



DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

DECLARATION OF AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST AT HOLLYMOUNT, COUNTY DOWN. ARTICLE 24 OF THE NATURE CONSERVATION AND AMENITY LANDS (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 1985.

The Department of the Environment (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 "Hollymount Area of Special Scientific Interest".

The area is of special scientific interest because of its woodland flora and fauna. Hollymount is one of the largest areas of semi-natural woodland in County Down. It includes stands of relatively dry woodland dominated by Oak *Quercus* spp., in addition to swamp woodland ("carr") dominated by Alder *Alnus glutinosa*. The latter is particularly significant for its well-developed, mature structure. The area also includes a number of notable species.

Hollymount consists of low-lying, regularly flooded marshland surrounded by drumlins. Swamp woodland occurs in hollows between the drumlins and is characterised by a canopy of dense, mature Alder *Alnus glutinosa* and Grey Willow *Salix cinerea*. Reed Canary-grass *Phalaris arundinacea* and Greater Pond-sedge *Carex riparia* dominate the ground flora. Tussock Sedge *Carex paniculata* is very conspicuous and some of the large, older tussocks form the rooting bases for trees such as Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and Downy Birch *Betula pubescens*. The trees are encrusted with a luxuriant growth of lichens, and bracket fungi are frequent on the many dead branches and trunks. Within the swamp woodland, water-filled ditches represent the main location for Water Violet *Hottonia palustris* in Northern Ireland.

Woodland also occurs on the drier slopes of the drumlins. In places, there is a natural transition from wet woodland at the base of the slope, dominated by Alder *Alnus glutinosa* with a ground flora of Nettle *Urtica dioica*, to drier woodland. Over much of the drumlin, Oak *Quercus* spp. dominates the canopy, with frequent Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* and Beech *Fagus sylvatica* and occasional Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*. Hazel *Corylus avellana*, Holly *Ilex aquifolium* and Elder *Sambucus nigra* form a scattered shrub layer. The luxuriant ground flora is dominated by Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, Ramsons *Allium ursinum* and the ferns Broad Buckler-fern *Dryopteris dilatata*, Scaly Male-fern *D. affinis* and Lady-fern *Athyrium filix-femina*.

Associated semi-natural habitats within Hollymount are largely fen and swamp. Common Reed *Phragmites australis*, Creeping Bent *Agrostis stolonifera* and Reed Canary-grass *Phalaris arundinacea* are dominant. Other species include Yellow Iris *Iris pseudacorus*, Meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria* and Brown Sedge *Carex disticha*.

The range of plants and animals at Hollymount reflects the diversity of woodland types present. A variety of typical woodland birds occurs, with more notable species including Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* and Buzzard *Buteo buteo*. Fungi recorded include Blushing Bracket *Daedaleopsis confragosa*, a species usually found on the dead wood of Willow *Salix* spp. and the common Oak Milk-cap *Lactarius quietus*, an ectomycorrhizal species associated with the Oak *Quercus* spp.

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. Grazing.
3. Introduction of rolling, 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 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, 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.
17. Use of craft or vehicles likely to damage the vegetation.

Sealed with the Official Seal of the
Department of the Environment on 5 JUNE 2000



DR J S FAULKNER
Senior Officer of the Department
of the Environment

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.