



DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

DECLARATION OF AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST AT KILNAMEEL, CO. FERMANAGH. 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 "Kilnameel Area of Special Scientific Interest".

The area is of special scientific interest because of its grassland flora and fauna. Species-rich grassland tends to occur only where land management is not intensive, in particular where traditional farming practices have been maintained. As a result, it is not a widespread habitat in Northern Ireland, often consisting of fragmented, individual fields, or smaller field parcels and banks. Kilnameel is a comparatively extensive area, and includes a range of species-rich grassland communities, including herb-rich dry grasslands, which are a particularly scarce resource.

Kilnameel is situated on the northern side of Cuilcagh Mountain. Soils are variable, but are mostly skeletal and humic in nature with the Knockmore Limestone locally exposed. Some fields are poorly drained and water-logging is widespread, while other fields have fairly peaty soils. The variations in soil moisture and acidity, in part related to local topography, have produced a range of different grassland communities.

A significant proportion of Kilnameel is species-rich dry grassland. Several fields are managed for hay and are typically grass-dominated, with a wide range of associated herbs. Common grasses such as Crested Dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*, Red Fescue *Festuca rubra* and Sweet Vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum* are constant in the sward. More notable species include Yellow Oat-grass *Trisetum flavescens* which is widespread, and Downy Oat-grass *Helictotrichon pubescens* and Crested Hair-grass *Koeleria macrantha* which are occasional. Common herbs such as Meadow Buttercup *Ranunculus acris*, Creeping Buttercup *R. repens* and White Clover *Trifolium repens* are constant throughout the sward, while Common Knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, Oxeye Daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*, Eyebright *Euphrasia officinalis* agg. and Bulbous Buttercup *Ranunculus bulbosus*, all species characteristic of unimproved meadows, are frequent.

Some of the most species-rich vegetation is found on banks along the edges of some of the fields. These are particularly rich in herbs, with Common Bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, Wild Thyme *Thymus polytrichus*, Lady's Bedstraw *Galium verum* and Yellow-rattle *Rhinanthus minor* all common. Glaucous Sedge *Carex flacca*, Spring Sedge *C. caryophyllea*, Downy Oat-grass *Helictotrichon pubescens* and Quaking-grass *Briza media* are also frequent. Notable species include Frog Orchid *Coeloglossum viride* and the small fern Adder's-tongue *Ophioglossum vulgatum*. In addition, near limestone outcrops where the soils are particularly thin, Mountain Everlasting *Antennaria dioica* is found.

Some field parcels are characterised by species typical of wetter soil conditions. Within these wet meadows herbs such as Ragged-Robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, Creeping Buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, Marsh-marigold *Caltha palustris* and Common Marsh-bedstraw *Galium palustre* are common. In more acidic conditions, sedges such as Star Sedge *Carex echinata*, Carnation Sedge *C. panicea* and Common Sedge *C. nigra* predominate, with a range of associated herbs including Devil's-bit Scabious *Succisa pratensis*, Bugle *Ajuga reptans* and Meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*.

As traditionally managed grassland, Kilnameel provides valuable habitat for animals, in particular 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 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.

Sealed with the Official Seal of the
Department of the Environment on

3 DECEMBER 1999



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.