SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: BALLYDONAGH MARSH

SITE CODE: 001844

This National Heritage Area consists of a series of three small basin fens, relatively poor in calcium judging by the ecology of the flora. The basins are situated approximately 5km north-north-east of Tipperary Town.

The largest and most important fen is Ballydonagh Marsh itself, which contains a mosaic of poor-fen and swamp communities and several patches of open water. Several rare species are found at this site, including Greater Spearwort (*Ranunculus lingua*), Slender Sedge (*Carex lasiocarpa*), Tufted-sedge (*C. elata*), Lesser Tussock-sedge (*C. diandra*), Skullcap (*Scutellaria galericulata*), Blunt-flowered Rush (*Juncus subnodulosus*) and the only station in the catchment for the nationally rare liverwort *Ricciocarpos natans* (a new county record for South Tipperary). Other species of note, recorded from pools, include Blunt-leaved Pondweed (*Potamogeton obtusifolius*), Greater Water-moss (*Fontinalis antipyretica*), Delicate Stonewort (*Chara virgata*) and Rugged Stonewort (*C. rudis*).

Grange Marsh, just north and downstream of Ballydonagh, is notable for a large, mono-dominant stand of Slender Tufted-sedge (*Carex acuta*), a species rated of regional importance. Grange Marsh is drier now than it has been in former times.

Pallas Marsh, further north again has also been partially damaged by recent drainage and reclamation activities. Nonetheless, it still retains wet with swampy areas at its northern extremity, from which the following rare species were noted: Slender Tufted-sedge, Greater Spearwort and Floating Crystalwort (*Riccia fluitans*).

This series of small wetlands, at the very eastern limit of the catchment, represent the best examples of poor-fen communities in the area. Such communities are rare in Mulkear catchment in general. The occurrences of such a relatively large number of rare species, including aquatic liverworts of regional and national importance, make these marshes of interest.

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