



Department of the Environment
for Northern Ireland



DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

DECLARATION OF AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST AT DRUMACRITTIN LOUGH, COUNTY FERMANAGH. 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 'Drumacrittin Lough area of special scientific interest'.

The area is of special scientific interest because of its physiography and associated wetland flora and fauna. It includes the open waters and surrounding marginal vegetation of Drumacrittin Lough and Black Lough, a small satellite lough to the north. Physiographical interest is associated with Drumacrittin Lough, which is largely spring-fed, and is related to the presence of calcium carbonate deposits, or marl, which are precipitated out of the calcium-rich water to produce a marl lake. This is a relatively rare lake type in Northern Ireland. Biological interest is related to the wetland vegetation. Some of this reflects these calcareous conditions, including extensive beds of Stoneworts (Charophytes) and species-rich fen and marsh communities. In addition, there is invertebrate interest, with important waterbeetle (aquatic Coleoptera) communities and Atlantic Stream Crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes* present.

The chemical composition of the water reflects the underlying Carboniferous Lower Limestone bedrock and the surface glacial till in this area and is highly base-rich. Marl deposition and high water quality, clarity and base-richness are characteristic features of marl lakes. Drumacrittin Lough is one of the best examples of a marl lake in Northern Ireland and is notable for its clear, clean water and very low phytoplankton productivity.

The two loughs exhibit the natural succession from open water to terrestrial vegetation and include a number of rare and species-rich plant communities, in addition to a number of rare plants. The aquatic vegetation of Drumacrittin Lough is of particular importance, as it represents the most extensive submerged growth of Stoneworts (Charophytes) found in Northern Ireland. Species include Bristly Stonewort *Chara hispida* and the regionally rare

Rugged Stonewort C. rudis. Yellow Water-lily Nuphar lutea, Red Pondweed Potamogeton alpinus and the aquatic moss Fontinalis antipyretica are amongst several other aquatic species present.

The emergent vegetation is dominated by stands of Common Club-rush Schoenoplectus lacustris, Common Reed Phragmites australis and particularly Bottle Sedge Carex rostrata. Great Fen-sedge Cladium mariscus also occurs, primarily around Black Lough. Behind the swamp zone, Bottle Sedge Carex rostrata remains one of the dominant species, with stands of calcareous fen scattered throughout. These are characterised by the prominence of Lesser Tussock-sedge Carex diandra. The calcareous fen typically grades into a calcareous marsh community that is extensive and well-developed. The vegetation of this marsh is rich in herbs and sedges, such as Long-stalked Yellow-sedge C. viridula ssp. brachyrrhyncha, Knotted Pearlwort Sagina nodosa, Marsh Arrowgrass Triglochin palustre and Marsh Pennywort Hydrocotyle vulgaris. Localised flushing of peaty soils by calcium-rich waters produces a particularly sedge-rich community. Other species associated with such conditions are Grass-of-Parnassus Parnassia palustris and Quaking-grass Briza media.

In addition to some of those described above, the area contains a number of rare plant species, such as Fen Bedstraw Galium uliginosum.

Due to its clean, unpolluted waters, Drumacrittin Lough also supports a healthy population of the Atlantic Stream Crayfish Austropotamobius pallipes, a species which is becoming increasingly rare throughout its geographical range. The marginal vegetation contains a diverse invertebrate community that includes a number of notable species, such as Hebrus ruficeps (aquatic Hemiptera) and the waterbeetles (aquatic Coleoptera) Hydrochus ignicollis and the scarce Hydroporus scalesianus.

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. Any activity or operation which involves the damage or disturbance by any means of the surface and subsurface of the land, including ploughing, rotovating, harrowing, reclamation and extraction of minerals, including gravel and peat.
2. Any change in the present annual pattern and intensity of grazing, including any change in the type of livestock used or in supplementary feeding practice.
3. Any change in the established method or frequency of rolling, mowing or cutting.
4. Any change in the annual pattern of application of manure, slurry or artificial fertiliser.
5. The application of herbicides, fungicides or other chemicals deployed to kill any form of wild plant, other than plants listed as being noxious in the Noxious Weeds (Northern Ireland) Order 1977.

6. The storage or dumping, spreading or discharge of any material not specified under (4) or (5).

7. The destruction, displacement, removal or cutting of any plant, seed or plant remains, other than for

(i) plants listed as noxious in the Noxious Weeds (Northern Ireland) Order 1977;

(ii) normal cutting or mowing regimes for which a consent is not required under (3).

8. The release into the area of any animal (other than in connection with normal grazing practice) or plant. 'Animal' includes birds, mammals, fish, reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates; 'Plant' includes seed, fruit or spore.

9. Burning.

10. Changes in tree or woodland management, including afforestation, planting, clearing, selective felling and coppicing.

11. Construction, removal or disturbance of any permanent or temporary structure including building, engineering or other operations.

12. Alteration of natural or man-made features, the clearance of boulders or large stones and grading of rock faces.

13. Operations or activities which would affect wetlands (including marsh, fen, rivers, streams and open water), e.g.

(i) change in the methods or frequency of routine drainage maintenance;

(ii) modification in the structure of any watercourse;

(iii) lowering of the water-table, permanently or temporarily;

(iv) change in the management of bank-side vegetation.

14. The killing or taking of any 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.

15. The following activities undertaken in a manner likely to damage or disturb the wildlife of the area:

(i) Educational activities;

(ii) Research activities;

(iii) Recreational activities;

(iv) Exercising of animals.

16. Changes in game, waterfowl or fisheries management or fishing or hunting practices.

17. Use of vehicles or craft likely to damage or disturb the wildlife of the area.

Sealed with the Official Seal of the
Department of the Environment for
Northern Ireland on 15 August 1996



Robert C Martin
Chief Executive

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FOOTNOTES

(a) Please note 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 (NI) 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.