

WESTMEATH - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Lough Lom
Other names used for site	Lough Lum
IGH THEME	IGH1 Karst, IGH16 Hydrogeology
TOWNLAND(S)	Kilbalraherd, Mabrista, Benalbit and Derryroe
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Castletown Geoghegan
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	32
ITM CO-ORDINATES	633950E 741290N (centre of feature)
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	48 GSI BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO. 15

Outline Site Description

This site comprises a small turlough in a valley about 2.5 km south of Castletown Geoghegan.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The bedrock under the site is pure bedded, Lower Carboniferous limestone, but the turlough feature itself is post-glacial, formed in the last 11,000 years.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

This small turlough has only been recognised as such as part of this audit, following a query by the County Westmeath Heritage Officer.

The feature reflects the interaction of the groundwater table with the land surface, and is a seasonal lake. There are many erratics of pure limestone around the base of the turlough, many of which are moss covered up to a certain elevation. Such moss provides a watermark which allows an approximation of the high water level when the turlough is in flood to be gleaned.

A marked swallow hole occurs at the southern end of the feature, and the hollow may also fill from this locality, but the exact process of empty and fill of the turlough feature remains to be observed and documented fully.

Site Importance – County Geological Site

This turlough is worthy of recognition as a County Geological Site, due to the relative rarity of such features in the county (currently, only two are known).

Turloughs are exceptionally rare east of the Shannon River, in fact, with known examples in Longford, Westmeath, Tipperary and Monaghan only.

Management/promotion issues

Issues such as cattle encroachment and soil disturbance of the margins, and agricultural drainage attempts may also cause problems. The hollows around the turlough site should not be used as dumping grounds, as this may affect the hydrology of the locality and mean that flood levels get higher as climate change ensues.



The (dry) turlough at Lough Lom, November 2018. Some recent drainage works have been completed, in the foreground.



Large, moss covered boulders at the western end of the feature, with moss showing the flooded water level.



Swallow hole

The swallow hole at the southern end of the feature.



Small pond in the centre of the turlough.

