

## DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

### DECLARATION OF AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST AT STRAIDKILLY WOOD, COUNTY ANTRIM. 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 'Straidkilly Wood Area of Special Scientific Interest'.

The area is of special scientific interest because of its woodland flora and fauna. The wood is one of the largest and least disturbed of its type in County Antrim. In addition, it has a well-developed structure, a wide range of woodland plant communities and a rich plant assemblage that includes a number of rare and notable species.

The wood covers the steep, north-facing basalt escarpment between Glencloy Valley to the north and Glenarm Valley to the south. The escarpment consists of a series of low cliffs with a main cliff line along the top. Generally, slopes are variable but steep, with a zone of scattered boulder scree along parts of the base. The woodland is composed of a low, even-aged Hazel *Corylus avellana* canopy, commonly interspersed with Rowan *Sorbus aucuparia* and Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*. Taller standards of Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, Goat Willow *Salix caprea* and Downy Birch *Betula pubescens* occur only occasionally throughout most of the wood, becoming most prominent at the western end.

The woodland ground flora displays a well-developed transition from the more calcifugous (acid) community types on the leached upper slopes, to typical calcicolous (base-rich) community types on the damper, boulder-strewn lower slopes. The former community types are dominated by extensive carpets of Great Wood-rush *Luzula sylvatica*, interspersed with occasional mats of calcifugous bryophytes and a few scattered stands of Bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus*. Base-rich community types include those dominated by stands of Wood Anemone *Anemone nemorosa*, Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* and Ramsons *Allium ursinum*. Soft Shield-fern *Polystichum setiferum* and Lady-fern *Athyrium filix-femina* typically form an upper tier to the ground flora. Small pockets of more strongly flushed soils are scattered along the base of the escarpment and are characterised by a mixture of Opposite-leaved Golden-saxifrage *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium* and Meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*. Calcicolous bryophytes form a lush growth over boulder scree.

In addition to its species richness, the woodland flora also includes a number of rare plants such as Stone Bramble *Rubus saxatilis*, Wood Vetch *Vicia sylvatica*, Toothwort *Lathraea squamaria*, Bird's-nest Orchid *Neottia nidus-avis* and Common Juniper *Juniperus communis*.

Straidkilly Wood provides an extensive area of semi-natural habitat for woodland animals, including Badger *Meles meles* and a range of breeding birds.

## 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, stone and gravel.
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. 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.
4. The storage or dumping, spreading or discharge of any material not specified under paragraph (3) above.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. Burning.
8. Changes in tree or woodland management, including afforestation, planting, clearing, selective felling and coppicing.
9. Construction, removal or disturbance of any permanent or temporary structure including building, engineering or other operations.
10. Alteration of natural or man-made features, the clearance of boulders or large stones and grading of rock faces.
11. The killing or taking of any wild animal except where such killing or taking is treated as an exception in Articles 5, 6, 11, 12, 16, 17, 20, 21 and 22 of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985.

12. 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.
13. Changes in game, waterfowl or fisheries management or fishing or hunting practices.
14. Use of vehicles or craft likely to damage or disturb the wildlife of the area.

Sealed with the Official Seal of the  
Department of the Environment for  
Northern Ireland on 23 APRIL 1997



**ROBERT C MARTIN**  
Chief Executive

*R. Hinchey  
Civil Servant in Charge  
BELFAST*

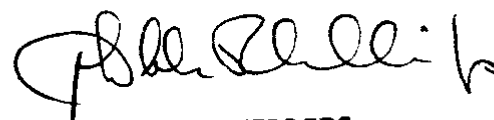
#### FOOTNOTES

- (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 or 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.

DECLARATION OF AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST AT STRANGFORD LOUGH (PART 2),  
COUNTY DOWN. ARTICLE 24 OF THE NATURE CONSERVATION AND AMENITY LANDS  
(NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 1985.

- Use of vehicles or craft likely to damage or disturb the wildlife.
- Recreational, educational or research activities likely to damage the wildlife.
- Changes in game or waterfowl management or hunting practices.
- Exercising of animals in areas where they are likely to disturb or damage the wildlife.

Sealed with the Official Seal of the  
Department of the Environment for  
Northern Ireland on 22 September 1988



J C L PHILLIPS  
Assistant Secretary

Y88007/CWB