SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: MUCKNO LAKE

SITE CODE: 000563

Muckno Lake is situated in the inter-drumlin hollow immediately adjacent to the southeast of Castleblaney. It is the largest lake in Co. Monaghan.

In general the land slopes steeply down to the lake with the exceptions of the north-west and south-east ends of the lake. The draining of the lake to provide a water supply for Dundalk has led to a slight increase in the lake level.

There are frequent patches of wet woodland on embankments. These are characterised by Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*) and willow (*Salix* spp.) with an understorey of Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) and wet pools. The most extensive areas of wet woodland lie at the south-east end of the lake.

This area is also the best for waterfowl with male swans, Mallard and Teal all seen during a recent survey. A moderate number (500) of wintering waterfowl have been recorded on the site (AFF).

A bird count in February 1979 showed the following birds to be present – Great Crested Grebe 4, Little Grebe 6, Cormorant 12, Mallard 78, Teal 4, Shoveler 1, Tufted Duck 160, Pollard 65, Goldeneye 12, Mute Swan 5, Coot 44 and Lapwing 50.

It seems likely however that the number of birds have declined dramatically since this time due to the development of the lake for recreation.

Fish species present in the lake are Brown Trout, Pike Rudd, Perch, Bream and Eel.

The lake is also important for invertebrates. Large populations of invertebrates such as Caddis fly larvae, water boatmen (*Notonecta* and *Corica* spp.) The water hoglouse (*Asellus aquaticus*) and Turbellorians have been recorded amongst the aquatic vegetation and under stones and in mud on the lake bed. There is considerable scientific interest in a water flea, *Bythotrephes*, which showed a complete production between two distinct species.

11.11.2009