

## IRELAND'S NATIONAL PARKS



### Killarney National Park

South and west of the town of Killarney in Co. Kerry is an expanse of rugged mountainous country. This includes the McGillicuddy's Reeks, the highest mountain range in Ireland which rise to a height of over 1000 metres. At the foot of these mountains nestle the world famous lakes of Killarney. Here where the mountains sweep down to the lake shores, their lower slopes covered in woodlands, lies the 10,236 hectare (26,000 acres), Killarney National Park. The distinctive combination of mountains, lakes, woods and waterfalls under ever changing skies gives the area a special scenic beauty.

### Glenveagh National Park

Glenveagh National Park lies in the heart of the Derryveagh Mountains in the north-west of Co. Donegal. It is a remote and beautiful wilderness of rugged mountains and pristine lakes. The 16,000 hectare Park consists of three areas, the former Glenveagh Estate, including most of the Derryveagh Mountains; to the west, the quartzite hills around Crocknafarragh and to the south, the peatlands of Lough Barra bog, Meenachullion and Crockastoller. Glenveagh is home to many rare and interesting plants and animals and is famous for its fine herd of red deer.



### Ballycroy National Park, Co. Mayo

Ballycroy National Park was established in November 1998. It is Ireland's sixth National Park and is located on the Western seaboard in northwest Mayo. It contains 11,000 hectares of Atlantic blanket bog and mountainous terrain, covering a vast uninhabited and unspoiled wilderness dominated by the Nephin Beg mountain range. To the west of the mountains is the Owenduff bog. This is one of the last intact active blanket bog systems in Ireland and Western Europe and is an important scientific and scenic feature of the National Park.

### Wicklow Mountains National Park

Wicklow Mountains National Park covers part of a mountain range that extends over most of County Wicklow on the east coast of Ireland. The upper slopes and rounded peaks are blanketed with heath and bog. The views are interrupted only by forestry plantations and the winding mountain roads. Fast-flowing streams descend into the deep lakes of the wooded valleys and continue their course into the surrounding lowlands. Over one million people visit the 17,000 hectare park each year. The most visited area is the scenic Glendalough Valley where the ancient monastic settlement of St. Kevin is located.



### The Burren National Park

The word "Burren" comes from an Irish word "Boireann" meaning a rocky place. The Burren National Park is located in the southeastern corner of the Burren and is approximately 1500 hectares in size. The Park land was bought by the Government for nature conservation and public access. It contains examples of all the major habitats within the Burren: limestone pavement, calcareous grassland, hazel scrub, ash/hazel woodland, turloughs, lakes, petrifying springs, cliffs and fen.

### Connemara National Park

Situated in the West of Ireland in County Galway, Connemara National Park covers some 2,957 hectares of scenic mountains, expanses of bogs, heaths, grasslands and woodlands. Some of the Park's mountains, namely Benbaun, Bencullagh, Benbrack and Muckanaght, are part of the famous Twelve Bens or Beanna Beola range. Connemara National Park was established and opened to the public in 1980. Much of the present Park lands formed part of the Kylemore Abbey Estate and the Letterfrack Industrial School, the remainder having been owned by private individuals. The Park lands are now wholly owned by the State and managed solely for National Park purposes.

