SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: DUNLAVIN MARSHES

SITE CODE: 001772

This site, which straddles the Wicklow-Kildare county boundary, is situated about 2km north-west of Dunlavin. The site consists of two disjointed strips of fen, which lie within an area of alkaline moraines.

A stream runs through the site and introduces such species as Water-cress (*Nasturtium officinale*), Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*) and Marsh-marigold (*Caltha palustris*). At the margins of the stream Purple-loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) is dominant in places.

Surrounding the stream, Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) and sedges (*Carex paniculata*, *C. diandra*, *C. acutiformis*) are found. An area of willow (*Salix* spp.) and birch (*Betula* spp.) scrub occurs in the north-east of the site.

The rest of the site is either unaltered fen, partly improved fen or damp pasture. Plant species recorded include Black Bog-rush (*Schoenus nigricans*), Great Fen-sedge (*Cladium mariscus*), Grass-of-parnassus (*Parnassia palustris*), Common Twayblade (*Listera ovata*), Tall Fescue (*Festuca arundinacea*), Cuckooflower (*Cardamine pratensis*), Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), Common Marsh-bedstraw (*Galium palustre*) and Devil's-bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*). The bladderworts (*Utricularia intermedia* and *U. minor*) are frequent in the wet areas.

Bird species recorded from the site include Snipe, Meadow Pipit and Sedge Warbler. Black-headed Gulls have been seen during the breeding season in recent years and may have attempted to breed.

The quality of this site and its size has been diminished over the last 30 years owing to drainage and improvement. However, the remaining areas of semi-natural vegetation are still of scientific interest.

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