SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: NEWTOWN MARSHES

SITE CODE: 001759

Newtown Marshes are located about 2km west of Hollywood and immediately beside Lemonstown crossroads. The site consists of a series of marshes and ponds within an area of calcareous eskers.

The wetlands vary from areas of permanent open water to damp rush (*Juncus* spp.) dominated hollows. Wet grassland occurs around some of the pools and marshes. One of the larger bodies of water has some Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*), Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*) and an area of willow (*Salix* spp.) scrub. Other species found include Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*), Marsh Cinquefoil (*Potentilla palustris*), Cuckooflower (*Cardamine pratensis*), Common Marsh-bedstraw (*Galium palustre*), Lesser Spearwort (*Ranunculus flammula*) and Bottle Sedge (*Carex rostrata*). Floating species present are Common Duckweed (*Lemna minor*), Common Water-starwort (*Callitriche stagnalis*) and the liverwort *Riccia fluitans*. Bog mosses (*Sphagnum* spp.) occur in places.

The area is of interest ornithologically as it holds a breeding colony of Black-headed Gulls. In the early 1980s up to 200 pairs bred, but today numbers are less than 50 pairs. Mute Swan, Little Grebe, Teal and Coot also breed.

The area is grazed mostly by sheep and some of the grasslands have been improved in recent years, with signs of eutrophication in some of the wetlands. However, the grasslands are included as part of the site for hydrological reasons.

Apart from the ecological interests, this site is of interest for geomorphological reasons. Areas of freshwater marsh are now scarce in this part of the country.

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