SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: BALLYCONNIGAR UPPER

SITE CODE: 000742

Ballyconnigar Upper lies approximately 1.5km east of Blackwater in County Wexford. The main habitat is species-rich grassland which has been relatively unaffected by fertiliser inputs. The most abundant and widespread species are Common Bent (*Agrostis capillaris*), Sweat Vernal-grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), White Clover (*Trifolium repens*) and Common Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*). There are also three legally protected plant species that occur here: Bird's-foot (*Ornithopus perpusillus*), Hairy Bird's foot-trefoil (*Lotus subbiflorus*) and Small Cudweed (*Filago minima*). There are also a number of other rare species such as Knotted Clover (*Trifolium striatum*) which is restricted to the east coast, as well as some interesting plant communities of disturbed ground.

The soil has a sandy structure which, despite the site's proximity to the coast 0.5km away, is not of marine origin. In this respect, and in topography, the site is affiliated with the nearby Screen Hills.

Although part of the site has previously been planted with conifers, and while Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) and Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) dominate other parts, this is still an important area of unimproved grassland - a habitat under heavy pressure in the lowlands.

12.11.2009