

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**

**DECLARATION OF AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC AT TULLYSRANADEEGA,  
CO. 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 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 "Tullysrnadeega Area of Special Scientific Interest".

This area is of special scientific interest because of its grassland communities and the presence of Melancholy Thistle *Cirsium heterophyllum*. This is the only known site for the species in Ireland.

Species-rich grassland occurs in areas of low-intensity land management, in particular where traditional farming practices have been maintained. As a result, it is not a widespread habitat in Northern Ireland, often consisting of fragmented, individual fields or banks. The western Fermanagh region contains a large proportion of the resource, and Tullysrnadeega represents one of the most extensive concentrations of fields with a range of species-rich grassland types present.

Tullysrnadeega adjoins the Roogagh River, to the north-west of Roogagh Bridge. Soils have developed from Carboniferous sandstone tills and tend to be quite acidic in nature and poorly drained with strong gleying (waterlogging). Variations in surface topography and drainage have resulted in a range of soil conditions, which are reflected in the variety of grassland communities present. The species composition of these communities has also been influenced by past and current management practices.

Much of the area is grazed by cattle. These pastures are generally dominated by Sharp-flowered Rush *Juncus acutiflorus*, Carnation Sedge *Carex panicea* and Sweet Vernal Grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, but there is a wide variety of associated species including Meadow Buttercup *Ranunculus acris*, Tormentil *Potentilla erecta*, Devil's-bit Scabious *Succisa pratensis*

and the moss *Calliergon cuspidatum*. The wettest pastures are often very rich in sedges and bryophytes (mosses). Carnation Sedge *Carex panicea* is generally dominant, with frequent Tawny Sedge *C. hostiana*, Yellow-Sedge *C. viridula* ssp. *oedocarpa*, Flea Sedge *C. pulicaris* and Star Sedge *C. echinata*. Species typically associated with wet heath and bog are also frequent in these swards and include Cross-leaved Heath *Erica tetralix*, Heather *Calluna vulgaris*, Lousewort *Pedicularis sylvatica* and several species of *Sphagnum* bog-mosses. In some places, the combination of acidic, peaty soils and intense flushing by groundwater produces a particularly notable community known as "Fen Meadow". This is typically dominated by Purple Moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*, Meadow Thistle *Cirsium dissectum* and Devil's-bit Scabious *Succisa pratensis*, with frequent Tawny Sedge *Carex hostiana* and Flea Sedge *C. pulicaris*. Cross-leaved Heath *Erica tetralix* and the mosses *Breutelia chrysocoma* and *Sphagnum auriculatum* are also widespread in this community.

Some parts of the area are mown annually for hay. Several of these hay meadows bordering the Roogagh River are particularly species-rich. They share many of the same species as the grazed pastures and are typically dominated by sedges, with Carnation Sedge *Carex panicea* being particularly abundant. Frequent species include Sharp-flowered Rush *Juncus acutiflorus* and the grasses Crested Dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus* and Red Fescue *Festuca rubra*. A range of herbs occur at varying degrees of abundance, reflecting such features as soil moisture content. Widespread species include Meadow Thistle *Cirsium dissectum*, Self-heal *Prunella vulgaris* and Devil's-bit Scabious *Succisa pratensis*. Orchids are common in these fields and include Lesser Butterfly-orchid *Platanthera bifolia*, Twayblade *Listera ovata*, Common Spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* and Heath Spotted-orchid *D. maculata*.

Freely-draining soils make up a small proportion of the area. These are dominated by the grasses Red Fescue *Festuca rubra*, Crested Dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus* and Sweet Vernal Grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*. Associated herbs typical of freely-draining, neutral soils include Common Sorrel *Rumex acetosa*, Meadow Vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis* and Common Knapweed *Centaurea nigra*. One field is particularly notable for the presence of Melancholy Thistle *Cirsium heterophyllum*. This nationally rare plant species was first discovered at this location in 1949 by Mr. E. N. Carrothers and is the only known site in Ireland where it occurs. It is found in a damp, neutral meadow growing with Ribwort Plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, Meadow Thistle *Cirsium dissectum*, Lesser Stitchwort *Stellaria graminea* and the grasses Rough Meadow Grass *Poa trivialis* and Sweet Vernal Grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*. Several species of orchid are also present in this field including Greater Butterfly-orchid *Platanthera chlorantha*.

Patches of scrub occur throughout the area, particularly along the Roogagh River. Much of this is dominated by Gorse *Ulex europaeus* with a linear fringe of Willow *Salix* spp., Alder *Alnus glutinosus* and Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*. The scrub, in addition to the river itself and old field boundaries, all contribute to the overall diversity of the area.

Tullysradeega represents a large area of semi-natural habitat managed in a traditional way, with a wide variety of plant communities. As such, it provides valuable feeding and roosting sites for a range of 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. 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. Any change in the established method or frequency of rolling, mowing or cutting.
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:
  - (i) plants listed as noxious in the Noxious Weeds (Northern Ireland) Order 1977;
  - (ii) normal cutting or mowing regimes for which a consent is not required under paragraph 3 above.
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 for  
Northern Ireland on 13 JANUARY 1999



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**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.