

KERRY - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Caragh Lough
Other names used for site	Lough Caragh, Loch Caragh, Caragh Lake, <i>Loch Cárthaí</i> , <i>Loch carthach</i> (rocky lake)
IGH THEME	IGH7 Quaternary
TOWNLAND(S)	Lough Caragh, Sugarloaf Island, Glannagilliagh, Oolagh West, Muingaphuca, Tooreennasliggaun, Tullig Beg, Lonart, Cromane Upper, Cromane Lower, Illaunstookagh, Dooaghs Commons, Ballintleave Commons, Ballintleave, Dooaghs, Knockaunaglass, Doolahig, Knockaunroe, Oolagh East
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Glenbeigh
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	55, 56, 63, 64
ITM CO-ORDINATES	471000E 595000N (centre of site)
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	78
GS1 BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO.	20
GIS CODE	KY028

Outline Site Description

This site comprises a series of arcuate moraine ridges centred on Caragh Lough, situated between Killorglin and Glenbeigh.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The moraines around Caragh Lough are formed from Quaternary age glacial sediments, deposited during the last Ice Age.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

Caragh Lough is a moraine-dammed lake at the mouth of a wide glacial trough, which is situated at the head of a U-shaped valley that extends about 8 km from the corrie at Coomavoon southwest of the lake, to within a couple of kilometres of Glenbeigh.

The site can be divided into two parts: a deep section situated at the base of a deep glacial trough, or U-shaped valley, which is occupied by Caragh Lough, and a wider part north of the lake, where the well-preserved moraines occur.

The recessional moraines, which lie at the head of the lake and extend as far as the coast, have been quoted as being the best examples of recessional moraines formed as a result of a valley glaciation outside of the Alps. They comprise a series of concentric ridges extending out seawards from the lake, and are up to 30 m in amplitude.

Site Importance – County Geological Site

This is an exceptionally impressive series of recessional moraines, all at the end of a U-shaped valley. They form the best examples of these features in the country.

Management/promotion issues

Due to the size and scale of this site, there are few threats to it. The site merits promotion, preferably as part of a north Kerry coastal geoheritage trail. It is partially within the Castlemaine Harbour SPA (site code 004029), SAC and pNHA (site code 000343), the Lough Yganavan and Lough Nambrackdarrig SAC and pNHA (site code 000370), and the Killarney National Park, Macgillicuddy's Reeks and Caragh River Catchment SAC and pNHA (site code 000365).



View of the recessional moraines at Caragh Lough, viewed from Commaun at the west of the lake.



The River Caragh flowing through a series of moraines at Scartnamackagh / Commaun.



The River Caragh flowing around a high moraine at Ballintleave, just off the N70 road.



Exposure into a moraine ridge in an old railway cutting at Scartnamackagh.



High, linear moraine ridge at Dooaghs Commons.

