SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: EAGLE LOUGH

SITE CODE: 001049

Eagle Lough is situated in County Cork, 2km north-east of Buttevant. It is situated in a limestone area, which has a major influence on the site.

The lough is a fluctuating lake and thus displays many features of a turlough, the famous 'vanishing lakes' from the limestone country of Counties Clare and Galway. Farmland surrounds the water body, except around the northern edges, where some small deciduous woods occur. Close to the lake shore, sedges are common - especially Hairy Sedge (*Carex hirta*), along with Fake Fox-sedge (*C. otrubae*) and Carnation Sedge (*C. panicea*).

The southern shore is heavily poached by cattle, but it is within this disturbed micro-habitat that the fourth Irish record of Orange Foxtail (*Alopecurus aequalis*) was made in 1992. This species is to be included in the next edition of the Red Data Book of Vascular Plants. A healthy population of some thousands of plants occurs, associated with such other wetland species as Thread-leaved Water-crowfoot (*Ranunculus trichophyllus*), Small Sweet-grass (*Glyceria declinata*), Lesser Marshwort (*Apium inundatum*), Redshank (*Persicaria maculosa*), Pink Water-spreadwell (*Veronica catenata*) and Shoreweed (*Littorella uniflora*).

Cattle-grazing is a major contributor to land use here, but it is essential for the maintenance of the Orange Foxtail's habitat. The main threat to the site would be from drainage, which should be prevented. Eutrophication does not appear to be a problem, probably because the fluctuating water levels cause a flushing-out of the system, especially in winter.

It is believed that Eagle Lough is the only turlough-type lake in Cork, and this fact, along with the presence of rare plants here, makes the site of at least regional importance.

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