SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: LOUGH SHEEVER FEN/SLEVIN'S LOUGH COMPLEX

SITE CODE: 000690

Lough Sheever Fen/Slevin's Lake Complex comprises two medium-sized lakes and their associated woodland and grassland habitats. These lakes are situated approximately 3 miles north-east of Mullingar, in Co.Westmeath. The site is of high scientific value for a variety of reasons, including the rich diversity of habitats and the rarity of some of the floral and invertebrate species. Habitats of note here include fen vegetation forming on the shores of both Lough Sheever and Slevin's Lake, mixed woodland on Quarry Bog, wet woodland, wet grassland, scrub, drainage ditch vegetation and reed swamp.

The north shore of Slevin's Lake is formed by calcareous fen, rich in species and containing Round-leaved Wintergreen (*Pyrola rotundifolia*), which is only found in 10 sites in Ireland. There is also a well developed fen invertebrate community here including species internationally vulnerable within the EU.

The eastern shore of Lough Sheever also has examples of fen vegetation. Quarry Bog is a low-lying peaty area between Lough Drin and Slevin's Lake. At present it is covered by semi-natural woodland in which a variety of conifers have been planted. Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*) is also present and is spreading. This area seems to be a naturally wooded cutover or partially cutover bog.

The woodland at Slevin’s Lough is notable for the presence of two rare species of Myxomycete fungus, namely *Echinostelium brooksii* and *Physarum oblatum*. Both the woodland and lakes provide a very good habitat for a variety of bird species, with badgers, foxes and squirrels common in the woodland.

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