

4.27

Lauragh lagoon, County Kerry O.S. V 768 577
O.S. Discovery Sheet 84



Conservation Designation: Kenmare River SAC 002158

General description:

Situated 1km southwest of the village of Lauragh, un-named on the 1:50.000 OS map. A moderate sized (20ha) **natural “saltmarsh” lagoon**. Not a lot is known about this site, as it was only visited briefly in October 2006. Appears to be very shallow, salinity measured 4.4psu at the time of sampling (9/10/2006), but probably varies considerably.

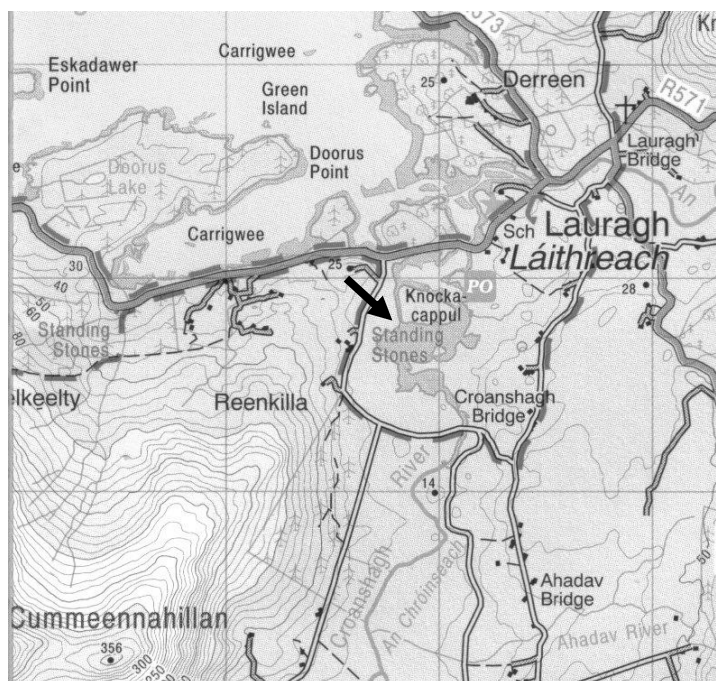


Figure 27.1 Location map of lagoon at Lauragh.

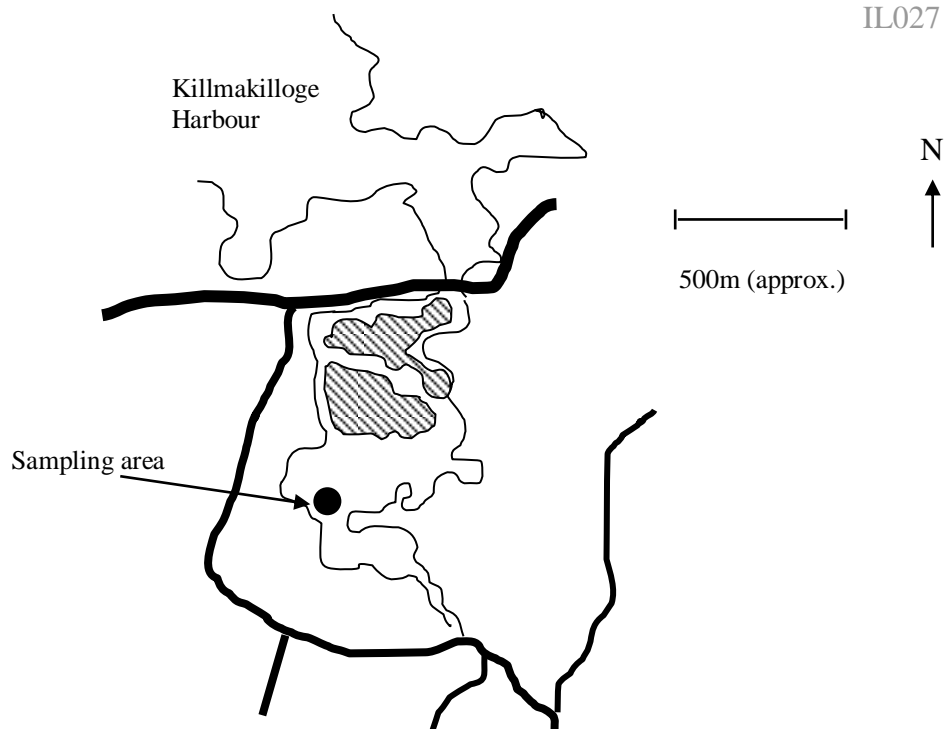


Figure 27.2 Sampling stations used at Lauragh lagoon on 9/10/06.

Flora

Very little is known about the lagoon at Lauragh. It is described as an “estuarine” or “saltmarsh” lagoon. It appears to be very shallow, and most of the bed of the lagoon appears to be bare mud, or covered by accumulations of rotting vegetation. The lagoon is bordered by dense beds of *Phragmites* with deep tidal channels. Only 5 floral taxa were recorded (Table 27.1), all of which are relatively common, but one (*C. linum*) is a lagoonal specialist:

Chaetomorpha linum. There is some doubt about the taxonomic status of the unattached lagoonal form of this species, and it was recorded by Hatch and Healy (1998) as *C. mediterranea*. It is a common, characteristic alga of semi-isolated Irish lagoons, recorded at 49 of the 87 (56.3%) lagoons surveyed.

