



An Agency within the Department of the

**Environment**

10/01/2002 10:00:00



## **DRUMACRITTIN LOUGH**

### **Views About Management**

#### **The Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 Article 28(2)**

#### **A statement of Environment and Heritage Service's views about the management of Drumacrittin Lough Area of Special Scientific Interest ("the ASSI")**

This statement represents the views of Environment and Heritage Service about the management of the ASSI for nature conservation. This statement sets out, in principle, our views on how the area's special conservation interest can be conserved and enhanced. Environment and Heritage Service has a duty to notify the owners and occupiers of the ASSI of its views about the management of the land.

Not all of the management principles will be equally appropriate to all parts of the ASSI and there may be other management activities, additional to our current views, which can be beneficial to the conservation and enhancement of the features of interest. It is also very important to recognise that management may need to change with time.

The management views set out below do not constitute consent for any operation or activity. The written consent of Environment and Heritage Service is still required before carrying out any operation or activity likely to damage the features of special interest (see the Schedule on pages 2, 3 and 4 of the attached Document B for a list of these operations and activities). Environment and Heritage Service welcomes consultation with owners, occupiers and users of the ASSI to ensure that the management of this area maintains and enhances the features of interest, and to ensure that all necessary prior consents are obtained.

### **MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES**

Fens are an important habitat for wildlife and generally need management to retain their interest. Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the maintenance and enhancement of the fen, through the conservation of its associated native plants and animals.

Specific objectives for the open water and fen include:

Encourage the maintenance of water quality through the control of pollution and artificial enrichment.

Encourage the maintenance of natural water levels.

Low intensity agriculture and sympathetic recreational practices around the lough have contributed to the conservation and enhancement of the features of interest. Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the maintenance of these practices to ensure that disturbance to the waters, bed and shore of the lough and its wildlife is minimised.

Environment and Heritage Service recognises the important economic and social roles of fishing and welcomes sustainable fishery management that is sensitive to the special interests of the ASSI.

Discourage non-native species, especially those that tend to spread at the expense of native wildlife.

Fen vegetation requires water levels to be at, or just below, the surface all year round. Where necessary, EHS would encourage the blocking of drains to prevent the fen from drying out.

Increases in the nutrient status of the water and underlying peat soils can lead to an increase in the dominance of Common Reed at the expense of other valuable plant communities. EHS would encourage the maintenance of good water quality through the control of pollution and artificial enrichment.

The more species-rich types of fen vegetation can be maintained through very light summer grazing by cattle (or ponies) that are adapted to the wet conditions. EHS would encourage the continuation and extension of this practice, although overgrazing should be avoided as the wet soils are particularly susceptible to poaching.

Patches of scrub and woodland provide valuable habitats for birds and invertebrates. However, the spread of scrub into the fen could shade out valuable plant communities and cause the fen to dry out. In general, the control of scrub and rank growth can be achieved through the appropriate grazing regime. In some cases, other methods of control such as cutting, may be required.

Maintain the diversity and quality of habitats associated with the lough and fen, such as swamp, scrub and wet grassland through sensitive management. These adjoining habitats can often be very important for wildlife.



*C. McParland*

**C McParland**  
Authorised Officer

Dated the *23<sup>RD</sup>* of *JANUARY* 2004