

Anaclann Dúlra Shliabh Bladhma

Tús Eolais

Tá Anaclann Dúlra Shliabh Bladhma, a bhfuil breis is 2,300 heicteár inti, ar an anaclann dúlra is mó de chuid an stáit. Sa bhliain 1985 a bunaíodh í lena bainistiú sa tslí go gcaomhnófaí éiceachóras bratphortaigh na sléibhte. Suíomh Bogaigh Ramsar agus Tearmann Bithghiniteach de chuid na Comhairle Eorpaí is ea an anaclann dúlra chomh maith. Ainmníodh mórchuid den limistéar ardtailte ina Limistéar Caomhantais Speisialta (SAC). Is é an bratphortach sléibhe a chaomhnú príomhchuspóir an Limistéir Chaomhantais Speisialta. Limistéar faoi Chosaint Speisialta is ea Sliabh Bladhma chomh maith, toisc an gá atá le Cromán na gCearc, éan tearc creiche, a chaomhnú.

Ní creaga atá ar bharr na sléibhte seo ach ardchlár nó talamh maolaithe ar furasta bratphortach sléibhe a leagan síos air. Titeann mórán báistí ar thalamh sléibhe den chineál seo. Toradh ar an láisteach mianraí ithreacha agus ar an leathbhá a leanann ardráta báistí is ea na gnáthóga tailte móna atá coitianta anseo.

Is gnách do mhóin i mbratphortaigh a bheith níos doimhne ná méadar amháin. Cineál talún níos troime is ea fraochmhá, ina mbíonn an mhóin 0.5 méadar nó níos lú ar doimhne, agus is mar sin a idirdhealaítear idir an dá ghnáthóg, atá ar aon le fáil san anaclann dúlra seo. Meastar go bhfuil Sliabh Bladhma ar cheann de na córais bhratphortaigh sléibhe is fearr in Éirinn, agus is lú athrú ó leagadh síos é. As Sean-Ghaineamhchloch Rua atá na sléibhte déanta, agus iad suite ar shraith de charraigeacha Siolúracha. Mórthimpeall orthu tá an machaire réidh aolchloiche as a bhfuil formhór Lár-Réigiún na hÉireann déanta. Níl Sliabh Bladhma chomh hard sin (seasann Ard Éireann, an pointe is airde, ag 526 mhéadar), ach is uaidh a gheofar cuid de na radhairc is fearr ar an tír i ngach treo.

Beatha Phlandúil

Le bratphortach atá an talamh ard clúdaithe. Gnáthóg fíorthais í seo de fhraoch agus de mhóin súsáin ina bhfaightear ceannbháin (speiceas *Eriophorum*) agus cib cheanngheal (*Trichophorum germanicum*) a bhaineann araon leis an fhine cíbe. Tá léicin gheala le feiceáil i ngach áit. Sna linnte is fliche agus i mborrfháis (criosanna silte) den phortach gheofar drúchtíní, cineálacha lus borraigh agus cineálacha den liath uisce. An langa (*Calluna vulgaris*) an fraoch is coitianta ar mhóinteach agus ar fhraochmhá, tailte atá níos troime ná an bratphortach. Sna ceantair is fliche, gheofar an fraoch naoscaí (*Erica tetralix*) agus sciollam na móna (*Narthecium ossifragum*). Speicis eile nár mhiste a lua is ea an dédhuilleog bheag (*Listera cordata*), aiteann Muire (*Huperzia selago*), fionnán (*Molinia caerulea*) agus fraochán (*Vaccinium myrtillus*). Gheofar chomh maith dhá bhall den fhine fraoigh, an mhónóg (*Vaccinium oxycoccos*) agus lus na móinte (*Andromeda polifolia*). Meastar gur cruthú ar nasc bláthúil idir an bratphortach sléibhe agus portaigh ardaithe lár na tíre é an fhlúirse de lus na móinte agus den mhonóg ós ar phortaigh ardaithe a fhaightear an dá speiceas sin de ghnáth. Nasc tábhachtach is ea an anaclann dúlra i ngrádán thoir-thiar phortaigh na hÉireann, i bhfianaise an dá speiceas sin a bheith le fáil ann. Sna clasáin agus sna máim a ghearr na srutháin sléibhe as an gcarraig gheofar 'micreaghnáthóga' eile ar díol suntais iad.

