SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: GOUGANEBARRA LAKE

SITE CODE: 001057

Gouganebarra Lake is situated about 20km north-west of Dunmanway in West Cork. The An Foras Forbartha County Report of 1986 provided the basis for the following description of the site.

The lake is glacial and lies in the lower part of a cone cut into the eastern flanks of the Shehy Mountains. Conifer plantations occur to the west and south of the lake, while the northern shore is more open with balder scree and grassland occurring beneath steep cliffs. The lake is large, acidic and at least l5m deep.

The lake is fringed with rushes (*Juncus* spp.) and sedges (*Carex* spp.) but the high level of acidity, combined with peat-stashing of the water, means there is little aquatic vegetation except for two specialised plants, namely the scarce Awlwort (*Subularia aquatica*) and Six-stamened Waterwort (*Elatine hexandra*). The latter is also a scarce species, although locally frequent in the south-west.

Birdlife of the lakeshore includes Grey Wagtail, Common Sandpiper and Snipe. The recent NHA survey indicates the lake is used by ducks and swans, while Peregrine Falcons breed on the cliffs.

The invertebrate life of the lake has been studied with plankton records existing for 1954 and ridge larvae for 1970. Further records are scattered through the literature.

The main land uses around the lake are forestry, sheep grazing and tourism. Nutritionally poor lakes, such as this one, are very susceptible to pollution and acidification, so all of the above activities may pose a threat to the interest of the lake.

This site is described as of interest in the AFF County Report "because it is a fairly large acid lake, better documented than some and therefore of value in the study of habitat change over the years". The more recently recorded presence of Peregrine Falcon, a species listed in Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive, adds to the interest of the site.

17.11.2009