SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: BALLYQUIRK POND

SITE CODE: 001235

Ballyquirk Pond is located 2km south-west of Killeagh and 9km west of Youghal, on the south-west of East Cork. The south-east of County Cork comprises narrow alluvial plains between limestone ridges, an area rich in ponds and small lakes, many with fluctuating water levels and exposed mud edges in the summer. This site is situated to the south of the road and railway line to Youghal and consists of a small field and the pond itself.

The site was surveyed in 1992 and was formerly a site for the vulnerable, Red Data Book species Pennyroyal (*Mentha pulegium*) but the area where it occurred to the north of the old railway line has been drained. Consequently, the wetland habitat has been lost and with it the Pennyroyal. However, to the south of the railway line there is a small pond which is rather overgrown. Species here include, amongst others, Bulrush (*Typha latifola*), Lesser Spearwort (*Ranunculus flammula*), Jointed Rush (*Juncus articulatus*), Soft Rush (*J. effusus*), Remote Sedge (*Carex remota*), Hairy Sedge (*C. hirta*), Common Spike-rush (*Eleocharis palustris*), Bugloss (*Anchusa arvensis*), Water-plantain (*Alisma plantago-aquatica*) and Common Duckweed (*Lemna minor*). Also, on the northern, muddy edge of the pond are found a few flowering plants of the rare Orange Foxtail (*Alopecurus aequalis*), a species mainly distributed on the midlands and south-east of England and not previously recorded in Ireland. It is a species that will be included in the revised edition of the Irish Red Data Book.

This site however is threatened by infilling, on the south side of the pond branches and hardcore have been dumped, so unless the site is protected and the area monitored, this area may also be drained with the loss of another wetland habitat and a rare species. It is therefore recommended that the site is designated as an NHA, to protect the site from damaging operations such as drainage, to monitor the Orange Foxtail plants and to manage the pond and surrounding land opportunity.

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