



## DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

### DECLARATION OF AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST AT LOUGH ALEATER, COUNTY FERMANAGH. 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 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 'Lough Aleater Area of Special Scientific Interest'.

The area is of special scientific interest for its aquatic flora and fauna. Lough Aleater is a mid-altitude lake generally surrounded by steep slopes. The bed of the lake varies from boulder and rock to sand and gravel, with a peat substrate dominant along the south shore. The diverse aquatic plant community is characteristic of unpolluted water bodies with low levels of plant nutrients and is among the best examples of its type in Northern Ireland. Beds of Shoreweed *Littorella uniflora* and Water Lobelia *Lobelia dortmanna* are abundant in the shallows where they are sheltered by emergent vegetation. Floating Club-rush *Eleogiton fluitans*, Bulbous Rush *Juncus bulbosus* the Stoneworts *Chara* spp. and the moss Greater Water-moss *Fontinalis antipyretica* also occur in these submerged lawns. Other aquatic plants such as Perfoliate Pondweed *Potamogeton perfoliatus*, Red Pondweed *P. alpinus* and Lesser Marshwort *Apium inundatum* occur in submerged beds, while Broad-leaved Pondweed *P. natans*, White Water-lily *Nymphaea alba*, Yellow water-lily *Nuphar lutea* and occasional Floating Bur-reed *Sparganium angustifolium* and Unbranched Bur-reed *S. emersum* form floating rafts on the surface.

Emergent vegetation is restricted along the exposed north-east shoreline. Elsewhere Common Club-rush *Schoenoplectus lacustris* forms a sparse outer swamp zone, Common Reed *Phragmites australis* a sparse mid swamp zone and Bottle Sedge *Carex rostrata* an inner swamp zone along the shore. These swamps only become more extensive to the north-west and south-east. Fen vegetation is also restricted through exposure, only occurring to any extent along the western shore and the south-east corner. Here, sedges dominate the fens with the Bottle Sedge *C. rostrata* being replaced in predominance by Common Sedge *C. nigra* along the shore. Other sedges which make up the sward include Tufted-sedge *C. elata*, Slender Sedge *C. lasiocarpa*, Star Sedge, *C. echinata* and Yellow-sedge *C. viridula* while the herb component includes Bog Bean *Menyanthes trifoliata*, Marsh Cinquefoil *Potentilla palustris*, Marsh-marigold *Caltha palustris*, Marsh Pennywort *Hydrocotyle vulgaris*, Water Mint *Mentha aquatica* and Marsh Speedwell *Veronica scutellata*.

## 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 a 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 (including marsh, fen, 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 vehicles or craft likely to damage or disturb the wildlife of the area.

## 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.