

KILDARE - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Pollardstown Fen and springs		
Other names used for site			
TOWNLAND(S)	Pollardstown, Morrinstownbiller		
NEAREST TOWN	Newbridge		
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	23		
NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE	277150 216275 = N 7715 1628		
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	55	1/2 inch Sheet No.	16

Outline Site Description

A calcareous spring-fed fen.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

Quaternary (Holocene).

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

Pollardstown Fen is a large marshland that covers an area approximately 2.2km² just northwest of Newbridge. The formation of Pollardstown Fen began after the last Ice Age, due to the configuration of glacial deposits and groundwater flow patterns. Due to the influx of mineral rich waters from several calcareous springs, mainly originating from the Curragh area, peat accumulated to eventually form a groundwater fed bog known as a fen. The Fen is made up of a central lake, reed swamps, forestry on its northern margins and a large number of springs. Some of the most obvious calcareous springs, which feed this area, can be seen on the south side of Pollardstown Fen. The Seven Springs Complex is one such example; this is a large calcareous spring, with a surface area of about 25m² and about 1.5-2m deep. Its waters appear to be clean as well as crystal clear. This spring is located at the southernmost end of the Pollardstown Fen National Natural Reserve.

Site Importance

This site is the largest remaining calcareous spring-fed fen in Ireland. Pollardstown Fen is recognised internationally for its extensive vegetation of Black Bog Rush and Saw Sedge. This habitat supports a great number of threatened plant species such as the Fly Orchid, Fen Bedstraw and Tufted Sedge to name a few. The Fen is also home to a large number of animals, bird life in particular and is very popular amongst birdwatchers, with rare species such as Marsh Harriers being observed.

Management/promotion issues

As this site is a state owned National Nature Reserve, established on 15 December 1986. It is also designated as an NHA and SAC. Entrance to the Fen is by means of a small pathway, which is signposted along the main road. There is also an information board within Pollardstown Fen explaining the wildlife and the formation of the marshlands. Great care should be taken while walking through Pollardstown Fen as drainage ditches, watercourses and soak holes are deep and in many places hidden by vegetation. It is important to note that Irish law protects all flora and fauna within this reserve area.

The inclusion of the Fen within this report, is belated recognition of the geodiversity element, which has provided the biodiversity which is already protected and widely recognised for its value.



Top Left: Pathway through Pollardstown Fen

Top Right: Seven Springs, one of the many springs feeding the Fen.

Above: Panorama view of Pollardstown Fen, displaying the abundance of Saw Sedge.

Pollardstown Fen and Springs

