SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: KILCORRAN LOUGH

SITE CODE: 001838

At about 17ha open water area, Kilcorran Lough is one of the larger of the highly calcareous lakes in the Finn River system. It lies less than 1km from the Monaghan and Fermanagh border at Rosslea. A small catchment in limestone drift ensures a high calcium status, with a substrate of precipitated marl, and a relatively low nutrient status.

The aquatic macro-flora is typical of lakes in the area. Two notable species of pondweed have been recorded, Shining Pondweed (*Potamogeton lucens*) and Various-leaved Pondweed (*Potamogeton gramineus*).

Swamps are reasonably well developed in a few areas, the principal swamp forming species being Common Club-rush (*Schoenoplectus lacustris*) and Bottle Sedge (*Carex rostrata*). Elsewhere there is often a narrower belt of Common Spike-rush (*Eleocharis palustris*). Around most of the shore the surrounding fields slope down to the lake edge, but small level areas behind the waters edge have allowed the development of patches of marsh. The main dominants species here are Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*) and Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*). In places the influence of calcium is evident in the marsh, and the much less common association between Long-stalked Yellow-sedge (*Carex lepidocarpa*) and Lesser Tussock-sedge (*Carex diandra*) is evident. Another notable sedge species that has previously been recorded from Kilcorran Lough is Lesser Pond-sedge (*Carex acutiformis*).

There is also one small area of wet woodland on the lakeshore, dominated by Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) with willows (*Salix* spp.) and Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*).

The fields on the slopes above the lake are variously used for cattle pasture and for silage production, and appear to be intensively fertilised. The water chemistry of the lake water relies upon a low nutrient status, and is particularly sensitive to nutrient runoff from farmland. Therefore management of the grassland slopes above the lake is critical and for this reason these slopes have been included in the Natural Heritage Area (NHA) designation.

Marl lakes have been identified as being of particular importance in a European context. Kilcorran Lough can currently be described as a marl lake, and it is hoped that the NHA designation will serve to protect the water quality, and hence the characteristic flora of the lake.

26.11.2009