

## MAYO - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

<b>NAME OF SITE</b>	<b>Curreighnabannow Spring</b>
Other names used for site	Carrownabannoo, Currynabannir
<b>IGH THEME</b>	<b>IGH1 Karst, IGH16 Hydrogeology</b>
<b>TOWNLAND(S)</b>	<b>Creggaree, Nymphsfield</b>
<b>NEAREST TOWN</b>	<b>Cong</b>
<b>SIX INCH MAP NUMBER</b>	<b>120</b>
<b>ITM CO-ORDINATES</b>	<b>514880E 755870N</b>
<b>1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NO.38</b>	<b>GSI BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO. 11</b>
<b>GSI Code MO040</b>	

### Outline Site Description

This site represents one of the major springs from the extensive underground drainage system between Lough Mask and Lough Corrib. The site is part of the Cong Isthmus site: an 18km<sup>2</sup> hydrogeomorphic area of springs, sinks, caves and karst surface features.

### Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The spring is of karstic origin, and formed in pure-bedded Lower Carboniferous (359-324 million years ago) age limestone bedrock (Cong Limestone Formation).

### Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

The Cong Isthmus (3-5 km wide) separates Loughs Mask and Corrib, and is largely underlain by Carboniferous limestone bedrock. There is a ~15m altitude difference between the lake surface levels of Corrib and Mask. This area exhibits some of the more remarkable karst landscapes in Ireland.

A significant amount of water flows from Lough Mask to Lough Corrib via subterranean routes, where flow volume rates are ~20m<sup>3</sup>/s at medium flow. Water flowing into major sinks along the southern margin of Lough Mask rises at several major springs (including Ellechrissaun, and the hatchery springs) near Cong and Lough Corrib. Curreighnabannow Spring is the highest of the Cong springs, and is one of the main outlets of water that disappears into sinkholes further north at Lough Mask and Castle Lake. There is extensive development of a variety of karren (karst features) at and near the site. Many karren features indicate the present and past zones of fluctuation of water levels in south east Lough Mask. The Cong Canal (seasonally dry) runs almost parallel to the river issuing from the spring. The spring river meets the Cong waterways below the Cong Canal Bridge by the parking area to the east of Cong village, on the R346 road.

### Site Importance – County Geological Site; recommended for Geological NHA

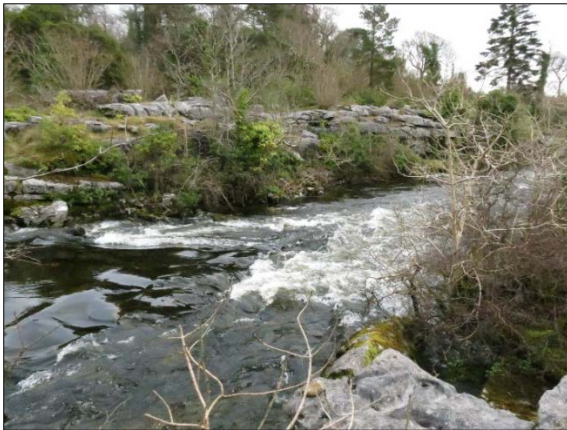
The site is of national importance. Curreighnabannow Spring is one of the largest springs in County Mayo. The site is part of the greater Cong Isthmus site which includes Castle Lake, Pigeon Hole Cave (Co. Galway) and Ballymaglancey Cave (Co. Galway). The site is recommended as a geological NHA. The spring is the highest of the Cong springs and is one that operates at successively higher levels as stage levels rise. The site contributes to a major water supply source and it is one of the most important karst sites in County Mayo and County Galway.

### Management/promotion issues

Access to the site is not easy, with significant scrub and uneven karst terrain bordering the spring and river outlet. A significant threat to the site and to the local karst landscape is the extraction and sale of 'water-worn' and karren limestone. Limestone pavement is classed as an Annex 1 priority habitat for conservation under the EU Habitats Directive (8240). The site is an excellent site for teaching about large surficial karst landscape features and for demonstrating the wonderful aspects of the karst geomorphology on the Cong Isthmus.



Curreighnabannow Spring, viewed looking northwards.



Curreighnabannow Spring river flowing south (to right) from spring. Epikarst along river banks.



Meeting of the waters, east of Cong village.  
Curreighnabannow Spring waters enter under stone bridge on right.



Lock on the dry Cong Canal.



Curreighnabannow Spring river flowing south (to right) from spring.



