SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: TURLOUGHNAGULLAUN

SITE CODE: 000071

Turloughnagullaun is situated at the head of a valley in the eastern Burren, 6km south of Burren village, Co. Clare. The turlough is divided into two basins by the Deelin Beg road, which crosses on a high bridge. Most of the land is drift covered, but there is some exposed rock. The edges of the main basin are woodland on most sides with pavement at the northern end. The eastern basin is in complete contrast; it is open, there is little exposed rock, and the surrounding land mainly comprises fields and shallow channels.

The central depression, composed of marl, is wet grassland with Common Sedge (*Carex nigra*) and rather frequent Common Spike-rush (*Eleocharis palustris*). It surrounds a patch of knotgrass (*Polygonum* spp.) and Silverweed (*Potentilla anserina*). A channel leads into this central area and is lined by Amphibious Bistort (*Persicaria amphibia*) and Common Sedge.

The sloping stony sides of the turlough are generally dominated by sedges (*Carex* spp.) and Creeping Cinquefoil (*Potentilla reptans*). At the top of the slopes the Creeping Cinquefoil is usually replaced by species such as Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*), Devil's-bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*) and violets (*Viola* spp.). This merges into a scrub of Dog-rose (*Rosa canina*), Buckthorn (*Rhamnus catharticus*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*).

The eastern basin consists mainly of flattish fields with grasslands containing Tall Fescue (*Festuca arundinacea*), Jointed Rush (*Juncus articulatus*), Heath Dog-violet (*Viola canina*), Common Couch (*Elymus repens*), Greater Plantain (*Plantago major*) and dock and sorrel species (*Rumex* spp.).

The turlough contains Common Meadow-rue (*Thalictrum flavum*), while Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*) grows in the woodland at the north-west corner of the site.

The Red Data Book species, Fen Violet (*Viola persicifolia*) is found at the site.

Cattle are grazed in both basins of the turlough. Some hay is cut in the fields around the eastern basin.

Turloughnagullaun is a diverse turlough in topography and vegetation, and is notably unmodified. It is relatively eutrophic despite its occurrence in the hilly Burren, and has rather unusual vegetation for this area. The occurrence of rare and unusual plant species adds to its scientific interest.

4.11.2009