

4.14

**Bessborough Pond, Blackrock, County Cork O.S. W 717 700**  
O.S. Discovery Sheet 87

NO PHOTO !

**Conservation Designation:**

NONE

**General description:**

Bessborough Pond is located within the grounds of The Sacred Heart Convent, Blackrock, 4.5 kilometres to the south east of Cork City. The area covers just over 135 m<sup>2</sup> and lies at an average altitude of 9 metres above mean sea level. A very small (1ha) **artificial lagoon** apparently formed as part of an ornamental garden with five small islands. Hydrology of the pond may have been modified by construction of the new bypass south of Cork City. The pond is now largely stagnant but still receiving saline water through a pipe, and salinity measured 23.7psu at the time of sampling on 27/7/06.

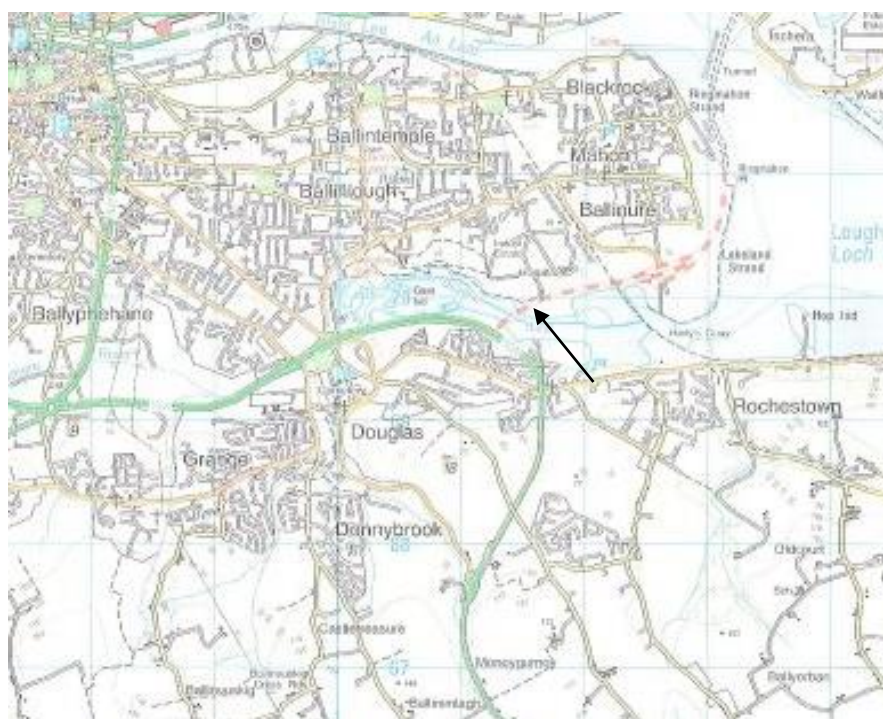


Figure 14.1 Location map of Bessborough Pond

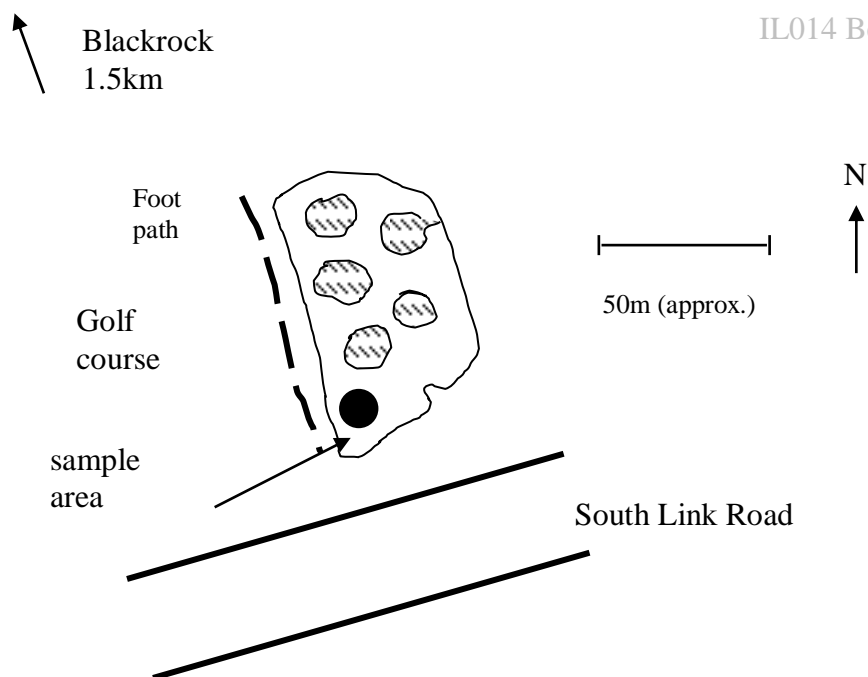


Figure 14.2 Sketch map showing sampling station in Bessborough pond 27/7/06

## Flora

This small lagoon was visited briefly on the 27/7/06 in response to a request from a student at UCC (Fergal O’Riordan). The pond was found to be largely stagnant with a deep layer of rotting vegetation and leaf litter. The only plants recorded were occasional strands of *Enteromorpha* and small patches of the saltmarsh alga, *Vaucheria* sp. near the inflow pipe.

Table 14.1 Salinity, temperature, substratum and vegetation recorded at Bessborough Pond, Co. Cork on 27/7/06.

Name of site	Bessborough Pond
Date of survey	27/07/2006
GPS position	Sta 1 W 71681 70026
Salinity (psu)	23.7
Temperature	21.8
Depth (cm)	0-50
substratum	gravel, stones overlain with leaf litter
<b>Percentage cover</b>	
Algae	
Chlorophyceae	
	<i>Enteromorpha</i> sp. 2
Phaeophyceae	
	<i>Vaucheria</i> sp.
Anoxic leaf litter and rotting vegetation	97
Stones	1

## Fauna

Only four faunal taxa were recorded at the time of sampling, all in very low numbers. Two of these are common estuarine species, the ragworm, *N. diversicolor*, and shore crab, *C. maenas*. The other two species are lagoonal specialists, but one (*C. seurati*) appeared to be dead.

Table 14.2 Aquatic fauna recorded in Bessborough Pond, Co. Cork on 27/7/06.

o = occasional. Species in bold text are lagoonal specialists.

Name of site	Bessborough Pond	
