SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: GLENASTAR WOOD

SITE CODE: 001431

This is a small dense deciduous wood situated approximately 3km west of Ardagh in Co. Limerick. Sessile Oak (*Quercus petraea*) forms the main canopy species at the western side, and Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*) becomes more important at the eastern end.

The woodland is set in a deep, wet V-shaped valley. Small streams run down the north facing slope in several places to join the River Daar in the valley bottom. This damp atmosphere allows moss and fern growth to flourish. There is a rich herb layer which reflects a typical woodland flora. There is a distinct successional gradation along the valley from east to west. Dense Downy Birch at the eastern end grades into mature Sessile Oak with Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) becoming more important further west. Due to the steep, sloping valley the woodland has remained relatively undisturbed. Some damage due to cattle grazing was recorded.

For a small site species diversity is very good. The habitat is a rare one in the country as a whole. This site is particularly unique in its setting in this deep V-shaped valley. This site is not only of botanical value but also is of significant faunal interest as it represents one of a few remaining wildlife habitats in the region.

20.11.2009