



## DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

### DECLARATION OF AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST AT LOUGH SCOLBAN, 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 Scolban Area of Special Scientific Interest'.

Lough Scolban is a mid-altitude lake lying in a rocky depression between Pettigoe Plateau and Lower Lough Erne. The lake supports a community of aquatic plants that is indicative of unenriched and unpolluted oligo-mesotrophic water bodies. The shoreline of the lake varies between boulder and rock to sand and gravel, with sandy substrates predominating under deeper waters. The very diverse macrophyte community, which is among the best examples of this particular lake type, consists of rosette-like species with Shoreweed *Littorella uniflora* abundant along the shore and in the shallows and occasional Water Lobelia *Lobelia dortmanna* and Quillwort *Isoetes lacustris* in deeper water. Growing in these submerged lawns are such associates as Bulbous Rush *Juncus bulbosus*, the Stoneworts *Chara* spp. and the moss Greater Water-moss *Fontinalis antipyretica*. Other macrophytes such as Canadian Waterweed *Elodea canadensis*, Perfoliate Pondweed *Potamogeton perfoliatus*, Various-leaved pondweed *P. gramineus*, Shining Pondweed *P. lucens* and Alternate Water-milfoil *Myriophyllum alterniflorum* form mixed submerged beds, while Broad-leaved Pondweed *P. natans*, White Water-lily *Nymphaea alba*, Yellow Water-lily *Nuphar lutea* and to a lesser extent Floating Bur-reed *Sparganium angustifolium* form floating rafts on the surface.

A narrow woodland fringe occurs along most of the shoreline. Along the south-west shore the woodland broadens out and becomes more extensive, extending back along the steep valley of a narrow tributary stream. The woodland is typically formed by upland mixed ash wood with pockets of wet woodland. Within the woodland Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, Downy Birch *Betula pubescens*, and more occasionally Sessile Oak *Quercus petraea* and Goat Willow *Salix caprea* form an open canopy. The dense shrub layer is dominated by Hazel *Corylus avellana* with Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and Holly *Ilex aquifolium*. Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. is the main component of the field layer, with ferns such as Scaly Male-fern *Dryopteris affinis*, Male-fern *D. filix-mas*, Broad Buckler-fern *D. dilatata*, and Soft Shield-fern *Polystichum setiferum* locally prominent.

Typical species in the ground flora include Wood-sorrel *Oxalis acetosella* and Primrose *Primula vulgaris*, which are frequently accompanied by Herb-Robert *Geranium robertianum*, Common Dog-violet *Viola riviniana*, Sanicle *Sanicula europaea*, Ivy *Hedera helix*, Wood Avens *Geum urbanum* and False Brome *Brachypodium sylvaticum*. Other species such as Lady-fern *Athyrium filix-femina*, Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, Bugle *Ajuga reptans*, Wild Strawberry *Fragaria vesca*, Barren Strawberry *Potentilla sterilis*, Lords-and-Ladies *Arum maculatum*, Remote Sedge *Carex remota* and Wood-sedge *C. sylvatica* tend to be more scattered in their distribution. Mosses occur on the ground and over exposed rock faces and boulders. Dominant species include Common Tamarisk-moss *Thuidium tamariscinum*, Big Shaggy-moss *Rhytidiadelphus triquetrus*, Common Striated Feather-moss *Eurhynchium striatum* and Common Feather-moss *E. praelongum*.

The narrow, stony foreshore supports wet grassland with occasional Blue-eyed-grass *Sisyrinchium bermudiana*.

Emergent vegetation is sparse along the exposed rocky shoreline, only developing to any extent in the sheltered bays to the north and west. Here, Common Club-rush *Schoenoplectus lacustris* swamp forms an outer fringe to an inner Common Reed *Phragmites australis* reedbed. Behind the swamp dense tussocks of Tufted-sedge *Carex elata* form a tall fen zone, which in turn gives way to a shorter species-rich fen. In addition to a rich mix of the more common fen species, the vegetation includes a number of plants indicative of calcareous conditions including Bay Willow *Salix pentandra*, Marsh Hawk's-beard *Crepis paludosus*, Knotted Pearlwort *Sagina nodosa*, Bog Pimpernel *Anagallis tenellus*, Yellow-sedge *C. viridula* Ssp. *brachyrrhyncha* and Lesser Clubmoss *Selaginella selaginoides* as well as brown mosses such as Greater Spear-moss *Calliergon giganteum*, Rusty Hook-moss *Drepanocladus revolvens*, Yellow Starry Feather-moss *Campylium stellatum* and Marsh Bryum *Bryum pseudotriquetrum*.

Also of interest are the presence of alkaline flushes characterised by the presence of Grass-of-Parnassus *Parnassia palustris*, Quaking-grass *Briza media* and Dioecious Sedge *C. dioica*.

## 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.