

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**DECLARATION OF AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST AT CALDANAGH BOG, COUNTY ANTRIM. 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 delineated and described on the attached map (the area) is of special scientific interest by reason of the flora, fauna and physiographical features and accordingly needs to be specially protected, hereby declares the area to be an area of special scientific interest to be known as the 'Caldanagh Bog Area of Special Scientific Interest'.

The area is of special scientific interest because of its physiographical features and peatland flora and associated fauna. Biological interest relates to the intactness of the site, in addition to the diversity of the vegetation and the presence of rare and notable species. The bog displays the classic dome shape of a lowland raised bog with minimal turf cutting around the periphery. Although burnt in the past, the intact surface still maintains a moderately well-developed hummock/hollow complex. Pool development is limited, but the surface of the bog is extremely wet and as a result, extensive *Sphagnum* lawns are prominent, in association with ericoid dwarf shrubs and other raised bog species.

Over most of the bog plain, Heather *Calluna vulgaris* is the dominant higher plant. Other associated species include Cross-leaved Heath *Erica tetralix*, Common Cottongrass *Eriophorum angustifolium*, Hare's-tail Cottongrass *E. vaginatum*, Deergrass *Trichophorum cespitosum* and Bog Asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum*. The relative abundance of these species tends to vary according to the wetness of the surface. Additional species which are also well represented include locally frequent Crowberry *Empetrum nigrum* and widespread Cranberry *Vaccinium oxycoccus*.

Generally, the bog surface is wet and supports a luxuriant *Sphagnum* moss carpet dominated by *S. capillifolium* and *S. papillosum*, which form abundant low hummocks. The rare mosses *Sphagnum imbricatum* and *S. fuscum* form larger hummocks, but they are very restricted in distribution. In the hollows, *Sphagnum magellanicum* and *S. tenellum* are frequent, together with carpets of the nationally rare *S. pulchrum*, a species generally associated with pool edges. The abundance of this rare species in the wettest areas of the bog is of particular interest.

The edges of the bog have been cut for turf, creating a mosaic of habitats which are dependent on peat depth and age of cutting. Vegetation communities vary from deep artificial pools, which support species like Bogbean Menyanthes trifoliata and Great Sundew Drosera longifolia, through to Purple Moor-grass Molinia caerulea dominated grasslands.

One of the most important features of the area is the intact lagg along the north-eastern edge of the bog. This natural transition from bog to lagg is a very rare feature and represents one of the best in Northern Ireland. Typically the bog vegetation gives way to a sward dominated by Purple Moor-grass Molinia caerulea with scattered Bog-myrtle Myrica gale, before reaching a narrow band of fen along the edge of the River Main. The fen is variable, and contains stands of Grey Willow Salix cinerea, which become rather more sparse towards the south. The underlying vegetation is mainly composed of Tufted Hair-grass Deschampsia cespitosa, Purple Moor-grass Molinia caerulea, Reed Canary-grass Phalaris arundinacea, Common Reed Phragmites australis and Marsh Woundwort Stachys palustris. Greater Tussock-sedge Carex paniculata is locally frequent.

The overall diversity of the site is enhanced by a small esker ridge to the south-west, where the vegetation is very different. The ridge is dominated by a heath and grassland mosaic, which has been closely grazed by rabbits. Short Heather Calluna vulgaris and a variety of other species reflect both base-rich and more acid soil conditions here. Species include Lady's Bedstraw Galium verum, Common Dog-violet Viola riviniana, Devil's-bit Scabious Succisa pratensis, Tormentil Potentilla erecta and Heath Speedwell Veronica officinalis. Two low hills associated with the esker ridge support small stands of rank Bracken Pteridium aquilinum, Gorse Ulex europaeus and Hawthorn Crataegus monogyna scrub.

A number of notable species have been recorded for the area. In addition to the Sphagnum mosses already mentioned, Burnet-saxifrage Pimpinella saxifraga grows on the esker ridge.

Caldanagh Bog provides an important habitat for Curlew Numenius arquata and Snipe Gallinago gallinago, both for nesting and winter feeding. Golden Plover Pluvialis apricaria have also been recorded feeding on the bog. In addition, the area supports a population of Badger Meles meles, which inhabit a sett on the mineral soils of the esker ridge.

SCHEDULE

The following operations and activities appear to the Department to be likely to damage the flora, fauna and physiographical features 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 in a manner likely to affect the continued existence of the species within the area except as provided for under the terms of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985.
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 16 October 1996

*R. Lyndelaur -
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ROBERT C MARTIN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

FOOTNOTES

- (a) Please note that the consent by the Department to any of the above operations or activities 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 above 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.