Turloughs in County Roscommon

Most of the major turloughs in County Roscommon are located in mid and south Roscommon from the area around Strokestown in the north to Mount Talbot in the south.

Size of Turloughs

Turloughs vary in size but most cover an area of many hectares.

Most turloughs can be a depth of about two metres or so but some turloughs can be up to five metres deep.

Turloughs of County Roscommon

Some Turloughs in County Roscommon...

Annaghmore (Strokestown)
Ballinamaddy (Athleague)
Ballsbrin (Castleplunkett)
Castleplunkett Village
Cloonamuck (Ballinlough)
Corbally (Tulsk)
Coolcam (Ballinlough)
Drogheda Lower
Four Roads
Kilbride (Athleague)
Leitrim (Castleplunkett)
Lisduff (Athleague)
Lough Ree West
Mount Talbot
Mullaghmore
Mullaghshannon (Castleplunkett)
Shanagarry (Castleplunkett)
Turlough Moss
Turlough River

What is a Turlough?

The name Turlough appears to come from the Irish ‘Turlach’ which means ‘lake’ or ‘pond’. Turloughs can be low lying areas in limestone.

Turloughs lie and simply meander through a joint in the limestone, or a swallow hole connected with the underground water table. Turloughs are not fed or drained by surface streams.

In most years during the wet winter months, turloughs fill with water and then gradually dry out and disappear. Some turloughs may hold water in their deeper parts in autumn and remain small lakes in summer.

Turloughs are sometimes referred to as temporary lakes or disappearing lakes.

Some Turloughs of County Roscommon

Lough Croan
Lisduff (Athleague)
Four Roads
Corbally (Tulsk)
Coolcam (Ballinlough)
Castleplunket Village
Annaghmore (Strokestown)
Roscommon...
in County Roscommon

Some Turloughs under EU or Irish legislation. Natural Heritage Area (NHA)

Some turloughs can be up to five metres deep.

Most turloughs rise to a depth of 1.5 metres deep.

Most of the major turloughs in County Roscommon are located in mid and south Roscommon from the area around Strokestown in the north to Mount Talbot in the south.

Turloughs in Ireland

Turloughs are a feature almost unique to Ireland and an interesting part of our landscape. They are profoundly associated with limestone areas and occur widely in the north east of the country including Roscommon, Galway, Mayo and Sligo. There are also found in Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan and a scattering of other counties.

They are of interest because of their formation, mean of flooding and their flora and fauna.

Wildlife of Turloughs

Turloughs are used for waterbirds particularly in winter when large numbers can occur. In summer when the water level is low wildflowers grow in abundance. Wintering waterfowl means that in turn attract resident birds.

Wintering Wildbirds

In winter the flooded turlough in County Roscommon is a large wetland of international importance.

Turloughs are important winter feeding areas for a large number of birds, including wildfowl, ducks, waders and geese.

Swans

Three species of swans spend the winter months at some turloughs in County Roscommon.

The mute swan is common to Ireland throughout the year and is distinguished by an orange crowned bill. The colour can change the movement and both have a yellow and black bill.

The whooper swan arrives in autumn from Iceland while the Bewick’s swan comes from northern Russia and Siberia. Both species winter in turloughs with a green head of winter plumage and black beak.

Only the mute swan stays for the summer.

White-fronted Goose

About half the world’s population of the white-fronted goose winter in Ireland each winter. A small number winter in County Roscommon at turloughs.

Species of bird that have been recorded on turloughs include gadwall, mallard, pintail, shoveler, teal and wigeon.

Wintering Ducks

Dabbling ducks prefer shallow water and most turloughs have such water. Species of duck that have been recorded on turloughs are shallow and ideal.

Wintering Wildbirds

Wintering Wildbirds

In winter seed areas and shrike points, turloughs are ideal for small birds like reed bunting, sedge warbler, bullfinches and meadow pipit. The whinchat can be seen in some turloughs in County Roscommon. Puffins and small wild birds are ideal for feeding young birds including moorhen, mallard, shoveler and teal.

