



DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

DECLARATION OF AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST AT MOYROURKAN LOUGH, COUNTY ARMAGH. 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 'Moyrourkan Lough Area of Special Scientific Interest'.

The area is of special scientific interest because of its wetland flora and fauna. Moyrourkan Lough is a large wetland with a diverse range of communities of open water, swamp and fen. Marginal grasslands and carr woodland provide additional habitat diversity. Several notable species of plants and invertebrates (insects) have been recorded.

Moyrourkan Lough consists of an elongated wetland basin with two small loughs to the north and south. The open waters support an extensive growth of floating Broad-leaved Pondweed *Potamogeton natans*, with localised Yellow Water-lily *Nuphar lutea* along the margins. In addition, there are submerged beds of Canadian Waterweed *Elodea canadensis*, Blunt-leaved Pondweed *Potamogeton obtusifolius* and the aquatic moss *Fontinalis antipyretica*.

The area has a wide range of fen communities. The open waters are surrounded by a floating mat of vegetation, dominated by Bottle Sedge *Carex rostrata*, Bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata* and Water Horsetail *Equisetum fluviatile*, with frequent Bulrush *Typha latifolia*, Cowbane *Cicuta virosa*, Common Marsh-bedstraw *Galium palustre*, Water Forget-me-not *Myosotis scorpioides* and occasional Gypsywort *Lycopus europaeus* and Mare's-tail *Hippuris vulgaris*. To the north-east, the fen is characterised by Bottle Sedge *Carex rostrata* and Marsh Cinquefoil *Potentilla palustris* growing over the brown moss *Calliergon cuspidatum*, together with scattered Water Horsetail *Equisetum fluviatile*, Wild Angelica *Angelica sylvestris*, Bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata*, Sweet Vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum* and Yorkshire-fog *Holcus lanatus*. In the south-west of the area, the fen becomes more acidic in character with Bottle Sedge *Carex rostrata* and *Sphagnum squarrosum* dominant, and occasional White Sedge *Carex curta*.

Carr woodland with Alder *Alnus glutinosa* and Grey Willow *Salix cinerea* is scattered over the

area. The ground flora is dominated by wetland species such as Bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata*, Bottle Sedge *Carex rostrata*, Water Horsetail *Equisetum fluviatile*, Reed Canary-grass *Phalaris arundinacea* and Meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, growing over a grassy mat of Creeping Bent *Agrostis stolonifera*. Other frequent associates include Marsh Pennywort *Hydrocotyle vulgaris* and Common Marsh-bedstraw *Galium palustre*, while Bulrush *Typha latifolia*, Marsh Cinquefoil *Potentilla palustris* and Yellow Iris *Iris pseudacorus* occur occasionally.

Moyrourkan Lough also includes scattered patches of Gorse *Ulex europaeus* scrub and grassland. The latter is dominated by Red Fescue *Festuca rubra*, Common Bent *Agrostis capillaris* and Common Bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*. Other herbs include Common Knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, Lesser Stitchwort *Stellaria graminea*, Common Dog-violet *Viola riviniana* and White Clover *Trifolium repens*. Wet grasslands dominated by Soft-rush *Juncus effusus* also occur in places.

The area contains several scarce plants, including Cowbane *Cicuta virosa*, Greater Tussock-sedge *Carex paniculata* and Narrow Buckler-fern *Dryopteris carthusiana*. Notable bryophytes include *Calliergon cordifolium*, *Sphagnum fimbriatum* and *S. squarrosum*.

Moyrourkan Lough supports a notable invertebrate community, including a number of locally distributed species of aquatic Coleoptera (water beetles). These include *Dytiscus circumcinctus*, which is only found at three other sites in Northern Ireland. The community also contains "relict" species indicative of undisturbed rich fens, generally restricted to east and central Ireland. Characteristic species found at Moyrourkan Lough include *Hydaticus seminiger*, *Hydroporus scalesianus*, *Laccornis oblongus* and *Rhantus grapii*.

The most notable Carabid or ground beetle recorded was *Pterostichus aterrimus*, which is now believed to be extinct in Great Britain. It has only been recorded at seven other sites in the rest of Ireland, and appears to be confined to large areas of fen vegetation. In addition, three notable species of spider have been recorded, including a money spider *Allomengea vidua*, and two wolf spiders *Pirata piscatorius* and *Trochosa spinipalpis*. Other notable invertebrates include the carrion beetle *Aleochara curtula*, the weevil *Bagous collignensis*, the flea beetle *Phyllotreta exclamationis* and the shore bug *Salda muelleri*.

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, 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 for
Northern Ireland on 20 OCTOBER 1998



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.