Date of survey	27/07/2006	
<b>Taxa</b>		
Annelida	<i>Nereis diversicolor</i>	o
Crustacea		
	Decapoda <b><i>Palaemonetes varians</i></b>	o
	<i>Carcinus maenas</i>	o
Bryozoa	<b><i>Conopeum seurati</i></b>	dead ?

***Palaemonetes varians*** Decapod crustacean listed as a lagoonal specialist in the U.K. by Barnes (1989) and Bamber (1997), but apparently is no longer regarded as such. Although found in estuaries, this species appears to be far more characteristic of lagoons in Ireland, found in 64 of the 87 lagoons surveyed (73.6%) and may require a lagoonal environment for reproduction. Therefore, it remains on the proposed list of lagoonal specialists for Ireland.

***Conopeum seurati*** Bryozoan recorded at 49 of the 87 lagoons surveyed (56.3%), but is not listed in a recent review of Irish marine Bryozoa (Wyse Jackson 1991). Either the species is under-recorded or is truly a lagoonal specialist.

## Summary

Bessborough pond is a small **artificial lagoon** which was stagnant and almost lifeless at the time of sampling. Only two plants and 4 faunal species were recorded at the time of sampling, all in low numbers, but two of these were lagoonal specialists. The greatest interest in this site lies in the potential for restoration.

**Overall Conservation Value = Low**

## Conservation Status Assessment (from Oliver 2007)

Impacts	Natural accumulation of leaf litter in isolated (stagnant) pool. Accumulation of organic material.
Conservation Status	Unfavourable-BAD

## Further Information

Not previously listed as a lagoon. Not listed or surveyed until 2006. Included in the Conservation Status report (Oliver 2007).

## References:

- Barnes, R.S.K. 1989. Coastal lagoons of Britain: an overview and conservation appraisal. *Biological Conservation* **49**: 295–313.
- Bamber, R.N. 1997. Assessment of saline lagoons within Special Areas of Conservation. *English Nature Research Reports* No. 235.
- Oliver, G.A. 2007. Conservation status report: Coastal Lagoons (1150). Unpublished report to the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Dublin.
- Wyse Jackson, P.N. 1991. Distribution of Irish marine Bryozoa, together with biographical notes relating to the chief researchers in the group. *Bulletin of the Irish Biogeographical Society*. **14**: 129-18.