

MAYO - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Carrownisky River
Other names used for site	Abhainn Cheathrú na Uisce
IGH THEME	IGH15 Economic Geology, IGH6 Mineralogy
TOWNLAND(S)	Roonagh, Carrowniskey, Formoyle, Knockeen, Srahwee, Cregganagappul, Cregganbaun, Cregganawoddy, Derryheeagh, Srahroosky, Glenkeen
NEAREST TOWN	Louisburgh
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	95b, 96ac, 106a
NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE	80050 274100 (location at Srahee Bridge)
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NO. 37	GSI BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NOS. 10, 11
GIS Code MO025	

Outline Site Description

Originating in the Sheeffry Hills, the Carrownisky River is a ~15km long water body that flows into the sea via Roonagh Lough at Carrownisky.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The river follows a course that has developed in the Holocene (post-glacial) period. Within the lower 5km, the river flows through a low valley cut through thick glacial deposits. The river originates on the Lower Ordovician age deep marine, greenish-grey sandstones and mudstones of the Sheeffry Formation in the Sheeffry Hills. Some 1.5km southeast of Srahwee Bridge, the river flows onto Silurian age shallow marine rocks of the Croagh Patrick Succession (sandstones, siltstones, conglomerates). Some 500m west of Carrownisky Bridge, the river completes its course across an area underlain by the Sheeffry Formation.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

The site is very important as a source of alluvial gold and mineral deposits. The river flows down a deeply eroded gully and over waterfalls on the west slopes of Sheeffry Hills, (>100m a.s.l.) in the Glenkeen townland. The river exhibits some excellent meandering as the course levels out, flowing northwest-west to Carrownisky. The river drains into Lough Roonagh behind Sruhír Strand, with the outflow to the beach meandering through the low dunes and machair. This alluvial gold occurrence has been linked to the Cregganbaun – Doolough bedrock gold site.

Site Importance – County Geological Site

Owing to the significance of the site as source of alluvial gold mineral deposits, the site merits County Geological Site status.

Management/promotion issues

The beach is publicly accessible from three beach car park areas, and via a local road at the north end. Aside from warnings about tides along foreshore settings (this is a popular surfing spot) this site is one which could be promoted in publications, websites etc., outlining the geological and natural heritage, and conservation sensitivities of the dune-machair environment.



Looking north over White Strand from sand dunes at Gortnagarryan. Shoreline outcrops of Silurian rocks visible on left.



Smoothered bedrock (Bouris Fm.) with NS trending striations (parallel to hammer) at N end of Carrownisky Beach. Strata strike EW (direction of photo, looking west).



Sand, gravel and cobble beach deposits at Carrownisky, looking north towards Gortnagarryan. Corraun hills in distance.



Machair pastures and Roonagh Lough viewed from Cross Strand parking area, looking east. Croagh Patrick in distance.



Looking south from the drift/sand hill at Gortnagarryan over Sruhir Strand. Mweelrea visible in distance.

