SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: CLOONCOE WOOD AND LOUGH

SITE CODE: 000424

This lake is part of the Lough Rinn group of lakes in Leitrim which lies approximately 6km east of Dromod and Lough Bofin. The lake is situated in a long narrow inter drumlin hollow orientated approximately north-south. The wood more or less encircles the lake but its most extensive area is on the old raised bog on the western shore.

The gradient of the lake edge is very shallow giving rise to a broad flooded area. Common Club-rush (*Schoenoplectus lacustris*) and Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) form dense stands in the open water particularly at the northern and southern ends of the lake. Reed Canary-grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) and Bottle Sedge (*Carex rostrata*) are frequent around the rocky shore.

The lake is encircled by a band of wet woodland. The canopy is predominantly Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), willow (*Salix* spp.), Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) and Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*). There is also a scrubby layer dominated by Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*). A species-rich herb layer includes species such as Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), Gipsywort (*Lycopus europaeus*) and Marsh-marigold (*Caltha palustris*). There is abundant fallen wood often covered in mosses such as *Eurhynchium* spp..

The wood to the west of the lake consists of birch (*Betula* spp.) woodland on an old raised bog which is drying out. Much of the wood has been underplanted with Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*). The wood is very open in character and there is good regeneration of birch though much of it has been underplanted with Scots Pine and invasion by Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*) is becoming a problem. The field layer consists of a typical suite of bog species with Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*) and Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*). There is also a rich carpet of mosses including some wetter areas with *Sphagnum* lawns. Towards the margins of the wood are some commercial conifer plantations and some tall mature broadleaved species such as oak (*Quercus* spp.) and Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*).

A number of rare invertebrates have been recorded from this site. Although it was originally considerably disturbed by peat cutting and drainage this has given rise to a range of good habitats for invertebrates and the site has not been touched recently.

6.11.2009