



An Agency within the Department of the

**Environment**

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**Document B**



## **DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT**

### **DECLARATION OF AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST AT FEYSTOWN, COUNTY ANTRIM. ARTICLE 28 OF THE ENVIRONMENT (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 2002.**

The Department of the Environment (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 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 'Feystown Area of Special Scientific Interest'.

This area is of special scientific interest because it is one of the main localities for Wood Cranesbill *Geranium sylvaticum* in Ireland. This Schedule 8 species is confined to County Antrim, where it historically existed along the coast from Killyglen (near Larne) to Glenarm. Feystown is the most significant remaining population of this species and is located approximately 5km southeast of Glenarm along the Feystown Road.

At Feystown, Wood Cranesbill *Geranium sylvaticum* is found in a neutral grassland habitat characterised by a variety of grasses and associated herbs. It is similar to the grassland type with which the species is generally associated in Northern Britain. Constant components of the sward include Sweet Vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, Common Bent *Agrostis capillaris*, Rough Meadow-grass *Poa trivialis*, Yorkshire-fog *Holcus lanatus* and Red Fescue *Festuca rubra*. Herbs are also abundant in this grassland and along with Wood Cranesbill *Geranium sylvaticum*, include species typical of traditionally managed meadows such as Meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, Meadow Buttercup *Ranunculus acris*, Common Sorrel *Rumex acetosa*, Common Knapweed *Centaurea nigra* and Meadow Vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis*. Less frequent species include Yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor* and Bulbous Buttercup *Ranunculus bulbosus*.

Feystown is a small area of semi-natural grassland managed in a traditional way. As such, it provides valuable feeding and roosting sites for a range of 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. 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 sand, 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 (or introduction), of rolling, mowing or cutting.
4. The 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 paragraph 5 above.
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 consent is not required under paragraph 3 above.
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 (include marsh, fen, bog, rivers, streams and open water), e.g.
  - (i) change in the methods or frequency of routine drainage maintenance;
  - (ii) modification of 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 wild animal except where such killing or taking is treated as an exception in Articles 5, 6, 11, 17, 20, 21 and 22 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.

## 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.
- (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.