

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: GALMOY FEN

SITE CODE: 001858

Galmoy Fen is situated 7 km north of Johnstown in Co. Kilkenny, close to the boundary with Co. Laois. It comprises a cutover raised bog that has become flooded with base-rich groundwater and that now supports alkaline fen vegetation. It lies in a depression and is underlain by Carboniferous limestone.

This site is a candidate SAC selected for alkaline fen, a habitat listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive.

The central part of the site comprises an area of cutover raised bog with numerous peat-cuttings, resulting in a mosaic of dry peat banks and wet peaty pools. The peat banks support typical bog species, e.g. Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) and Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*), while the pools, which have become flooded with base-rich groundwater, support alkaline fen vegetation with such species as Black Bog-rush (*Schoenus nigricans*), Great Fen-sedge (*Cladium mariscus*) and Bog Mosses (*Sphagnum* spp.), amongst others. A large area of alkaline fen vegetation surrounds the central part of the site; this area has a number of large pools that support calcicole species.

Other habitats present on the site include Gorse scrub, wet grassland, improved grassland, dry calcareous grassland with such species as Fairy Flax (*Linum catharticum*), Wild Thyme (*Thymus praecox*) and Mountain Everlasting (*Antennaria dioica*), and a small area planted with Sitka Spruce (*Picea sitchensis*). A stream brings water to the site on its north-east side.

The site supports a rich assemblage of invertebrates associated with fen and bog habitats. Irish Hare and Common Frog, both Red Data Book species, also occur.

Parts of the site are grazed by cattle and the whole area is used for shooting.

Galmoy Fen is of considerable conservation significance as it comprises a good quality example of alkaline fen, a habitat that is listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive.