



DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

DECLARATION OF AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST AT BALLYCAM, COUNTY DOWN. ARTICLE 24 OF THE NATURE CONSERVATION AND AMENITY LANDS (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 1985.

The Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland (the Department), having consulted the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside and being satisfied that the area described and delineated on the attached map (the area) is of special scientific interest by reason of the flora and fauna and accordingly needs to be specially protected, hereby declares the area to be an area of special scientific interest to be known as the 'Ballycam Area of Special Scientific Interest'.

The area is of special scientific interest because of its wetland flora and fauna. Although small, Ballycam contains a number of fen communities, including the only known example in Northern Ireland of one that is generally only found locally in lowland England and Wales. It is characterised by the dominance of Black Bog-rush *Schoenus nigricans* and Blunt-flowered Rush *Juncus subnodulosus*. Other vegetation-types include swamp dominated by Common Reed *Phragmites australis*, and fen dominated by Bottle Sedge *Carex rostrata* and Marsh Cinquefoil *Potentilla palustris*. These communities grade into mesotrophic grassland (often containing fen species) around the edge of the site.

The most species-rich fen consists of tussocks of Black Bog-rush *Schoenus nigricans* with scattered Blunt-flowered Rush *Juncus subnodulosus* and Common Reed *Phragmites australis*. Smaller herbs and mosses including *Campylium stellatum*, *Calliergon cuspidatum*, *Calliergon giganteum* and *Cratoneuron filicinum* grow between the tussocks. Higher plants scattered throughout the fen include Marsh Pennywort *Hydrocotyle vulgaris*, Bottle Sedge *Carex rostrata*, Marsh Cinquefoil *Potentilla palustris*, Wild Angelica *Angelica sylvestris*, Yellow Iris *Iris pseudacorus*, Water Horsetail *Equisetum fluviatile* and Lesser Spearwort *Ranunculus flammula*. Where the cover of *Juncus subnodulosus* is less dense, Bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata* becomes more abundant and such species as Lesser Water-parsnip *Berula erecta* and Water Mint *Mentha aquatica* increase. Common Reed *Phragmites australis* occupies the centre of the site, with a number of other species such as Meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria* and Marsh Bedstraw *Galium palustre*. The bryophyte layer here is variable, with the brown moss *Calliergon cuspidatum* the most prominent species present.

In addition to the species listed above, the fen contains a number of vascular plants with a restricted distribution in the British Isles, including Bog Pimpernel *Anagallis tenella* and Fen Pondweed *Potamogeton coloratus*. Notable bryophytes include *Calliergon giganteum*, *Plagiomnium elatum*, *Riccardia multifida* and *Scorpidium scorpioides*.

Ballycam also provides valuable habitat for a range of wetland animals, including birds and invertebrates.

SCHEDULE

The following operations and activities appear to the Department to be likely to damage the flora and fauna of the area:

1. Cultivation, including ploughing, rotovating or re-seeding.
2. Increase in grazing intensity or change either in the type of livestock used or in feeding practices.
3. Introduction of mowing or other methods of cutting vegetation.
4. Application of manure, slurry, fertiliser or lime.
5. Application of pesticides, herbicides, fungicides or other chemicals deployed to kill, selectively or non-selectively, any form of animal, plant or other living organism.
6. Dumping, spreading or discharge of any matter.
7. Burning.
8. The release into the area of any wild, feral or domestic animal, plant or seed. "Animal" includes any mammal, reptile, amphibian, bird, fish or invertebrate, but excludes livestock and animals used in controlling livestock.
9. The destruction, displacement, removal or cutting of any plant, seed or plant remains, or the disturbance, killing or removal of any wild animal.
10. The introduction of tree or woodland management, including afforestation or planting.
11. Drainage, including peat drainage or the use of mole, tile, tunnel or other artificial drains.
12. Modification of the structure of water courses, including their banks and beds as by realignment, regrading or dredging.
13. Management of aquatic and bank vegetation.
14. The alteration of water levels or water tables or the utilisation of water including storage or extraction, but excluding water used for domestic requirements.
15. Infilling of ditches, drains, ponds, pools, marshes or lakes.

16. Reclamation of land from bog, marsh, river or lake.
17. Extraction of minerals including peat, sand, gravel, topsoil or subsoil.
18. Construction, removal or destruction of roads, tracks, walls, fences, hard-standings, banks, ditches and other earth works or the laying or removal of pipelines or cables, above or below ground.
19. Storage of materials.
20. Use of craft or vehicles likely to damage the vegetation.
21. Erection of permanent or temporary structures or the undertaking of building, engineering or other operations, including drilling.
22. Recreational, educational or research activities likely to damage the vegetation.
23. Changes in game management.

Sealed with the Official Seal of the
Department of the Environment for
Northern Ireland on 4 JUNE 1997

R. Lyndelaur.
Civil Servant in Charge
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FOOTNOTES

- (a) Please note that consent by the Department to any of the operations or activities listed in the Schedule does not constitute planning permission. Where required, planning permission must be applied for in the usual manner to the Department under Part IV of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991. Operations or activities covered by planning permission are not normally covered in the list of Notifiable Operations.
- (b) Also note that many of the operations and activities listed in the Schedule are capable of being carried out either on a large scale or in a very small way. While it is impossible to define exactly what is large and what is small, the Department would intend to approach each case in a common sense and practical way. It is very unlikely that small scale operations would give rise for concern and if this was the case the Department would normally give consent, particularly if there is a long history of the operation being undertaken in that precise location.