

## MAYO - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

<b>NAME OF SITE</b>	<b>Bellacorick</b>
Other names used for site	Béal Átha Liag
<b>IGH THEME</b>	<b>IGH14 Fluvial and Lacustrine Geomorphology</b>
<b>TOWNLAND(S)</b>	<b>Bellacorick, Shrahnakilly, Croaghaun West, Laghtanvack</b>
<b>NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE</b>	<b>Bangor</b>
<b>SIX INCH MAP NUMBER</b>	<b>19, 20, 27, 28</b>
<b>ITM CO-ORDINATES</b>	<b>497670E 822000N</b>
<b>1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NO. 23</b>	<b>GS1 BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO. 6</b>
<b>GIS Code MO011</b>	

### Outline Site Description

The site comprises meandering river channels within an extensive area of Atlantic blanket bog.

### Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The site comprises extensive Holocene age (post-Ice Age) river channels and Atlantic blanket bog, overlying glacial till (Quaternary) and calcareous sandstones of the Downpatrick Formation (Carboniferous age).

### Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

The site comprises river channels within an area of blanket bog that exhibit irregular and deranged meandering patterns. Bellacorick is located at the confluence point of two rivers (Oweninny River and Altnabrocky River) which together flow westwards as the Owenmore (Abhainn Mhór). The Oweninny River flows southwards from the Sliabh Fíach (Slieve Fyagh) area. The Altnabrocky River flows north from the Nephin Beg Range.

### Site Importance – County Geological Site

The Altnabrocky River to the southeast of Bellacorick is within the Bellacorick Bog Complex SAC (001922). The Owenmore River catchment area (including the Oweninny and Altnabrocky catchment areas) is ~ 340km<sup>2</sup>. Located some 7km north-east of Bellacorick at the headwaters of the Sruffaunnamuingabatia (a tributary of the Oweninny River) is the Bellacorick Iron Flush cSAC (000466). Significant for the occurrence of *Marsh Saxifrage*, this site contains a small minerotrophic fen surrounded by drains and extensive areas of mechanically-cut peat.

### Management/promotion issues

Owing to the remoteness and access issues associated with the river channel features, the site is not deemed of discernible interest for public promotion. Future wind-farm development in the surrounding area poses a threat to the integrity of the site. The Bellacorick area occupies an important place in the development of Ireland's renewable energy industry. In 1992, Bord na Móna Energy Limited established Ireland's first commercial wind farm on the cutover blanket bog at Bellacorick. In the past, the main activity in the surrounding area was peat harvesting (Bord na Móna), however much of the peat extraction has now ceased. The peat-burning power station at Bellacorick burned milled peat from the surrounding bogland from 1962 until it was decommissioned in 2004 (the cooling tower was demolished in 2007).



Bellacorick Bridge (*Musical Bridge*) viewed from the south looking upstream to the Oweninny River.



Looking NE from Shrahnakilly, to Laghtanvack, over the meandering braided section of Oweninny River. The Bellacorick Iron Flush (cSAC 000466) is located ~3km away in the middle distance.



Looking west towards the Altnabrocky and Oweninny River confluence. Photo taken 100m south of Bellacorick Bridge.



The Altnabrocky River, looking southwest from location 100m south of Bellacorick Bridge. Nephin Range in distance.



