SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: CAHIRCALLA WOOD

SITE CODE: 001001

This wood is situated about 2km south-west of Ennis and is a fine example of woodland over limestone. The main canopy species is Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), with some Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*). The understorey is mixed with Hazel (*Corylus avellena*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monoygna*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and occasional Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*).

There is a rich herb flora with typical woodland plants such as Wood Avens (*Geum urbanum*), Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Lords-and-ladies (*Arum maculatum*), Early-purple Orchid (*Orchis mascula*) and Golden-saxifrage (*Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*). Ferns are found in places, with *Dryopteris* spp. and Hart's-tongue (*Phyllitis scolopendrium*). The shaded areas allow luxuriant moss growth. An area of scrub occurs in the north-west of the site.

Habitat diversity is increased by a small area of wet woodland dominated by willow (*Salix* spp.). Further diversity is created by the presence of shattered limestone pavement in the northern sector, with species such as Blue Moor-grass (*Sesleria albicans*), Devil's-bit Scabious (*Succisia pratensis*) and Rue-leaved Saxifrage (*Saxifraga tridactylites*).

A good range of woodland bird species occurs, including Sparrowhawk, Treecreeper, tits and finches. Grey heron, Snipe and Stonechat were also observed. Fox and Badger are present.

The main interest of this site is that it is a fine example of relatively intact mostly native woodland. Habitat diversity is provided by the presence of scrub, wet woodland and limestone pavement.

16.11.2009