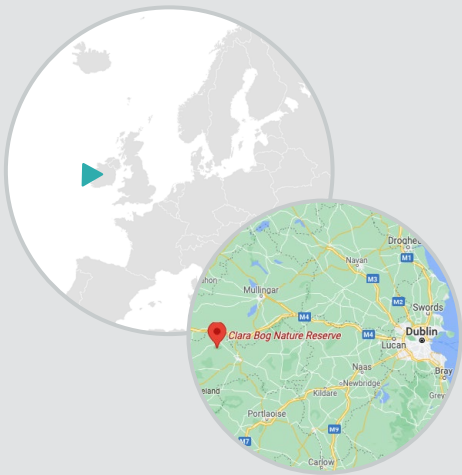


NATURAL CLIMATE BUFFER



Ireland



Clara Bog

Introduction

Clara is one of the largest raised bogs in Ireland and has peat up to 10m deep. It originally covered over 1,000ha but over the last 3 centuries has all been affected by drainage and over 50% has been cut away for fuel. Of the remaining 440ha only 100ha still supports active peat-forming vegetation.

Hydrologically and biologically the outstanding feature of Clara are the very rare 'soak' systems (fen, swamp, pond and bog woodland habitats) developed in areas of focussed surface water flows or where calcium-enriched water from the basal fen peat reaches the bog surface.

Issues & key challenges

Peat subsidence of up to 6 metres, due to long term drainage and turf cutting, has increased surface slopes and rainfall runoff rates so much that water levels are now too low to support active peat growth over much of the uncut bog. In addition, drainage in the 1990s intercepted a sand and gravel layer under the bog, causing extensive subsidence of the basal peats and caused the loss of 10ha of active raised bog since 2009.

Turf cutting at Clara ceased in 2012 due to both compensation and relocation of turf cutting to an adjacent dried-out bog. However, to reach the site conservation objective of 180ha of active bog it will be necessary to stop/limit further subsidence by blocking the subsurface drainage and carrying out restoration of the surrounding cutover bog.

Legal Status

Ramsar Wetland, National Nature Reserve (NNR), Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Ownership: State and multiple private owners.

Habitats and Protected Species

Active raised bog, Degraded raised bog, Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion, Bog woodland, Semi-natural grassland and scrub on calcareous substrates

Marsh Fritillary, Peregrine, Curlew, Common Frog, and rare mosses and invertebrates

Management

National Parks and Wildlife Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in cooperation with local land and rights owners.

Information and Videos

[Clara Bog: Peat land history and conservation](https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites)

<https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites>

<http://raisedbogs.ie/eu-life/>



Outcomes & benefits

- Most of the uncut bog was purchased by the state as a nature reserve in 1986 and EU-funded restoration work was undertaken in 1995-6 and 2018-21. While these have been successful in restoring active raised bog growth in some areas they have not been able to reverse the ongoing drying out process of significant parts of bog due to past activities. Stabilisation of the bog will require further extensive works on the surrounding privately owned cutover.
- Multidisciplinary studies into the ecohydrology of Clara, beginning in 1989, led to the development of an integrated set of ecological and hydrological assessment tools which have provided the basis for Ireland's current conservation, restoration and monitoring methods for raised bogs. Such methodologies are being constantly improved by further research work at Clara and elsewhere.

Lessons learnt & future

Discussions on conditions for the cessation of turf cutting at Clara helped develop a national compensation scheme for turbary right owners. Detailed consultation with the local community and landowners is essential in the development of restoration plans which should include a socio-economic plan to maximise the benefit of site conservation for the local community.

To ensure long term success in the achievement of conservation and ecosystem service objectives, site restoration plans need to be based on the management of complete hydrological units.



CARBON SINK



NATURAL SPONGE



BLUE-GREEN SPACE

[More info](#)



An Roinn Tithíochta, Rialtais Aitiúil agus Oidhreacht
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage



An tSeirbhís Páircenna Náisiúnta agus Fiadhúlra
National Parks and Wildlife Service



Eurosite Factsheet

Wetlands and Climate Change

www.eurosite.org | info@eurosite.org