

BirdWatch Ireland Reserves

Co Mayo: Termoncarragh Meadows



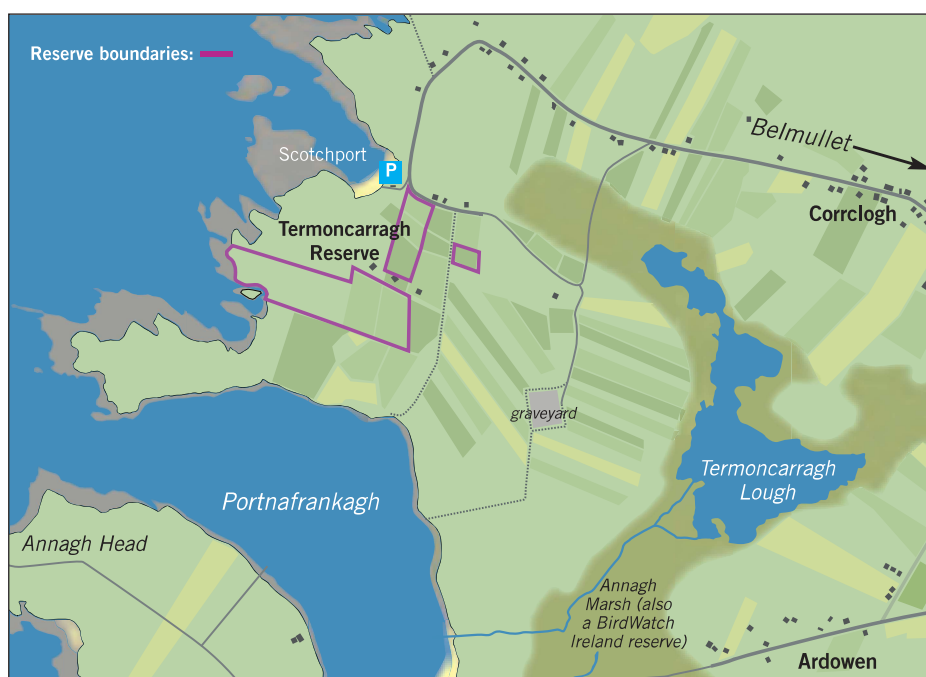
Wildflowers in bloom at Termoncarragh Meadows.
Photograph: Dave Suddaby

Dave Suddaby, BirdWatch Ireland's Reserves Officer, describes the attractions of Termoncarragh Meadows reserve on the Mullet peninsula, Co Mayo.

BirdWatch Ireland's Termoncarragh Meadows reserve was established between 2004 and 2005 with support-funding from the **EU LIFE-Nature** programme and our members. The reserve extends to around 20 hectares split between semi-improved grasslands and coastal pastures that provide a home for an array of rare and important wildlife.

With ongoing management, the grasslands are attractive to **Corncrakes**, as well as **Skylarks** and **Meadow Pipits**, during the summer months and to **geese**, **Choughs** and **Rock Doves** during the winter months.

Corncrake. **Photo:** Eric Dempsey



MAP: COLIN MACDOULAN

Exploring the reserve

As winter turns to spring the grasslands come alive, with the songs of **Skylarks** filling the air. These are soon joined by displaying **Meadow Pipits** and **Reed Buntings**, followed by the arrival of summer migrants, such as **Swallows** and **Sedge Warblers** as they take up their summer residency.

Then, as the spring day turns to night the rasping 'crex crex' song of the secretive **Corncrake** indicates its arrival from Africa. Here, they spend the summer in the tall, species-rich herb vegetation within the grasslands. At this time, they are often heard

alongside **Grasshopper Warblers** 'reeling' and **Snipe** 'drumming' through the night.

As the grasslands grow they turn into flower-rich meadows, offering a wonderful floral display in June. Looking closer, some very rare insects can be found, including several scarce bumblebees feeding on the clovers, such as the **Great Yellow Bumblebee**.

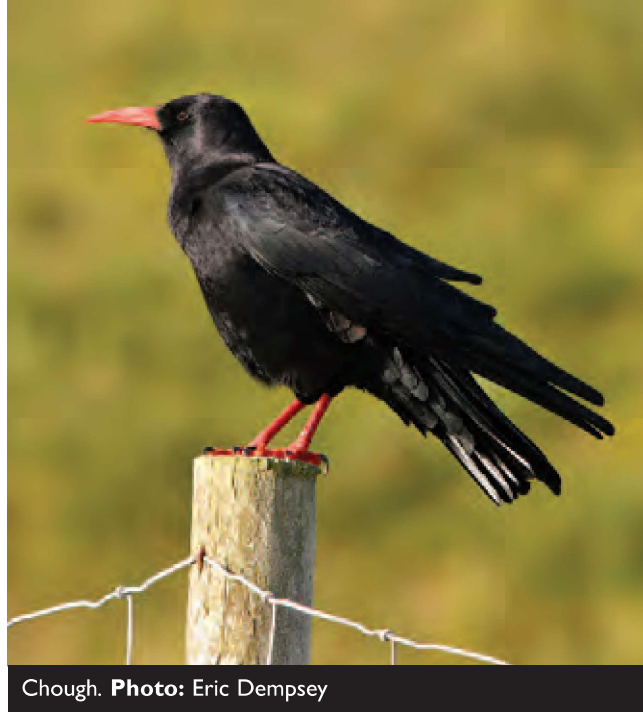
The distinctive red-billed **Choughs** and their charismatic 'chow' calls can often be heard as they feed in the short turf of the coastal pastures.

