SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: OWENGAR WOOD

SITE CODE: 001419

Owengar Wood occurs on the steep, north facing bank of the Owengar River, 1km south-east of Drumkeeran and 4km west of Lough Allen. This site is a good example of wet, semi-natural deciduous woodland that has developed on the often waterlogged, clay-rich soils which are typical of County Leitrim. Most of the site is intact and has retained its natural character, despite being somewhat damaged from tree felling and grazing on the east side.

Willows (*Salix caprea*, *S. cinerea*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) form the dominant species in the canopy with some birch (*Betula* spp.), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*). Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) is also very common near the river banks. The understorey includes Hazel, Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*). In some of the more ungrazed areas, the wood has developed into a very dense thicket which has a very natural character.

This woodland is notable for its excellent diversity of bryophyte and lichen communities which form a lush carpet in some of the more undisturbed parts of the wood. The ground flora also contains a good diversity of flowering herbs, ferns, grasses and sedges which are characteristic of slightly acidic soils. Common species include Lesser Celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*), Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), some Golden-saxifrage (*Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*), Wild Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*), Sanicle (*Sanicula europaea*), Wood-sedge (*Carex sylvatica*) and Early-purple Orchid (*Orchis mascula*). Wet patches and flushed channels running down slope feature Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*), sedges (*Carex nigra*, *C. laevigata*, *C. remota*), Marsh Horsetail (*Equisetum palustre*), Yellow Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*) and Cuckooflower (*Cardamine pratensis*).

Due to widespread afforestation of conifers in this region, Owengar Wood is important as it is one of the few remaining, intact wet woodland sites in this region. Although the eastern half has been damaged by grazing, much of this site is exceptionally undisturbed and contains a good diversity of plant species. The varied age structure and diversity of tree species in the Owengar Wood also creates an important resource for local wildlife species including Pheasant and Woodcock.

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