SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: LOUGH SMILEY

SITE CODE: 001607

Between Lough Smiley and Drumillard Lough, 2 km north of Castleblaney, a variety of habitats have been identified as being of ecological importance. This extensive wetland area includes lakes, freshwater marsh, fen, raised bog, cutover bog mosaic and wet woodland lying in a basin between drumlins.

Lough Smiley contains a large area of floating marsh fringed by willow (*Salix* spp.) carr. Common Club-rush (*Schoenoplectus lacustris*) and Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) with Reed Canary-grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), Marsh-marigold (*Caltha palustris*), Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*) and Water Horsetail (*Equisetum fluviatile*) are the patchy dominant species of the vegetation.

On the northern and southern ends of the lake where peat cutting has occurred, Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*), Bottle Sedge (*Carex rostrata*) and Branched Bur-reed (*Sparganium erectum*) replace these. Here Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*), water-milfoil (*Myriophyllum* spp.) and pondweeds (*Potamogeton natans* and *P. berchtoldii*) are also present. Stands of Sharp-flowered Rush (*Juncus acutiflorus*) often lead out from this area, and into lawns of bog moss (*Sphagnum* spp.) that contain peaty communities.

There are also small pockets of raised bog around the lake which are quite dry and being colonised by Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) and Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) in some places.

This site contains a good diversity of habitats and since they occur over a large area, there is an interesting variation in vegetation communities which provides a good example of ecological succession. This site is also of high educational value because of its proximity to nearby Castleblaney.

24.11.2009