Beatha Ainmhithe

Dhá speiceas comharthach éan is ea Cromán na gCearc agus an Chearc Fhraoigh, agus gnáthóg dóibh araon is ea Anaclann Dúlra Shliabh Bladhma. Ar an talamh a dhéanann an dá éan a nead, ar an mbratphortach agus ar an bhfraochmhá. Ní fhaightear Cromán na gCeart i mórán áiteanna eile in Éirinn agus is éan rúnmhar í an Chearc Fhraoigh nach bhfeictear go hiondúil ach nuair a bhrúchteáitear as an gcasarnach í. Gheofar an riabhóg mhóna agus an fhuisseog ar fud na hAnaclainne Dúlra. Sa gheimhreadh bíonn gealóga

sneachta le feiceáil inti. I measc na n-éan eile a fhaightear ann tá an meirliún, an fabhcún gorm, an fiach dubh, an naoscach, an fheadóg bhúí, an pilibín agus an crotach. I measc na mamach is mó suntais a fhaightear san anaclann tá an fia buí agus an gabhar fia, an easóg, an cat crainn, an broc, an giorria Éireannach, an madra uisce agus an t-iora rua. Gheofar froganna, niúit agus laghairteanna inti chomh maith. Ar na speicis is suntasaí d'fheithidí san anaclann tá an leamhan sionnaigh (*Macrothylacia rubi*) agus an t-impire (*Saturnia pavonia*). Beathaíonn boilb an dá leamhan iad féin ar an bhfraoch. Tá cuntas againn d'fhéileacáin, leithéidí an stiallaigh uaine (*Callophrys rubi*) agus an fhritileáin réisc (*Euphydryas aurinia*), a bheith feicthe san anaclann chomh maith. Póraíonn an seabhcaí coiteann (*Aeshna juncea*), speiceas mór den tsnáthaid mhór i linnte an phortaigh.

Caomhnú agus Bainistiú

Is í an tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Páirceanna agus Fiadhúlra, ar cuid í den Roinn Comhshaoil, Oidhreacht agus Rialtais Áitiúil, a bhainistíonn an Anaclann Dúlra. Tá bratphortach tearc go maith ar fud an domhain agus san Eoraip is in Éirinn, sa RA agus san Iorua amháin a fhaightear é. Toisc an dochar atá déanta ag draenáil, cur buaircíneach agus nithe eile don bhratphortachagus do ghnáthóga fraochmhá i gcodanna áirithe den Anaclann Dúlra, tá bearta éagsúla ar cois in áiteanna áirithe chun staid na ngnáthóg a fheabhsú. Bagairt an-mhór don Anaclann Dúlra is ea leathadh buaircíneach ó fháschoillte máguaird. Athraíonn na buaircínigh seo leibhéil agus sreabhadh an uisce ar an mbratphortach agus cuireann siad isteach ar bhláthanna agus ar ainmhithe dúchasacha san Anaclann. Mura ndéantar beart anois, ní bheidh i gcodanna áirithe den Anaclann, in imeacht aimsire, ach forais bhuaircíneach. Tá buaircínigh a mbaint as an Anaclann Dúlra ag an tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Páirceanna agus Fiadhúlra le roinnt blianta anois. Ach ní mór na crainn seo a bhainistiú go leanúnach i bhfianaise na síolta a thagann isteach ó fháschoillte máguaird.

Beart amháin ab ea bac a chur ar sheandíoganna draenála in áiteanna áirithe chun an tábla uisce a ardú agus cuidiú le téarnamh gnáthóg. Tugtar faoi ghníomhaíochtaí eile bainistíochta san Anaclann Dúlra chomh maith – creimeadh talún agus teacht an phobail ar áiteanna leochaileacha, forfheidhmiú dlí, monatóireacht ar staid speiceas agus gnáthóg agus oideachas comhshaoil.



1. Earc luachra ar an gclárchosán.
2. Sciollam na móna
3. Ceannbhán ag Clear Lake.
4. Lus na móinte faoi bhláth

1. Common lizard on boardwalk.
2. Bog asphodel.
3. Bog cotton at Clear Lake.
4. Bog rosemary in flower

Slieve Bloom Mountains Nature Reserve

Introduction

The Slieve Bloom Mountains Nature Reserve is, at over 2,300 hectares, Ireland's largest state-owned nature reserve. It was established in 1985, so that it could be managed in such a way as to ensure the conservation of the mountain blanket bog ecosystem. In addition, the nature reserve is designated a Ramsar Wetland Site and a Council of Europe Biogenetic Reserve. Much of the greater upland area has been designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The primary interest of the SAC is mountain blanket bog. The Slieve Bloom Mountains are also designated a Special Protection Area (SPA), of special conservation interest for the Hen Harrier, a rare bird of prey.

