SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: ADARE WOODLANDS

SITE CODE: 000429

The Adare Woodlands are divided into five blocks of woodland situated to the south-west and south-east of Adare, Co. Limerick.

These dry, broad-leaved woodlands are believed to be amongst the oldest in the country, and remnants of a much larger forest that developed in the River Shannon Basin after the last ice age. Much of the site was actively used for forestry purposes up until about 30 years ago, but since then the site has, in the main, been left reasonably undisturbed and as a result is now a haven for local wildlife.

The woodland has developed a distinct canopy, shrub and ground layer vegetation. In the canopy, species such as Sessile Oak (*Quercus petraea*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*) occur, intermingled with exotics such as Turkey Oak (*Quercus cerris*), Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*).

The shrub layer contains native species such as Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*), with exotics like Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*), Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*) and Cherry Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*).

On the ground, ferns such as Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*), Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) and herbs such as Devil's-bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*) and vetch (*Vicia* spp.) occur, along with rushes (*Juncus* spp.) and sedges (*Carex* spp.) in wetter areas.

The various age structures of each block of woodland in the site combine to create a wide range of woodland habitats for bird life and other fauna.

This site is of significant conservation value for the stands of broad-leaved woodland and associated flora and fauna that it supports.

6.11.2009