SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: BONET RIVER

SITE CODE: 001404

This site runs along the Glenade Valley from Glenade Lough to 1km north-west of Manorhamilton. Glenade Lough and the surrounding mountains of the Benbulbin range and Aroo Mountain are all Natural Herritage Areas. The underlying geology of all these sites is predominantly Limestone.

The river is small and fast flowing with a predominantly gravel substrate with small exposures of the bedrock. Typical plants of the river channel include Greater Water-moss (*Fontinalis antipyretica*), Pond Water-crowfoot (*Ranunculus peltatus*), Water Horsetail (*Equisetum fluviatile*), Branched Bur-reed (*Sparganium erectum*), Canadian Waterweed (*Elodea canadensis*) and water-starwort (*Callitriche* spp.). The margins of the channel have dense stands of Reed Canary-grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*), Yellow Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), Marsh-marigold (*Caltha palustris*) and Brooklime (*Veronica beccabunga*). Scrub is frequent along the river margins with Osier (*Salix viminalis*) the most abundant species but Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), Bird Cherry (*Prunus padus*), Goat Willow (*Salix caprea*), Crack Willow (*Salix fragilis*), Purple Willow (*Salix purpurea*) and White Willow (*Salix alba*) are also frequent.

Wet grasslands along the channel sides are included within the site. These grasslands are grazed by cattle and sheep. Common species here are Timothy (*Phleum pratense*), Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*), Sweet Vernal-grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*), Common Valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*), Cuckooflower (*Cardamine pratensis*) and Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*). Areas of peat occur in some sections of the valley bottom and tiny amounts of cutting have taken place in the past. Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*) and Tufted Hair-grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*) are abundant is these areas.

An area of mature oak (*Quercus* spp.) woodland adjacent to the river is also included within the site. Other tree species occurring here include Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*), Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and Hazel (*Corylus avellana*). Wetter areas have a great abundance of Goat Willow and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). The woodland ground flora is very rich in species, including Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Sanicle (*Sanicula europaea*), Pignut (*Conopodium majus*), Wood-sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*) and Bird's-nest Orchid (*Neottia nidus-avis*). Bird's-nest Orchid and Bird Cherry occur within the site and are both listed in the Irish Red Data Book.

A study of the birdlife of the Bonnet River Catchment was made in 1978 and it was not found to be of any great significance to aquatic or water associated birds.

This site has been affected by arterial drainage schemes within the catchment. Afforestation has also been widespread in the area.

This site is important as an example of a clean river in a limestone catchment. Several species of algae and the well developed macrophyte flora add further interest to the site.

20.11.2009