Instead of craggy summits, the mountains are mostly rounded or plateaued which allows upland blanket bog to form. In uplands such as the Slieve Bloom Mountains, leaching of soil minerals and waterlogging due to high rainfall promoted the formation of blanket bog.

Blanket bog peat depths generally exceed one metre. Drier heathland typically has a peat depth of 0.5 metres or less and this feature is used as a rule of thumb to distinguish the two habitats, both of which are found within the nature reserve. The Slieve Bloom Mountains are considered one of the best and least disturbed mountain blanket bog systems in Ireland. The mountains consist of Old Red Sandstone resting on Silurian rock layers. They are largely surrounded by the flat limestone plain which dominates the midlands of Ireland. Whilst they are rather modest in height (Arderin is the highest point at 526 metres), the Slieve Bloom Mountains afford some of the best views of the country in all directions.

Plant Life

Plants occurring on the bog include sphagnum mosses, bog cottons (*Eriophorum* species), deergrass (*Trichophorum germanicum*), crowberry (*Empetrum nigrum*), cross-leaved heath (*Erica tetralix*), bog asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*) and purple moorgrass (*Molinia caerulea*). Bright-coloured lichens are dotted throughout. Sundews, bladderworts and butterworts can be found amongst the wetter pools and flushes (seepage zones) of the bogland. In the somewhat drier moorland or heaths, ling heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) dominates with fraochán or bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*) also occurring. Notable species include lesser twayblade (*Listera cordata*), fir clubmoss (*Huperzia selago*), as well as cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccos*) and bog rosemary (*Andromeda polifolia*). The abundance of bog rosemary and cranberry, species usually associated with raised bog is of note, as they are seen as a floristic link between upland blanket bog and midland raised bogs. The presence of these species makes this site an important link in the east-west gradient of bogs in Ireland. Areas of upland grassland, wet grassland, broadleaved woodland and scrub add to the diversity of the site. Other interesting 'micro-habitats' are found amongst the gullies and gorges carved out by upland streams.

Animal Life

The Slieve Bloom Mountains Nature Reserve is home to two emblematic bird species; the hen harrier and the red grouse. Both species nest on the ground on the blanket bog and heath. The hen harrier is one of Ireland's rarest birds of prey, while the red grouse is a secretive gamebird, and is usually only seen when flushed from undergrowth. Meadow pipits and skylarks are common



1. Cromán na gcearc (b).
2. Naoscach.
3. Impire ar fhraoch.

in the nature reserve. Snow buntings are found on the nature reserve in winter. Other bird species found include the merlin, peregrine falcon, raven, snipe, golden plover, lapwing, curlew, wheatear and ring ouzel. Mammals such as fallow deer, feral goats, stoats, pine martens, badgers, Irish hare, otters and red squirrels also occur. Common frog, smooth newt and common lizard can also be found. Insect species include moths such as the fox moth (*Macrothylacia rubi*) and the emperor moth (*Saturnia pavonia*). The caterpillars of both moths feed on heather. Butterflies such as the green hairstreak (*Callophrys rubi*) and the marsh fritillary (*Euphydryas aurinia*), have also been recorded on the site. The common hawkker (*Aeshna juncea*), a large dragonfly species, breeds in the bog pools.

Conservation and Management

The Slieve Bloom Nature Reserve is managed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), part of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. Mountain blanket bog habitat is globally rare and in Europe occurs mainly in Ireland, the UK and Norway. In some parts of the nature reserve where the blanket bog and heath have been degraded, a variety of measures are being taken to improve habitat condition.

One of the most serious threats to the nature reserve is the spread of conifer trees from surrounding plantations. As well as altering the water levels and water flow on the blanket bog, the spreading conifers alter the characteristic bogland flora and fauna of the site. NPWS has been removing conifers from the nature reserve for several years. However, this will require ongoing management as trees in adjacent plantations continue to produce seed. Some of the old drainage ditches have been blocked to raise the water table and aid habitat recovery. Other management activities within the nature reserve include erosion and access control, law enforcement, species and habitat condition monitoring and environmental education.



Bratphortach agus linn phortaigh, Wolftrap Mountain
Blanket bog and bog pool, Wolftrap Mountain