SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: LOUGH AVAN

SITE CODE: 001995

Lough Avan is a wetland area situated to the north-east of the village of Coolbaun in North Tipperary. A high degree of habitat diversity exists for a site of this size, ranging from lakes and ponds through to dry broadleaved woodland.

A number of small lakes occur here, with extensive fringing reed-beds, mostly of Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) but with other species such as Great Fen-sedge (*Cladium mariscus*) and Black Bog-rush (*Schoenus nigricans*) extensive in places. Areas of wet grassland occur on slightly higher ground where cattle graze. Some of these locations are traditional winter feeding sites for Greenland White-fronted Geese, as well as ducks and wild swans.

Pockets of scrub are scattered throughout the site. Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and willows (*Salix* spp.) are the most frequent plants, but one area has a healthy population of Juniper (*Juniperus communis*).

Woodland comprising Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), oak (*Querus* spp.), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and others is included to the south-east of the wetlands, while a glacial deposit supporting a calcareous grassland community is included in the site to the north-east of Lough Avan.

The habitat and species diversity displayed by this site is extremely valuable in an area that is otherwise intensively farmed.

8.12.2009