

TIPPERARY - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Cabragh Wetlands
Other names used for site	
IGH THEME	IGH14 Fluvial and Lacustrine Geomorphology, IGH16 Hydrogeology
TOWNLAND(S)	Cabragh, Galbertstown Lower, Lisnagonoge, Fertiana
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Holycross
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	47
ITM CO-ORDINATES	610750E 655100N (centre of feature)
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER 66	GSI BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO. 18

Outline Site Description

This site comprises the Cabragh marshes which lie in a low-lying tributary valley of the River Suir, into which the main river floods in winter.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The bedrock under the site is impure Lower Carboniferous limestone, but the marsh features themselves are post-glacial, formed in the last 11,000 years.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

The landscape surrounding the Cabragh Wetlands marsh site is comprised of low hills, but the wetlands are relatively flat except for a slight rise in the southern portion. The site is naturally eutrophic, but it has also the nutritional legacy of the former sugar factory which discharged into it through a number of holding lagoons, which are now removed.

The wetlands host fifteen different habitats including ponds, reed swamps, hedgerows, streams and wild flower meadows. Footpaths and raised walkways with well-illustrated information boards as well as a large bird hide, make an ideal place for school children to discover the sights and sounds of nature in a safe environment. Owing to the nutritional value of the ground, plant production is high at Cabragh, seen in the huge size of such species as celery-leaved buttercup, as well as in the reeds themselves. There is abundant food for surface feeding wildfowl also, which total over 1,000 in winter.

The cosmic walk at the site is a brief history of the birth and development of the universe, including information on planet Earth, the emergence of life and the evolutionary story of humans. The walk allows a realisation of the beauty and mystery of what humans are part of; evoking a sense of awe and wonder, gratitude and compassion. It enables us to make sense of our own lives and our place on the planet. This walk and its associated theme is completely geological in its foundations.

Site Importance – County Geological Site

These wetlands are worthy of recognition as a County Geological Site owing to the local-scale geological and geomorphological diversity across the feature, across a relatively small area. The feature is already a pNHA (sitecode 001934) and the designated County Geological Site matches the boundaries of the pNHA area.

Management/promotion issues

This is a well managed site by the local community and complements the local Cabragh Wetlands Development Trust initiative. Regular walks, talks and seminars focus on a wide range of geology-related topics, including bedrock, soils, and ecology. Some more information on signboards on the hydrogeological aspects of the wetlands would prove a useful addition to the site.



The main, central body of the Cabragh Wetlands site.



Horses grazing on the wetland are close to the River Suir.



The entrance to the wetlands, marked by a number of geological sculptures.



One of the installations on the cosmic walk; this signifies organisms developing eyesight half a billion years ago.

