SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: CARRICKAPORT LOUGH

SITE CODE: 001920

Carrickaport Lough is a medium sized lake in a landscape of gently rolling hills in south County Leitrim, 4km south-east of Drumshambo. It is underlain by limestone and the water is fairly calcium-rich.

The shores are stony and the lake bed is a sandy mud. Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) beds and Common Club-rush (*Schoenoplectus lacustris*) with some Bottle Sedge (*Carex rostrata*) form a fringe around its margins. Common Spike-rush (*Eleocharis palustris*) is also frequent in shallow water on the shore.

There is an excellent diversity of submergent and emergent aquatic species including Shoreweed (*Littorella uniflora*), pondweeds (*Potamogeton crispus, P. perfoliatus, P. praelongus*), Yellow Water-lily (*Nuphar lutea*), Autumnal Water-starwort (*Callitriche hermaphroditica*) which occurs mainly in the north, and two stoneworts (*Chara globularis* and *Nitella flexilis*). Some of these species are of restricted occurrence in Ireland.

An aquatic moss, *Octodiceras fontanum*, was also found here. This was a new species to Ireland. The presence of this species and of algal species such as *Microcystis* spp. is indicative of eutrophic conditions and suggests the lake is receiving a high nutrient load.

There is also a good range of habitats and vegetation communities in the surrounding area including species-rich wet grassland, unimproved rushy fields, scrub woodland, freshwater marshes, dry broad leaved woodland and a small conifer plantation. Unusually, Wood Horsetail (*Equisetum sylvaticum*), a plant which is known in parts of the north but rather rare elsewhere, is locally abundant in wet grassland near the lakeshore.

In addition to the general ecological, educational and recreational value of this lake, the occurrence of a rare moss and several other plant species of interest makes this site of considerable botanical importance.

27.11.2009