

GALWAY - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Lough Namackanbeg
Other names used for site	
IGH THEME	IGH14 Fluvial and Lacustrine Geomorphology
TOWNLAND(S)	Letterpeak, Shannagurraun
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	An Spidéal
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	80
ITM CO-ORDINATES	513300E 726900N
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET No. 45	GSI BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO. 14

Outline Site Description

A small, largely infilled lake in boggy terrain north of An Spidéal.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The infilled lake comprises organic sediments of Late Pleistocene to Early Holocene age. The surrounding area is predominantly blanket-bog terrain with outcrops of Megacrystic Granite bedrock, part of the Caledonian Galway Granite Batholith.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

Situated 4.5 km north of An Spidéal, at 90 m OD, and 600 m east of Lough Boliska, Lough Namackanbeg is situated in a small, enclosed basin (area 1.4 ha), the slopes of which are covered with blanket bog. The 'lake' was overgrown with surface scraw in the early part of the 20th century, and therefore does not exhibit a typical water-body surface. The lake has been described as a *schwingmoor* lake, or a quaking bog.

Palaeoecological investigations on lake sediment cores at Lough Namackanbeg have provided valuable insights into environmental changes in this part of western Ireland during Holocene times. Pollen assemblage zones identified from the site allow for the reconstruction of late-glacial vegetation and environmental conditions. Pollen and geochemical analyses of cores taken from the lake sediments revealed a course of vegetation development from Birch (*Betula*), Pine (*Pinus*) and Hazel (*Corylus*), to include Oak (*Quercus*) and Elm (*Ulmus*), expanding to Alder, followed by the arrival of Yew (*Taxus*). Blanket bog development is recorded around 4100 BP. Anthropogenic activity is also recorded in the sediments with the presence of charcoal and cereal-type vegetation.

Site Importance – County Geological Site; recommended for Geological NHA

The site provides valuable evidence on late- and post-glacial vegetative and environmental changes in western Ireland in the Holocene, and is an important County Geological Site. The site is in the Connemara Bog Complex SAC and pNHA (002034).

Management/promotion issues

The 'lake' is located at Keeraunduff (*Caorán Dubh*), on Bóthar Boluisce, which is signposted on a granite-pillar on the L1320 An Spidéal-Moycullen road. The 'lake' does not exhibit any discernible features on the surface. This site should be preserved as an in-situ record of past environmental conditions in this part of western Ireland. The site is located 2.5 km NNW of an area of semi-natural woodland at Shannawoneen, in the valley of the Owenboliska River. This woodland is one of the best remnants of a Sessile Oak (*Quercus petraea*) dominated canopy woodland in Connemara.



Lough Namackanbeg – view looking northwest.



Lough Namackanbeg – view looking northeast.



Sphagnum, reeds and sedges on surface of the infilled lake.

