



DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

DECLARATION OF AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST AT GREENAN, COUNTY DOWN. 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 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 'Greenan Area of Special Scientific Interest'.

The area is of special scientific interest because of its wetland flora and fauna. Greenan is a basin fen, that lies in a shallow depression within rocky countryside. Although small, there is a range of vegetation types, including some notable fen communities and species.

The centre of the area is a mosaic of open water and swamp, with pockets of more diverse wetland vegetation and acid fen. The swamp is dominated by Bottle Sedge *Carex rostrata* with frequent Bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata*, Water Horsetail *Equisetum fluviatile*, Marsh Pennywort *Hydrocotyle vulgaris* and Greater Bladderwort *Utricularia vulgaris*. Within the swamp, there are floating mats dominated by mosses such as *Sphagnum squarrosum*, *S. subnitens* and *Pseudoscleropodium purum*. These support abundant grassy tussocks with a range of species, including Creeping Bent *Agrostis stolonifera*, Velvet Bent *A. canina* and Sweet Vernal Grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*.

To the north, there is an unusual fen community dominated by Water Horsetail *Equisetum fluviatile* and Ragged-Robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi* growing over a variable bryophyte (moss) layer in which the brown moss *Calliergon cuspidatum* is the most prominent species. This community is one of the most diverse in the area, with a range of grassy species including Velvet Bent *Agrostis canina* and Sweet Vernal Grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum* and sedges such as White Sedge *Carex curta*, Carnation Sedge *C. panicea*, Star Sedge *C. echinata* and Common Cottongrass *Eriophorum angustifolium*. Typical flowering plants associated with this community include Wild Angelica *Angelica sylvestris*, Devil's-bit Scabious *Succisa pratensis*, Marsh Cinquefoil *Potentilla palustris* and Common Marsh-bedstraw *Galium palustre*.

To the south and east of the area, the fen grades into wet pasture, with pockets of grassland dominated by Soft-rush *Juncus effusus* and Creeping Bent *Agrostis stolonifera*. This is interspersed in places by more sedge-rich areas, with such species as Carnation Sedge *Carex panicea*, Common Sedge *C. nigra* and Yellow-sedge *C. viridula*. Small pockets of scrub have developed, particularly along the north and western periphery of the site. These grassland and scrub communities add to the diversity of the area.

Greenan contains a number of vascular plants with a restricted distribution in the British Isles, including Greater Bladderwort *Utricularia vulgaris*, Floating Club-rush *Eleogiton fluitans*, and Marsh St John's-wort *Hypericum elodes*. Notable bryophytes include *Sphagnum squarrosum*.

Greenan also provides valuable habitat for a range of wetland 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. 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 paragraphs 4 or 5 above.
7. The destruction, displacement, removal or cutting of any plant, seed or plant remains, other than for plants listed as 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 large stones and grading of rock faces.
13. Operations or activities which would affect wetlands (including 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, 12, 16, 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.

Sealed with the Official Seal of the
Department of the Environment for
Northern Ireland on 19 December 1997



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.