

ROSCOMMON - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Lough Funshinagh		
Other names used for site			
IGH THEME	IGH 1 Karst, IGH7 Quaternary, IGH16 Hydrogeology		
TOWNLAND(S)	Ballagh, Lahara, Lysterfield, Kildurney, Carrick, Carrickbeg, Inchiroe and Gortfree, Lisfelim		
NEAREST TOWN	Athlone		
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	45		
NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE	193470 251500		
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	40, 47	1/2 inch Sheet No.	12

Outline Site Description

Lough Funshinagh is a large lake which is known to occasionally disappear rapidly.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The lake is in a karstic terrain with Carboniferous limestone bedrock underlying it, although there may be thin clay or marl deposits underlying the lake bed.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

Lough Funshinagh is not a true turlough, but rather it is a disappearing lake. This only happens occasionally, with the last rapid draining taking place in September 1996. It appears that there must be one or more swallow holes in the lake bed which are normally 'plugged' with an impermeable layer, such as clay. If the seal is broken, then the shallow lake may drain, leaving large expanses of dry lakebed. Gradual slumping inward of impermeable material may then reseal the swallow hole and allow the lake to fill gradually again.

Site Importance – County Geological Site; recommended for Geological NHA

The rarity of such disappearing lakes in Ireland means that this site has already been recommended by GSI for designation as a geological Natural Heritage Area by the NPWS.

Management/promotion issues

Access by road to the lake is fairly restricted and could be enhanced if council resources permitted. However, unless the lake has had a disappearing event, it presents no more specific interest to a visitor than any other lake in the county. If the event happens again, it would be very helpful if appropriate geological researchers could be alerted in order to access the site and make observations about processes and locations of importance. Photographs taken during this time, of the lake itself from both the surrounding land and air, would be especially useful.

Lough Funshinagh is already a proposed NHA and an SAC (site number 000611).



Lough Funshinagh from the roadside at the southern end looking north.



Lough Funshinagh viewed from the southwest side of Red Hill.



Lough Funshinagh, damp (left) and dry with algal paper covering (right) after a draining event in September 1996 (Photos: David Drew).



The main sink at Lough Funshinagh (Photo: David Drew)

