

# GALWAY - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

<b>NAME OF SITE</b>	<b>Levally Lough</b>
Other names used for site	<i>Loch an Chrainn Chrín</i>
<b>IGH THEME</b>	<b>IGH1 Karst, IGH7 Quaternary</b>
<b>TOWNLAND(S)</b>	<b>Cappadavock, Curraghcreen, Corralea, Kilgarrieff North, Kilgarrieff South</b>
<b>NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE</b>	<b>Tuam</b>
<b>SIX INCH MAP NUMBER</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>ITM CO-ORDINATES</b>	<b>552775E 753450N (centre of lake)</b>
<b>1:50,000 O.S. SHEET No. 39</b>	<b>GSI BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO. 11</b>

## Outline Site Description

This site comprises a lake which is actually a turlough feature, but which empties only every few years, and not on an annual basis.

## Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The turlough is situated within an area dominated by bedrock of pure, Lower Carboniferous limestones, which occur throughout this area of northeast County Galway. The turlough feature itself has formed in post-glacial times, over the last 11,000 years.

## Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

Levally Lough is set within a belt of 'lakes' (mapped as lakes) in northeast Galway, which are actually turloughs that do not empty fully each summer, but disappear only occasionally, every few years. These lakes include Glenamaddy Turlough, Kiltullagh Lough and Levally Lough.

This was only discovered by the scientific community as a turlough in 2018, when the lake emptied fully and the large swallow hole in the northeastern portion of its base was exposed.

The water sinking into this swallow hole has not been dye-traced, but major springs just over 1 km to the southwest of the feature, serving Gallagher Group Water Scheme, may be the eventual outflow from the lake.

## Site Importance – County Geological Site; may be recommended for Geological NHA

This is a turlough that is already designated by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) as a potential NHA and as a Special Area of Conservation (site code 000295). The lake is of considerable ecological interest because it retains water most of the time, and therefore lies at one of the extremes of turlough variation for wetness (assumed by NPWS to lie second only to Lough Funshinagh in County Roscommon). The lake is likely to support much more lake-like fauna than most turloughs, and its birdlife is richer than most. In addition, the lake structure is in a natural condition, and water quality seems good. The vegetation at this site is varied and unusual, and the areas of marl and reedbed here are the largest found in any turlough in a recent national survey (early 2000s). Geologically it is certainly of County Geological Site importance but may deserve consideration for Geological NHA status, if a review of IGH 1 Karst sites is undertaken, independent of NPWS designation.

## Management/promotion issues

The turlough is on private farmland and not suitable for visiting, but is easily visible and best seen from the public roads on the northern and eastern sides. The signboards in Glenamaddy Village, which explain the hydrology and ecology of Glenamaddy Turlough, could be enhanced with a board detailing the unique subsurface hydrogeology of the lakes in the wider area, and including Glenamaddy Turlough, Kiltullagh Lough, and Levally Lough.



The half-empty Levally Lough, July 2014. Viewed from the northeast.



The lake almost fully dry in September 2018, here viewed from the northwest near Levally School.



The swallow hole at the northeastern floor of the lake basin, September 2018.



Wet, calcareous, lacustrine marl exposed in the central portion of the lake body, Sept' 18.