As the autumn wanes to winter, the morning and evening skies come alive with the sounds of **Barnacle Geese** as they fly

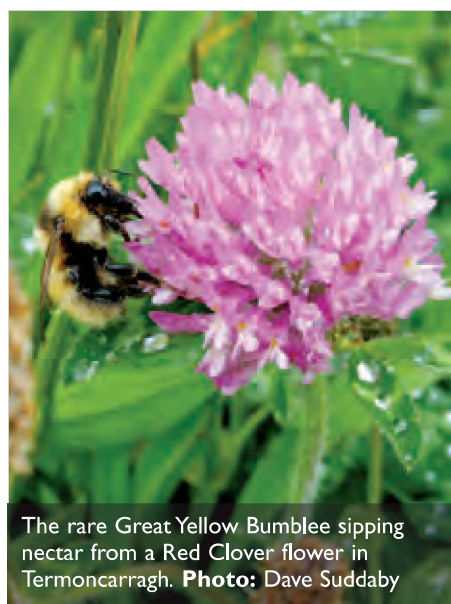
back and forth between the offshore islands and Termoncarragh Meadows. This spectacle is mixed with the sights and sounds of other wintering birds, including flocks of wintering waders – including **Golden Plovers** and **Curlews** – calling as they fly from the beach and rocky shore to the grasslands. They are often spooked by a **Peregrine** hunting for a meal.

Work we are doing at Termoncarragh

Our aim is to make a real contribution to priority species conservation and, where possible, offer natural places where people can enjoy wildlife.



Chough. **Photo:** Eric Dempsey



The rare **Great Yellow Bumblebee** sipping nectar from a **Red Clover** flower in Termoncarragh. **Photo:** Dave Suddaby

To accomplish this, local branches are playing a vital role, and your support as an individual or a member of a local branch is also crucial.

Our management aims at Termoncarragh are to:

- Maintain and enhance breeding **Corncrake** numbers;
- Enhance the numbers of **farmland birds**, both breeding and wintering;
- Enhance the numbers of bees, especially the **Great Yellow Bumblebee**;
- Enhance the wider **flora** and **fauna**;
- Maintain the remote wilderness and disturbance-free status of the area.

Visitor information

How to find the reserve

Termoncarragh Meadows lie approximately seven kilometres west of Belmullet. From Belmullet, take the R313 (the road to

Blacksod) but immediately turn off at the first right turn. Follow the road through Cordogh townland. Termoncarragh Lough will appear to the left, while the meadows are located to the west (national grid reference: F 646 356).

Parking is available at the beach to the north of the reserve at Scotchport. Note, there is no public transport to Termoncarragh, although taxis are available from Belmullet, if desired.

There are no facilities. This is a remote location and at times there may be **grazing animals** present, so please do take care. To reduce disturbance to the wildlife, particularly during the summer months, please view the reserve from the adjoining public road and track. Please keep dogs on a leash and under close control ■

Don't miss...

- The sounds of **Corncrakes**, **Grasshopper Warblers** and **Snipe** on a summer's night;
- **Skylarks** with their song filling the spring air;
- The buzz of **bees** as they forage on the array of **wild flowers**;
- **Choughs** and their distinctive calls as they search for food;
- **Barnacle Geese** enlivening a winter's day.



Snipe

Richard Mills



Barnacle Goose

Dermot Breen

We hope you enjoy your visit!

BirdWatch Ireland AGM 2018

Advance Notice

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Irish Wildbird Conservancy (BirdWatch Ireland) will be held at 2.00pm on Saturday, June 16th, 2018, in the Midlands Park Hotel (formerly the Portlaoise Heritage Hotel), Portlaoise. Formal Notice and Agenda will appear in the Summer 2018 issue of *Wings*.

The procedure for Appointment of Directors (Board Members) is outlined in Article 16(d) of the Articles of Association. The Board invites any member who feels they may have particular skills which would contribute to overseeing the organisation to contact the Chairperson or Secretary.

The procedure for Motions is outlined in Article 7(j) of the Articles of Association. The Board invites any member wishing to submit a Motion to contact the Chairperson or Secretary. The Board reserves the right to admit motions, consolidate them or rule them out of order.

The copy deadline for receipt of Nominations and Motions is 5.00pm on Tuesday, April 3rd, 2018.

A copy of the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Irish Wildbird Conservancy (BirdWatch Ireland) is available online at <https://www.birdwatchireland.ie/AboutUs/Governance/tabid/1568/Default.aspx>.

The Minutes of the 2017 AGM are available to members by calling 01 2819 878 or by email at info@birdwatchireland.ie.

Gerry Lyons, Chairperson



BirdWatchIreland
protecting birds and biodiversity