SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: CARRICKNAHORNA LOUGH AND LOUGH GORMAN

SITE CODE: 002068

Carricknahorna Lough and Lough Gorman are situated approximately 6km north-east of Ballyshannon. The main habitats of interest at this site are the marl lakes, and around the margins the marl flats, which are the best examples in Donegal. These occur in shallow water. These areas support fen vegetation dominated by Black Bog-rush (*Schoenus nigricans*) and Variegated Horsetail (*Equisetum variegatum*). The latter is a local species, confined mostly to the centre of Ireland. Other species, found fringing the lakes and colonising the marl flats, include Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*), Great Fen-sedge (*Cladium mariscus*), Tufted-sedge (*Carex elata*), Few-flowered Spike-rush (*Eleocharis quinqueflora*) and Broad-leaved Cottongrass (*Eriophorum latifolium*).

The limestone habitats associated with these lakes add to the diversity of the site. These include damp calcareous grasslands, limestone grasslands, limestone pavement and Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) woodlands. Blue Moor-grass (*Sesleria caerulea*) is a characteristic species of these limestone grasslands while a local species, Rough Horsetail (*Equisetum hyemale*), is found in the woodlands.

The main land-use within the site is cattle grazing. This has caused some damage by overgrazing and trampling, especially in the woodlands and may lead to some eutrophication of the lakes.

8.12.2009