This site should be visited again under suitable tidal conditions, but based on available information, the site is regarded as of **low conservation value** as a coastal lagoon, based on aquatic vegetation.

Table 27.1 Aquatic flora, salinity, temperature, water depth and substratum and recorded at Lauragh lagoon, 9/10/2006. Species in bold text are lagoonal specialists.

		Sta 1
GPS position		V 76710 57651
Salinity (psu)		4.4
Temperature		13.2
Depth (cm)		0-30
Substratum		mud, gravel, decomposing vegetation
Percentage cover		
Algae		
Chlorophyceae		
	<i>Chaetomorpha linum</i>	2
	<i>Enteromorpha</i> sp.	2
Phaeophyceae		
	<i>Fucus spiralis</i>	20
Angiosperms		
	<i>Phragmites australis</i>	+
	<i>Juncus maritimus</i>	+
	Bare soft mud	70
	Stones	+
	Rotting vegetation	30

Fauna

A total of 18 faunal taxa were recorded at Lauragh lagoon, of which 14 were identified to species (Table 27.2). Most of these are common estuarine or saltmarsh species, but one is a lagoonal specialist (*C. seurati*), and one appears to be relatively rare in Ireland.

Table 27.2 Aquatic fauna recorded at sampling stations in Lauragh lagoon, Co. Kerry 9/10/06 r = rare, o = occasional, c = common. Species in bold text are lagoonal specialists or notable species.

Taxa		Sampling Station
Nematoda	indet.	Sta 1 c
Annelida		
	Polychaeta	<i>Nereis diversicolor</i> o
	Oligochaeta	Tubificidae indet. o
		Naididae indet. o
Crustacea		
	Mysidacea	<i>Neomysis integer</i> o
	Isopoda	<i>Asellus aquaticus</i> o
		<i>Cyathura carinata</i> o
		<i>Lekanesphaera rugicauda</i> r
	Amphipoda	<i>Gammarus zaddachi</i> o
		<i>Microdeutopus gryllotalpa</i> r
	Decapoda	<i>Carcinus maenas</i> o
		<i>Crangon crangon</i> o
Insecta		
	Diptera	Chironomidae indet. o
Mollusca		
	Pulmonata	<i>Hydrobia ulvae</i> shells
Bryozoa		<i>Conopeum seurati</i> o
Teleostei		<i>Pleuronectes flesus</i> c
		<i>Pomatoschistus microps</i> o
		<i>Gobius niger</i> r

Cyathura carinata Isopod crustacean which occurs from the southern British coast to the Mediterranean (Hayward and Ryland 1995). Recorded at the North Slob (Co. Wexford) in 1991 (Galvin 1992) and still present in 1996, but was not recorded in 2003, following drainage for maintenance work. Recorded from Bantry Bay (Griffith 1970) and more recently at Commoge Marsh (Co. Cork) and Lauragh (Co. Kerry), but otherwise appears to be rare in Ireland. Regarded by some authors as a lagoonal specialist in Portugal.

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.

None of the other faunal species appear to be of particularly high conservation interest. Based on available information, the site is regarded as of **low conservation value** as a coastal lagoon, based on aquatic vegetation.

Summary

Lauragh lagoon is a moderate sized (20ha) "**estuarine**", or "**saltmarsh**" lagoon. It is of great scenic value, but not very much is known about it. The species list is low with only 5 floral and 18 faunal taxa recorded on a brief visit in October 2006. One species (*C. carinata*) appears to be relatively rare in Ireland and two are lagoonal specialists (1 faunal, 1 floral) but generally, based on the biological community, the site appears to be of low conservation value.

Overall Conservation Value = Low

Conservation Status Assessment (from Oliver 2007)

Impacts	Natural eutrophication from decaying reeds but significant tidal and freshwater flushing. Accumulation of organic material.
Conservation Status	Unfavourable-Inadequate

Further Information

Not listed previously as a coastal lagoon. Included in the Conservation Status report (Oliver 2007).

References:

- Galvin, P. 1992. *The ecology of the brackish-water lagoons of Wexford and east Cork*. MSc thesis, University College, Dublin.
- Griffith, D. de G. 1970. *Cyathura carinata* (Kröyer) (Isopoda: Anthuridae) in Bantry Bay. *Irish Naturalists' Journal* **16** (9): 277-278.
- Hatch, P. & Healy, B. 1998. Aquatic vegetation of Irish coastal lagoons. *Bulletin of the Irish Biogeographical Society*. **21**: 2-21.
- Hayward, P. J. & Ryland, J.S. (eds.) 1995. *Handbook of the Marine Fauna of North-West Europe*. Oxford University Press. PB. 899 pp.
- 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.