SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: LOUGH GARROW AND LOUGH GUBDOO

SITE CODE: 000984

Loughs Garrow and Gubdoo are outliers of the Erne system which lie in an inter-drumlin hollow on the Cavan/Fermanagh border approximately 9km east of Belturbet near the Clones road. A water analysis carried out by the 1989 Lake Survey conducted in Northern Ireland by the Conservation Service (Department of Environment (NI)) found Lough Garrow to be nutrient poor and calcium rich. This type of lake is unusual because of its susceptibility to damage by nutrient enrichment from intensive agriculture in its catchment.

There is an extensive area of freshwater marsh to the west of Lough Garrow with Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) very abundant and scattered willow (*Salix* spp.) shrubs. This area shows a good vegetation gradient from seasonally flooded areas with abundant grasses such as Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*) and sedges such as Carnation Sedge (*Carex panicea*) through wetter areas with a broad band of Common Reed with species such as Marsh-marigold (*Caltha palustris*), Gipsywort (*Lycopus europaeus*) and Cowbane (*Cicuta virosa*), into the lake where there is Tufted-sedge (*Carex elata*) and Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*) growing with the reeds out into deeper water where there is Common Club-rush (*Schoenoplectus lacustris*) and Great Fen-sedge (*Cladium mariscus*) with Yellow Water-lily (*Nuphar lutea*). The swamps on Lough Gubdoo are also dominated by Common Reed.

The area between the two loughs is mown and this has given rise to a close cropped, sedge-rich sward with Carnation Sedge a major constituent.

The fields on the drumlin slopes around the loughs are not heavily fertilised or reseeded and contain a high proportion of meadow grasses such as Meadow Foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*), Sweet Vernal-grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), Common Bent (*Agrostis capillaris*) and Smooth Meadow-grass (*Poa pratensis*). In places there is some calcareous influence with Hard Rush (*Juncus inflexus*) and forb species such as Yellow-rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*) and spotted-orchid (*Dactylorhiza* spp).

There are also records for three species on Lough Gubdoo which are restricted in their distribution, namely Frogbit (*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*), Marsh Stitchwort (*Stellaria palustris*) and Marsh Fern (*Thelypteris palustris*).

These lakes are a good example of low nutrient, high calcium lakes. This type of lake is unusual. The adjacent unimproved calcareous grassland also increases the value of this site.

16.11.2009