



DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

DECLARATION OF AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST AT GLENNASHEEVAR, 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 described and delineated 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 "Glennasheever 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 size of the intact blanket bog, the diversity of the peatland flora and structural features on the bog surface, and the presence of notable plant species. Associated rocky scarps and steep-sided river valleys provide a varied and diverse mosaic of habitats, including scrub, woodland, heath and grassland. In addition the area supports a rich invertebrate community.

The peatland consists of several units of deep peat within a blanket bog mantle. These units have developed on a series of plateaux at different levels. They exhibit a number of notable structural features including hummock and lawn complexes and, at the highest level, a well-developed pool system.

The large pool and hummock complex is composed of deep, frequently elongated pools distributed in a concentric ring. The pools support a characteristic growth of aquatic *Sphagnum* mosses, with frequent stands of Bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata* and occasional Lesser Bladderwort *Utricularia minor* in the deeper pools. Well-developed *Sphagnum capillifolium* hummocks are prominent on the adjacent bog and are frequently topped by Heather *Calluna vulgaris* and the moss *Racomitrium lanuginosum*. The surrounding waterlogged lawns are dominated by Bog Asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum* with low *Sphagnum papillosum* hummocks, particularly around the pool margins. Notably the three species of Sundew are present - Round-leaved Sundew *Drosera rotundifolia*, Great Sundew *D. longifolia* and the rare Oblong-leaved Sundew *D. intermedia* - in addition to the rare hummock-forming *Sphagnum fuscum*.

The remaining bog surface is generally wet and is dominated by Heather *Calluna vulgaris*, Cross-leaved Heath *Erica tetralix*, Deergrass *Trichophorum cespitosum*, Common Cottongrass *Eriophorum angustifolium* and swards of Bog Asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum* in the wetter runnels. The dense moss carpet beneath the dwarf shrub canopy is dominated by *Sphagnum capillifolium*, *S. subnitens*, *S. tenellum* and *S. papillosum*. Localised erosion is marked by large *Racomitrium lanuginosum* hummocks topped by the lichen *Cladonia portentosa*. These are particularly prominent close to the edge of the intact peat mass and along the stream. Notably, several stands of Royal Fern *Osmunda regalis* occur along the banks of the stream.

A number of flushed slopes, peripheral to the deep peat units, are dominated by Purple Moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* with frequent Bog-myrtle *Myrica gale*, indicating weak flushing of acidic water through the surface peat layer. Species frequently associated with these broad flushes include Sharp-flowered Rush *Juncus acutiflorus*, Cross-leaved Heath *Erica tetralix*, Soft-rush *J. effusus*, Hare's-tail Cottongrass *Eriophorum vaginatum* and Tormentil *Potentilla erecta*. Carnation Sedge *Carex panicea*, Star Sedge *C. echinata* and Devil's-bit Scabious *Succisa pratensis* indicate more concentrated flushing over thinner peats. The liverwort *Pleurozia purpurea* is locally abundant and Black Bog-rush *Schoenus nigricans* is locally frequent in some of the more pronounced flushes. The presence of both these oceanic species indicates a high level of rainfall, typically associated with blanket bog in the extreme west of Northern Ireland.

Shallower peats over rocky knolls and on scarp slopes support heath communities dominated by rank Heather *Calluna vulgaris* and Bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus* over a *Sphagnum capillifolium* and pleurocarpous moss layer. The scarps and small, steep-sided valleys are generally wooded with scattered Rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*, Downy Birch *Betula pubescens*, Willows *Salix* spp. and occasional Sessile Oak *Quercus petraea*. The diversity of habitats is increased on the lower slopes by a series of old peat cuttings and fields, forming a complex mosaic of wet heath, acid grassland and species-rich flushed grassland.

Because of the variety and quality of habitats present, Glennasheevar is also important for Lepidoptera (butterflies and moths). A number of notable butterflies were recorded feeding on the site during 1998 including the Large Heath *Coenonympha tullia*, Marsh Fritillary *Eurodryas aurinia* and Wood White *Leptidea sinapis*. Notable moths recorded included the Clouded Buff *Diacrisia sannio*, Wood Tiger *Parasemia plantaginis*, Red-necked Footman *Atolmis rubricollis*, Grass Wave *Perconia strigillaria* and Argent and Sable *Rheumaptera hastata*. The bog also provides habitat for birds such as Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*, Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus* and Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*.

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 rock, 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. The introduction of mowing or other methods of cutting vegetation.
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 plants listed as being noxious in the Noxious Weeds (Northern Ireland) Order 1977.
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 stones and grading of rock faces.

13. Operations or activities which would affect wetlands (including rivers, streams and open water), e.g.
 - i) change in the methods or frequency of routine drainage maintenance;
 - ii) modification to 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 disturbance, 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 the interest 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 the scientific interest.

Sealed with the Official Seal of the
Department of the Environment for
Northern Ireland on 18 FEBRUARY 1999



ROBERT C. MARTIN
Assistant Secretary

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.