

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

DECLARATION OF AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST AT MONAWILKIN, COUNTY FERMANAGH.
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 Committee for Nature Conservation and being satisfied that the area delineated by the solid black line 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 and to be known as the "Monawilkin Area of Special Scientific Interest".

The area is of special scientific interest because it represents an excellent example of unimproved calcicolous grassland on Carboniferous Upper Limestone. Several distinctive plant-communities occur, and these are closely related to physical variations in steepness of slope, aspect, and soil depth. This variety has enabled a typical range of calcicolous plants to thrive including Kidney Vetch (Anthyllis vulneraria), Crested Hair-grass (Koeleria macrantha), and Wild Thyme (Thymus praecox), alongside more locally distributed species, such as Irish Eyebright (Euphrasia salisburgensis) and Blue Moor-grass (Sesleria albicans). The site also includes areas of Hazel (Corylus avellana) scrub, base-rich flushes, and - on the less nutrient-rich sandstone to the west - acid grassland and heath. Transitions to fen, swamp, and open water are present around Carrick and Monawilkin Loughs.


Monawilkin is also of importance for the diversity of its butterfly fauna, with at least 18 resident breeding species, and it is the only known site in Northern Ireland for the Small Blue (Cupido minimus), whose larvae feed exclusively on Kidney Vetch (Anthyllis vulneraria).

The following operations and activities appear to the Department to be likely to damage the flora and/or fauna of the area:-

- Cultivation, including ploughing, rotovating, harrowing or re-seeding.
- Changes in the grazing regime, including changes in type of livestock or significant increase or decrease in livestock population, or changes in the seasonal pattern of grazing or cessation of grazing.
- The introduction of livestock feeding, or changes in livestock feeding practice.
- The introduction of mowing or other methods of cutting vegetation, or changes in the mowing or cutting regime, including changes from hay making to silage cutting, or cessation of mowing.
- Application of manure, slurry, fertilisers or lime.
- Application of pesticides, herbicides, fungicides or other chemicals deployed to kill, selectively or non-selectively, any form of animal, plant or other living organism.
- Dumping, spreading or discharge of any matter.
- Burning.
- 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 farm livestock.
- The killing or removal of any wild animal. "Animal" includes any mammal, reptile, amphibian, bird, fish or invertebrate.

- The destruction, displacement, removal or cutting of any plant, seed or plant remains.
- Changes in tree or woodland management, (including afforestation, planting, clear and selective felling, thinning, coppicing, modification of the stand or underwood or changes in species composition).
- Drainage, including the use of mole, tile, tunnel or other artificial drains.
- Modification of the structure of water courses, (for example, rivers, burns, springs, ditches or drains), including their banks and beds as by realignment, regrading or dredging.
- Management of aquatic or bank vegetation.
- The alteration of water levels or water tables or utilisation of water (including storage or abstraction).
- Infilling of ditches, drains, pools or marshes.
- Changes in freshwater fishery production or management (including sporting fishing, angling or the use of traps or fish cages).
- Reclamation of land from marsh, lake or river.
- Extraction of minerals including sand, gravel, topsoil, subsoil or limestone.
- Construction, removal or destruction of roads, tracks, walls, fences, hard-standings, banks, ditches or other earthworks or the laying, maintenance or removal of pipelines or cables, above or below ground.
- Storage of materials.
- Erection of permanent or temporary structures or the undertaking of building, engineering or other operations, including drilling, or the formation of access roads.
- Alteration or modification of natural or man-made features, (including cave entrances), clearance of boulders, large stones, loose rock or scree, battering, buttressing or grading of rock faces or cuttings, infilling of pits or quarries.
- Use of vehicles or craft likely to damage or disturb the vegetation or wildlife.
- Recreational, educational or research activities likely to damage the vegetation or wildlife.
- Changes in game or waterfowl management or hunting practices.

Sealed with the Official Seal of
the Department of the Environment
on 23 June, 1987


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