SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: LOUGH CULLIN

SITE CODE: 000406

Lough Cullin is the only natural lake in south Kilkenny and occupies a low-lying depression 6km north of Waterford. Streams enter the basin from the north-west, north-east and south-east and cause considerable flooding in most winters. The outflow is sluggish towards Dunkitt and the Suir though here and elsewhere there has been work to deepen the channel.

Although formerly peat-filled, at least in parts, there is now little evidence of peat in the area except in the soil, some fen vegetation on the eastern side of the lake and in the frequent use of bog oak in the fences. Generally the area consists of wet grassland made up of Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*) with Tufted Hair-grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*), Marsh Ragwort (*Senecio aquaticus*) and Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*). Where peat remains there is often a component of sedges (*Carex panicea, C. nigra, C. demissa*) as well as Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), Tall Fescue (*Festuca arundinacea*) and Devil's-bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*). Cinquefoils (*Potentilla palustris, P. reptans*) and rushes (*Juncus acutiflorus, J. bulbosus*) are occasional.

Most of the fields within the site are grazed though some are cut for silage and, rarely, tilled for cereals despite the winter flooding. The only area of semi-natural vegetation occurs east of the lake and within the lake itself. The fens here include much Tall Fescue as well as Purple-loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), Yellow Pimpernel (*Lysimachia nemorum*), Meadowsweet and Wild Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*). Bottle Sedge (*Carex rostrata*) and Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) grow near drains and around the lakeshore where they are joined by Lesser Bulrush (*Typha angustifolia*) in its only Kilkenny station, by bur-reeds (*Sparganium erectum, S. minimum*) and by Nodding Bur-marigold (*Bidens cernua*).

The main interest of the site lies in its flowering plants some of which are rare in the Kilkenny and Waterford region. There is also a high population of Snipe in winter as well as smaller numbers of Curlew, Lapwing and Mallard. In summer Sedge Warbler and Reed Bunting breed.

6.11.2009