



DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

DECLARATION OF AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST AT LOUGHAVEELY, COUNTY ARMAGH. 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 'Loughaveely Area of Special Scientific Interest'.

The area is of special scientific interest because of its wetland flora and fauna. Although relatively small, Loughaveely is a diverse site with several wetland plant communities ranging from poor fen vegetation to swamp and open water. As a result, the area supports a large number of wetland plants, some of which are scarce. In addition, the invertebrate community is important for its overall diversity and includes several rare species.

Loughaveely occurs in an extended basin which is bisected by a minor road. Much of the eastern part contains small pools formed by past peat cutting. In contrast, the large pool to the west appears to be more natural.

The fen vegetation to the east of the area is dominated by Bottle Sedge *Carex rostrata* and Bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata*. Old peat-cuttings contain a number of pools with Broad-leaved Pondweed *Potamogeton natans* and Bladderwort *Utricularia* sp. growing in the open water. Small areas of more elevated cutover bog remain, with Heather *Calluna vulgaris* and *Sphagnum* bog mosses being the main species.

The open water to the west is surrounded by a number of different fen types. Around the western and southern edge of the pool there is a floating mat dominated by Bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata* with the rare sedge species, Bog-sedge *Carex limosa* and Lesser Tussock-sedge *C. diandra*. In places, the vegetation is composed of a number of grasses and sedges such as Velvet Bent *Agrostis canina*, White Sedge *Carex curta* and Bottle Sedge *C. rostrata*, growing over a carpet of *Sphagnum subnitens*. Elsewhere, the fen vegetation is characterised by species such as Water Horsetail *Equisetum fluviatile*, Water Mint *Mentha aquatica*, Marsh Cinquefoil *Potentilla palustris*, Common Cottongrass *Eriophorum angustifolium*, Bottle Sedge *Carex rostrata* and Sharp-flowered Rush *Juncus acutiflorus*.

Additional habitat diversity is provided by fringing semi-natural vegetation. This includes wet grassland, dominated by Soft-rush *Juncus effusus*, patches of dry grassland with frequent Bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*, and thickets of Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* and scrub dominated by Gorse *Ulex europaeus* and Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*.

In addition to some of the species listed above, the area supports a number of scarce plants, such as Cowbane *Cicuta virosa* and the moss *Calliergon cordifolium*.

Loughaveely is also one of the most important wetlands in the east of the province for invertebrates. This is largely because of the diversity and unspoilt nature of the habitats. Many of the species recorded are considered notable in Northern Ireland, such as the spiders *Pirata piscatorius* and *Trochosa spinipalpis*. Water beetles of particular interest include *Hydroporus scalesianus* and *Laccornis oblongus*, which are confined to undisturbed wetlands, and *Cercyon ustulatus*, which has been recorded rarely in Northern Ireland in the past. Other notable invertebrates at Loughaveely include the pond skater *Limnoporus rufoscutellatus*, the leaf beetle *Phyllotreta exclamationis* and *Bagous collignensis*, a weevil associated with Water Horsetail *Equisetum fluviatile*. The horse fly *Chrysops sepulchralis* occurs here at one of only three known fen sites in Northern Ireland. The rove beetle *Gymnusa brevicollis* has also been recorded, which although typical of fens in Northern Ireland, is a scarce species in Britain.

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 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, 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 16 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.