

# New Ramsar site on the Isle of Man

29 September 2006

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (Overseas territories)



**Isle of Man**

The Secretariat is pleased to announce that the United Kingdom's Department for

Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (defra) has designated a new Wetland of International Importance located on the Isle of Man, a UK crown dependency in the Irish Sea. Ballaugh Curragh (193 hectares, 54°19'N 004°31'W) is a complex mosaic of interrelated peatland habitats dominated by grey willow and birch scrub locally known as 'curragh'. Of particular significance is the presence of wet bog woodland, natural dystrophic ponds, *Molinia* meadows on peaty soils, and especially the purple moor-grass-dominated fen pastures with good populations of marsh orchids. Amongst the high diversity of breeding birds the site also supports the threatened Corncrake *Crex crex*, which is ascribed to the continuing presence of traditionally managed farmland. The biodiversity of the site is known to have contributed to its cultural importance as an early settlement, and hence to its considerable value as an archaeological resource. Thus Ballaugh Curragh forms a culturally-defined area of the Isle of Man as well as a distinct wetland, and as such it has provided valuable archaeological and palynological (spores and pollen) records. The presence of impressive numbers of winter hen harrier *Circus cyaneus* and traditionally-managed meadows with summer displays of thousands of orchids attracts visitors for both bird-watching and the popular 'orchid tours' run by the Manx Wildlife Trust.

In ceremonies on 6 September 2006, the Manx Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Phil Gawne, and Ramsar Secretary General Peter Bridgewater celebrated the new designation with local officials, and the Secretary General's illustrated report on that, with the government's press release, [can be seen here](#). [14/09/06]

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