of International Importance under Article 2.5 of the Convention. The four sites are owned and managed by the Minister for Tourism, Fisheries and Forestry. This will bring to 5 the total number of sites designated by Ireland.

The Raven Nature Reserve comprising 589 hectares is a sand dune system including inshore waters and inter tidal zone and is adjacent to the North Wexford Slob wetland ecosystem. It is a highly unstable sand spit which is the worlds most important night time winter roosting site of a flock of 6,000 - 8,000 Greenland Whitefronted geese (*Anser albifrons flavirostris*) which feed by day on the nearby Wexford Slobes which include the Wexford Wildfowl Reserve which has already been designated. The sand spit is also a nesting site for the Common tern (*Sterna hirundo*) and Little tern (*Sterna albifrons*) all of which species are listed in Annex 1 of the E.E.C. Council Directive number 79/409/EEC of 2 April 1979, on the conservation of wildbirds as species whose habitat requires special conservation measures.

Pettigo Plateau Nature Reserve comprising 900 hectares is an excellent example of blanket bog representing one of the major vegetation types of Ireland and indeed Europe. The area covers low hills and broad basins with numerous lakes and pools. The vegetation is dominated by *Molinia caerulea* over much of the area with a notable absence of *Schoenus nigricans* except in flushes. The area therefore falls into highland Blanket Bog

category (150m-300m). Other species present include Cross-leaved heath (*Erica tetralix*), Deer sedge (*Scirpus cespitosus*), Calluna, Bog cottons, Sundews, White-beaked sedge (*Rhynchospora Alba*), Bog asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*) and lichens. Drier rocky sites are characterised by an abundance of Ling heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) with woodland elements e.g. Hard fern (*Blechnum spicant*). Pettigo Plateau Nature Reserve is a traditional feeding and roosting site for the Greenland whitefronted goose (*Anser albifrons flavirostris*).

Slieve Bloom Mountains Nature Reserve is an excellent example of mountain blanket bog comprising 2,230 hectares and is an important link in the natural range of bogs occurring in Ireland. Floristically it has affinities with midland raised bogs. It supports a range of flora species but particular interest lies in the presence of Bog rosemary (*Andromeda polifolia*) and Cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccos*). Their presence along with Crowberry (*Empetrum Nigrum*) is particularly unusual. The vegetation also consists of hummocks of Calluna, Cladonia SPP, *Sphagnum capillifolium* with *Hyphnum jutlandicum*, Eriophorum species (Cotton grasses), Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*), Deer Sedge (*Scirpus cespitosus*), Bog asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*) and Lesser twayblade (*Listera cordata*). The main variations in this type of vegetation are to be found in flushed sites and stream sides where patches of *Molinia* and/or *Juncus* SPP occur. Small stands of *Salix* also occur in these situations.

The Owenduff Catchment County Mayo is 6,000 hectares approx in extent of which 1,382 hectares is being designated and is part of an area of extensive lowland blanket bog grading into mountain blanket bog and wet heath and is one of the best developed and undisturbed examples of its kind in Europe. The lowland part is an excellent example of Atlantic Blanket Bog and supports vegetation consisting of Purple Moore grass (*Molinia caerulea*), Blackbog rush (*Schoenus nigricans*) and Deer sedge (*Scirpus cespitosus*) with White beak sedge (*Rhynchospora alba*) in the wetter places. This group of characteristic species is completed by the heather, *Erica tetralix* and *Calluna vulgaris*, Bog asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*), Carnation sedge (*Carex panicea*), Bog cotton (*Eriophorum angustifolium*), Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*), Spike rush (*Eleocharis multicaulis*), Sundew (*Drosera* Spp) and the grass *Nardus stricta*.

Mosses include *Leucobryum glaucum*, *Sphagnum rubellum* and *Campylopus atrovirens*. Lichens present include *Cladonia impexa* and *C. uncialis*. Pool complexes and wet areas with *Sphagnum* hummocks are also present.

The Owenduff Catchment supports a small flock of Greenland Whitefronted geese in winter and Golden plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) during the breeding season.