Wildflowers of Turloughs

In summer the turloughs droop with a carpet of grasses, sedges and wildflowers. The wildflowers are ideal for wildlife like grass of parnassum, self’s woundwort, knapweed and hawkweed.

Special plants of Turloughs

Some species of wild plant are special, growing only at turloughs. In County Roscommon these species recorded include turlough violet, turlough black moss and a rare species of dandelion.

Wild flowers

Turlough moss

The highest flood level at turloughs is frequently marked by the presence of the black moss Cinclidotus. Black moss can cover much of the turlough.

Three species of swan spend the winter months in County Roscommon. Swans, ducks, waders and geese.

Swans

Turloughs are an inland county covering an area of approximately 2,500 square kilometres. The landscape is generally flat with gently rolling hills. Only in some northern parts of the county does the land rise above 250m with the highest point 691m, on the County-Leitrim border.

Most of the county is underlain with Carboniferous limestone. There are a few pockets of sandstone, in the north, west and east of the county.

The Shannon heads to the west and south of the county, while the River Suck flows through the county covering an area of 1,150 square kilometres. The River Suck lies to the west and south of the county, while the mighty River Shannon and Lough Ree flow along the eastern border. There are a few pockets of sandstone, in the north, west and east of the county.

County Roscommon

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Look around you and see the wonderful selection of flowers & wildlife in our beautiful turloughs...

**Meadow (Geum urbanum)**
The yellow flower with long straight petals can be seen at turloughs in County Roscommon. It prefers damp, rich soil and can be found growing in hedgerows, gardens and glades.

**Golden Plover (Pluvialis squatarola)**
A small, brown field bird with a long tail and a short, sharp beak. The golden plover is a winter visitor to Ireland and is most often seen on beaches and mudflats. It feeds on small invertebrates such as crustaceans, insects and mollusks.

**Tufted Duck (Aythya fuligula)**
A small, brown duck with a distinctive long neck and a blue-grey bill. The tufted duck is a winter visitor to turloughs in County Roscommon. It feeds on aquatic invertebrates such as snails and worms.

**Mute Swan (Cygnus olor)**
The mute swan is a large, white bird with a black neck and a short, sharp bill. It is the most abundant waterbird in Europe and often seen on turloughs in County Roscommon. It feeds on a variety of plants and aquatic invertebrates.

**Mallard (Anas platyrhynchos)**
A small, brown duck with a short, yellow bill and a distinctive blue head. The mallard is a common breeder in County Roscommon and can be seen on many wetlands and lakes. It feeds on a variety of plants and invertebrates.

**Ringlet (Aphantopus hyperantus)**
The ringlet is a small, brown butterfly with a distinctive black ring around its body. It is often seen on turloughs in County Roscommon and feeds on a variety of plants, particularly grasses.

**Shoreline (Asperula gayana)**
The flower is a small, pinkish-red flower with a long, tubular corolla. It is often seen on turloughs in County Roscommon and is a common species in wetlands. It feeds on a variety of invertebrates and small plants.

**Buttercup (Ranunculus acris)**
The buttercup is a small, yellow flower with a long, tubular corolla. It is often seen on turloughs in County Roscommon and is a common species in wetlands. It feeds on a variety of invertebrates and small plants.

**Turlough Moss (Hylocomium splendens)**
The turlough moss is a small, green moss that is often seen on rocks and walls. It is a common species in wetlands and is often seen on turloughs in County Roscommon. It feeds on a variety of invertebrates and small plants.

**Custard (Fumanae aurantiaca)**
The flower is a small, yellow flower with a long, tubular corolla. It is often seen on turloughs in County Roscommon and is a common species in wetlands. It feeds on a variety of invertebrates and small plants.

**Redshank (Tringa totanus)**
The redshank is a medium-sized wading bird with long legs and a long, straight bill. It is often seen on turloughs in County Roscommon and feeds on a variety of invertebrates and small plants.

**Tufted Titmice (Parus bicolor)**
The tufted titmouse is a small, brown bird with a distinctive tuft of feathers on its head. It is often seen on turloughs in County Roscommon and feeds on a variety of invertebrates and small plants.

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