

## LIMERICK - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

<b>NAME OF SITE</b>	<b>Craggs Turlough</b>
Other names used for site	Lough Selleher, Lough Sellagher
<b>IGH THEME</b>	<b>IGH1 Karst, IGH16 Hydrogeology</b>
<b>TOWNLAND(S)</b>	<b>Craggs</b>
<b>NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE</b>	<b>Askeaton</b>
<b>SIX INCH MAP NUMBER</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>ITM CO-ORDINATES</b>	<b>529785E 648658N (centre of feature)</b>
<b>1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER 64</b>	<b>GSI BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO. 17</b>
<b>GIS CODE LK009</b>	

### **Outline Site Description**

This site comprises a small turlough in an area of abundant outcrop of limestone, about 4km southwest of Askeaton.

### **Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type**

The bedrock is pure, well-bedded Mississippian (Lower Carboniferous) Waulsortian limestone, but the turlough itself is post-glacial, formed in the last 11,000 years.

### **Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest**

The landscape surrounding Craggs Turlough is comprised of low hills formed of limestone at or just below the ground surface, but the floor of the turlough is relatively flat except for a rise in the northwestern half. The basin is confined by slopes on the north and part of the south but is more open to the west. The turlough is a seasonal lake and reflects the interaction of the groundwater table with the land surface.

The turlough dries out completely in summer, and the processes of water entering and leaving the basin have not been studied in any detail, though it is known that an estavelle, which is a feature that acts as a spring during winter months and a swallow hole during drier times, exists at the southeastern end of the basin. There are occasional erratic rocks of limestone around the base of the turlough, many of which are moss-covered and lime-coated up to a certain height. The moss serves as a watermark for the high-water level of the turlough when in flood.

Craggs Turlough has a quite varied vegetational cover for its size, with patches of up to ten separate plant communities around the floor of the basin. Shrubs at the turlough edge include common dogwood and buckthorn. When dried out, the shallow basin has a relatively species-poor sward, where silverweed is the most conspicuous plant, but with common spike rush, marsh bedstraw, water mint and the turlough form of buttercup (which has finely-divided leaves) also present. Threaded crowfoot grows at the estavelle.

### **Site Importance – County Geological Site**

This turlough is worthy of recognition as a County Geological Site owing to the local-scale geomorphological diversity present over a relatively small area. There are few turloughs in Limerick, and this is the most impressive as well as the most pristine such feature from a landscape perspective.

### **Management/promotion issues**

This is a site almost completely surrounded by hazel woodland, and as such is in an uncommon, semi-natural setting. Thus, the most obvious issues would be the potential clearance of some of this woodland, but other potential issues such as cattle encroachment and soil disturbance of the margins, and agricultural drainage attempts, could also cause problems for the site. A large quarry is situated approximately 200m to the south, and it must be ensured that the hydrogeological integrity of the turlough feature is protected in all future quarrying, and other, developments in the locality.



The basin hosting Craggs Turlough, viewed from the northwest.



Looking southeast across the basin floor of Craggs Turlough.



Erratic of limestone, lime-coated.



The estavelle feature at the southeastern end.

