SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: LOUGH RINN

SITE CODE: 001417

Lough Rinn is a large linear lake situated 3 km south of Mohill and 5 km east of Dromod. It is part of the larger River Shannon catchment. The Cloon River flows into the lake on the north-east side, while the Rinn River drains the southern end, flowing into Lough Forbes.

One of the largest lakes in the area, Lough Rinn is also one of the few lakes in Co. Leitrim which is underlain by limestone and has a partially calcareous source. The lakeshore is very rocky for the most part and the flora reflects base enrichment with plant species such as Quaking Grass (*Briza media*), Glaucous Sedge (*Carex flacca*), Purging Flax (*Linum catharticum*) and a moss, *Pseudoscleropodium purum*, mixed in with more calcifuge species such as Mat-grass (*Nardus stricta*) and Heath Grass (*Danthonia decumbens*). The more silty areas close to the shore are colonised by Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*). Much of the open water is colonised by extensive rafts of Common Club-rush (*Schoenoplectus lacustris*) with some floating Yellow Water-lily (*Nuphar lutea*). There are also areas of species-rich wet grassland and several freshwater marshes on the lakeshore with a notable abundance of Bladder Sedge (*Carex vesicaria*). Semi-natural deciduous woodland is present on the perimeter of the site with a narrow band of wet woodland occurring closer to the shore.

Lough Rinn is also of regional/local ornithological importance for Whooper Swan (23 birds, peak number in 3 counts over 1 season in 1993), Pochard (60 birds in 1993), Tufted Duck (25 birds in 1993), Curlew (50 birds in 1993) and small numbers of Teal, Mallard and Goldeneye. Greenland White-fronted Goose (110 birds maximum in 1992/1993) occasionally uses the lake as a roost site. Both Whooper Swan and Greenland White-fronted Goose are internationally important species that are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive.

A typical invertebrate fauna, including the Freshwater Mussel (*Anodonta* sp.) and several common aquatic invertebrates (*Bithynia* sp. *Limnaea* sp. and *Pisidium* sp.) was described during a survey of the aquatic fauna.

The lake occasionally suffers algal blooms, and nutrient enrichment is a contemporary process that should be controlled. Generally, however, the lake appears to still be relatively unpolluted and undisturbed in comparison to other lakes in the region.

This site is of interest as it supports regionally important numbers of birds and contains good examples of marsh and lakeshore vegetation. The juxtaposition of calcicole flora with more typical calcifuge species is of particular interest.

17.4.2009