SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: CASTLEOLIVER WOODS

SITE CODE: 002090

Castle Oliver lies 3km south of Kilfinnane and is most easily approached via the village of Ballyorgan. The site consists of a series of long woodland strips surrounding a centre which for the most part is intensively farmed grassland. The woodland strips are largely coniferous.

The north-east portion, adjacent to 'The Wilderness' contains the bulk of the deciduous species. Elsewhere conifers, notably spruce (*Picea* spp.), predominate. However, it is thought that the area as a whole merits assessment. Beside 'The Wilderness', an area just south of 'Olivers Folly' may support rare species, although the presence of Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*) is seen as damaging.

In addition to Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and oak (*Quercus* spp.) much of the deciduous population includes exotics such as Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and Horse-chestnut (*Aesculus hipposcastanum*).

Geary's Wood is an annex (polygon) just off the southern extremity. This small woodland grows around a stream. On the west side the original oak has been replaced by spruce while Beech has been planted on the east side. This latter wood is a self-sustaining wood with many self sown seedlings. Remnant oak are also present close to the stream banks. There is a diverse ground flora and a range of habitats here.

This wood may merit NHA designation even without the inclusion of Castle Oliver.

Also worthy of NHA designation is Gooseberry which is linked to the eastern boundary of Castle Oliver. It is upland grassland/gorse (*Ulex* spp.) scrub leading to heath. Extensive coniferous forestry is adjacent.

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