SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: SHAD LOUGH

SITE CODE: 001648

Shad Lough is located approximately 3km south of Tulsk, Co. Roscommon. It is a shallow lake, whose area is extended considerably by flooding in wet weather. It is located in a limestone region.

The main habitat is a lake, which has some of the features of a turlough, such as high productivity and attractiveness to wildfowl. The shore is marked by Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) bordered with Common Club-rush (*Schoenoplectus lacustris*). Behind this a Jointed Rush (*Juncus articulatus*) community takes over, with such species as Marsh Ragwort (*Senecio aquaticus*), Glaucous Sedge (*Carex flacca*), Water-cress (*Nasturtium officinale*), Grass-of-parnassus (*Parnassia palustris*) and Marsh Willowherb (*Epilobium palustre*). Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*) also forms an important part of the vegetation.

Secondary habitats include lowland wet grassland, which adds diversity to the site.

The main interest of the site is zoological. The lough is one of 17 in a 6 x 7km area and total numbers for this area make it a nationally important site for Wigeon (mean peak 1,258, 1984/85 - 1986/87). It is of regional or local importance for a further 12 species of waterfowl.

There appears to be a good local population of European Otter (*Lutra lutra*) although no figures are available. European Otter are listed in Annex II and III of the E.U. Habitats Directive.

Shooting levels at the site are low, according to local information. The major threats to the site are water abstraction, which is already a damaging operation, and fertilisation of surrounding land, which could threaten the plant and other populations. Drainage would affect the surrounding wet grassland more so than the lake itself, which is located in a shallow basin.

Shad Lough is of primarily ornithological interest and its nationally important numbers of Wigeon, as well as the presence of otters, which are listed as internationally important in the Irish Red Data Book, make this site of NHA standard.

24.11.2009