



3 Turraun Nature Reserve

Target species: Woodcock, Hen Harrier, Jack Snipe, Cuckoo

Access: Turraun wetlands are located near Pollagh. Vehicle access is easiest via Pollagh from either the R357 Blueball-Cloghan Road or the R436 Clara-Ferbane Road. Take the road west out of Pollagh (south of the Grand Canal) and follow this for about two miles until the tarmac surface stops at a 'T' junction. Turn left, and follow the track as it sweeps round right for about 200m to a car park. Walk back about 100m to a track leading off to your right that takes you into the nature reserve. For long-distance walkers, Turraun lies on the Offaly Way between Boora Church and the Grand Canal. Leaflets detailing the site can be found in local tourist offices and more information can be found at www.loughbooraparklands.com.

Habitats: Turraun was the first area to come out of commercial peat extraction and be restored to wetlands and woodland habitats by Bord na Móna. The wetlands comprise a freshwater lake fringed to the north-east by reeds, to the north-west by alder and reed scrub and open on its southerly shores. Other habitats include bare (cutaway) peatlands, reedbeds, birch, willow, gorse and mixed scrub, and some open bog.

Birds: Due to the variety of habitats, Turraun is worth a visit at any time of the year. Great-crested Grebe breeds on the lake, and Grasshopper Warbler, Cuckoo and Lesser Redpoll can be heard from the woodland. In winter, Hen Harriers can regularly be seen around the reedbeds, with a good variety of duck on the lake. Woodcock occur in good numbers in the woodlands, as do large flocks of Lesser Redpoll, interspersed with the occasional Siskin. Damp, open, rough grassy areas near the lakeshore are an excellent location for Jack Snipe, which often flush up from the tracks and paths.



Black-tailed Godwit

Ronnie Martin