

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

The Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland (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 'Loughmoney Area of Special Scientific Interest'.

The area is of special scientific interest because of its wetland flora and fauna. Loughmoney is a small wetland site within an elongated depression. The vegetation is dominated by a swamp of Great Fen-sedge *Cladium mariscus*, growing in a monodominant stand and forming the core of the site, covering over half a hectare. This is an uncommon vegetation type in Northern Ireland and is the largest stand known in Counties Down and Armagh.

Although the swamp covers most of the area, there are small stands of diverse, species-rich fen at the southern end and along narrow margins to the north. Grazing has produced a short sward on a floating mat of vegetation. Blunt-flowered Rush *Juncus subnodulosus* and Brown Sedge *Carex disticha* are co-dominant, growing over Bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata*. Associated species include Bottle Sedge *Carex rostrata*, Creeping Bent *Agrostis stolonifera*, Sharp-flowered Rush *Juncus acutiflorus*, Water Horsetail *Equisetum fluviatile* and the notable Slender Sedge *Carex lasiocarpa*.

Higher plants scattered throughout the fen and swamp include Marsh Pennywort *Hydrocotyle vulgaris*, Water Mint *Mentha aquatica*, Marsh Cinquefoil *Potentilla palustris*, Marsh-marigold *Caltha palustris*, Lesser Spearwort *Ranunculus flammula*, Marsh Bedstraw *Galium palustre* and Lesser Water-parsnip *Berula erecta*. The bryophyte layer is variable, with the brown moss *Calliergon cuspidatum* the most prominent species.

Loughmoney also provides valuable habitat for a range of wetland animals, including 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. Cultivation, including ploughing, rotovating or re-seeding.
2. Increase in grazing intensity or change either in the type of livestock used or in feeding practices.
3. Introduction of mowing or other methods of cutting vegetation.
4. Application of manure, slurry, fertiliser or lime.
5. Application of pesticides, herbicides, fungicides or other chemicals deployed to kill, selectively or non-selectively, any form of animal, plant or other living organism.
6. Dumping, spreading or discharge of any matter.
7. Burning.
8. The release into the area of any wild, feral or domestic animal, plant or seed. "Animal" includes any mammal, reptile, amphibian, bird, fish or invertebrate, but excludes livestock and animals used in controlling livestock.
9. The destruction, displacement, removal or cutting of any plant, seed or plant remains, or the disturbance, killing or removal of any wild animal.
10. The introduction of tree or woodland management, including afforestation or planting.
11. Drainage, including peat drainage or the use of mole, tile, tunnel or other artificial drains.
12. Modification of the structure of water courses, including their banks and beds as by realignment, regrading or dredging.
13. Management of aquatic and bank vegetation.
14. The alteration of water levels or water tables or the utilisation of water including storage or extraction, but excluding water used for domestic requirements.
15. Infilling of ditches, drains, ponds, pools, marshes or lakes.
16. Reclamation of land from bog, marsh, river or lake.
17. Extraction of minerals including peat, sand, gravel, topsoil or subsoil.

18. Construction, removal or destruction of roads, tracks, walls, fences, hard-standings, banks, ditches and other earth works or the laying or removal of pipelines or cables, above or below ground.
19. Storage of materials.
20. Use of craft or vehicles likely to damage the vegetation.
21. Erection of permanent or temporary structures or the undertaking of building, engineering or other operations, including drilling.
22. Recreational, educational or research activities likely to damage the vegetation.
23. Changes in game management.

Sealed with the Official Seal of the
Department of the Environment for
Northern Ireland on 11 JUNE 1997

R. Hutchinson
Chief Servant in Charge
Lower Belfast

Robert C Martin
ROBERT C MARTIN
Assistant Secretary

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.