SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: LOUGH CALLAUNYHEEDA

SITE CODE: 001017

Lough Callaunyheeda is a medium sized lake situated in east County Clare approximately 5km south of Tulla. The lake is set in a low lying area surrounded by extensive cutover bog to the north and east. A chain of small lakes extends in a westerly direction from the southern side of the lake. Mature conifer woodlands flank the north-west shore. An area of high fertile ground (max. height c. 100m) overlooks the lake to the south-west.

The main interest of the lake is ornithological. The lake holds nationally important numbers of Tufted Duck (622) (peak count 1,150) Coot (315), and regionally/locally important numbers of Great Crested Grebe (10), Wigeon (14), Teal (25) and Goldeneye (31) along with Pochard (59) and Lapwing (75) (Sheppard, 1993).

The dominant habitat is open water with few emergent plant species and an almost continuous fringe of the Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) along with lesser amounts of Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*).

Wet woodland occurs at the south-western and north-western shorelines and is mainly willow (*Salix* spp.), birch (*Betula* spp.) and alder (*Alnus* spp.). A variety of wet grassland, which in places grades into fresh water marsh, occurs around the lake. There is a good diversity of plants with sedges (*Carex* spp.) and rushes (*Juncus* spp.) dominating in places, along with such species as mint (*Mentha* spp.), Yellow Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), Marsh-marigold (*Caltha palustris*) and speedwells (*Veronica* spp.). The small islands to the north and south have a wet woodland cover with Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) and willow.

Adjacent to the south-east shore an area of species-rich cutover bog is found. Here on the drier tussocks common species include Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) and Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*) with abundant Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*) and Bog-rosemary (*Andromeda polifolia*). The wetter pools are rich in bog moss (*Sphagnum* spp.) along with Deergrass (*Trichophorum cespitosum*) and cottongrass (*Eriophorum* spp.).

The lake is a popular amenity area used by local sailing and water sports clubs. The north-west shore is managed by Clare County Council as an amenity area.

The main interest of the site is as a waterfowl site with nationally important numbers of diving duck. However, there is also a good diversity of habitats ranging from open water to wet grassland, marsh, cutover bog and wet woodland. The lake is of a high amenity and scenic value.

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