SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: QUARRYFIELD WEST TURLOUGH

SITE CODE: 001901

This site is situated 10km east of Tubercurry in an area of upper Visean limestone of the Carboniferous era. This site is one of a series of wetlands of Natural Heritage importance within the Owenmore Catchment.

The turlough occupies a basin that receives stream drainage from the south-east as well as flooding from the north-west corner. Peat growth has occurred in the eastern half and some peat cutting has also occurred in the past. A complex wetland has developed, much of which is a floating scraw. The sink holes are slightly above the lowest point in the valley floor where a semi-permanent pond occurs with Broad-leaved Pondweed (*Potamogeton natans*), Water-plantain (*Alisma plantago-aquatica*), Lesser Marshwort (*Apium inundatum*), and Pond Water-crowfoot (*Ranunculus peltatus*). Rich fen areas occur around the margins of the pool and valley bottom and contain many sedges (*Carex vesicaria*, *C. hostiana*) and wetland herbs.

A scraw occurs, covering much of the valley bottom. Bladder-sedge (*Carex vesicaria*), Jointed Rush (*Juncus articulatus*), Common Spike-rush (*Eleocharis palustris*), Water Horsetail (*Equisetum fluviatile)* and Nodding Bur-marigold (*Bidens cernua*) occur rocking into the fluid mud. In wetter areas Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*), Marsh Stitchwort (*Stellaria palustris*), Marsh Willowherb (*Epilobium palustre*) and Amphibious Bistort (*Persicaria amphibia*) are common. Branched Bur-reed (*Sparganium erectum*) and Lesser Pond-sedge (*Carex acutiformis*) occur in the wettest areas. Areas dominated by Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*) occur towards the edges.

A stream flows across the fen rich area. The banks of the stream have dense areas of Reed Canary-grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*). Bottle Sedge (*Carex rostrata*), Branched Bur-reed and Fen Bedstraw (*Galium uliginosum*) occur in this area.

A comparatively large flock of Whooper Swans visit this site. All areas of the turlough are grazed by sheep and cattle. Overgrazing is particularly evident close to the semi-permanent pool. Some of the drier areas are used for hay-making. Shooting also occurs here.

Quarryfield West Turlough is different from other turloughs in the area, having only limited areas of firm grassy vegetation. This is probably because of the inflowing stream and the fact that the sink hole is above the lowest point in the basin. This has led to an exceptionally well developed scraw floating on the permanent water. This makes the site of regional importance.

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