

# 1(A) Land Mass

County Kerry is the South - Western most county of Ireland and covers an area of 4,875 km sq. In 1996 the population was 126,130.

The county is noted for its agriculture, tourism and beautiful landscapes and it contains the highest mountain, Carrantuohill. Kerry's coastline stretches to over 1,000 kilometres. The peninsulas of Dingle, Iveragh and Beara define the highly indented seashore.

Kerry has no major rivers, but has a large number of smaller rivers. The total length of the principle rivers is over 1,100km the most significant being the Feale, Laune and Maine Rivers.

The physical environment of Kerry contains a number of unique features. In the North the Shannon Estuary bounds the county, the central and northern half of the county is low-lying and relatively flat dominated by grassland and pastureland for cattle and sheep production. The Dingle peninsula is surrounded on three sides by the Atlantic, and mountains with considerable areas of upland peat bogs which dominate its landscape. It also contains many important proposed natural heritage areas and is an important tourist destination.

Mountains dominate the remaining southern parts of the county including the Macgilllicuddy Reeks, Carrantuohill which is 1,035m, Ireland's highest mountain.

The Killarney Oak Woods are the largest areas of native forest in Ireland. These are unique both for the oak tree themselves as well as the diversity of other flora and fauna to be found in this ecosystem. This area contains valley bottoms and coastal lowlands dominated by natural grasslands and pasture land, much of this area has been designated as natural heritage areas and are the home of very important natural tourism products - the Lakes of Killarney and the Ring of Kerry.

The county also contains many unique offshore islands with strong heritage and faunal significance both for Co. Kerry and for Ireland as a whole. These include the Blaskets, Sceilig Michael and Puffin Island.

The climate is influenced by its maritime location and this produces considerable rainfall.

The average rainfall of the state is approx. 1,200mm per annum. Dublin and Wexford experience less rainfall approx. 750mm - 800mm. Kerry, Donegal, parts of Mayo and Galway experience the highest rainfall.

Average rainfall in Co. Kerry for low-lying regions in the more northern part of the county range from 1000mm - 1500mm, more mountainous regions experience between 1500 - 2000mm. However, some areas in Co. Kerry with high mountain ranges can experience in excess of 3000mm, which reaches the highest recorded rainfall in the Country. (Met Éireann January, 2001)

## CLIMATE 1999 COUNTY KERRY

Rainfall	Temperature (°C)	Sunshine
1,774mm	11.3	3.25 hours daily

The Kerry gaeltachts cover extensive areas in both the Dingle and Iveragh Peninsulas. There are two large gaeltacht areas in the county - Gaeltacht Uibh Rathaih and Gaeltacht Chorca Dhuibhne. The gaeltacht's primary resource is its language and culture.

