SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: BOOTERSTOWN MARSH

SITE CODE: 001205

Booterstown Marsh lies approximately 5km south of Dublin City. It is separated from Merrion Strand to the east by an embankment which carries the Dublin to Wexford railway, and to the west it is bounded by the road from Dublin to Blackrock. The marsh overlies glacial tills which in turn lie on Black Limestone.

Two streams run through the site; the Trimelston stream runs along the northern edge of the site and is culverted, although there is some seepage into the marsh which helps prevent the marsh drying out. The Nutley stream runs parallel to the railway along the eastern side of the site. Sea water incursions into the marsh occur along this stream at high tide.

Almost the entire marsh may be flooded at irregular intervals and salinity fluctuates throughout the site under the influence of rainfall and tidal cycles. Consequently, the site exhibits an interesting gradient from freshwater plant communities in the north-west to a more saline-tolerant flora in the south-east. Water-cress (*Nasturtium officinale*), Water Horsetail (*Equisetum fluviatile*), Amphibious Bistort (*Persicaria amphibia*) and Fool's Water-cress (*Apium nodiflorum*) are typical in the west of the site. Seaward, a fuller saltmarsh flora is found with Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), Sea Club-rush (*Bolboschoenus maritimus*), Saltmarsh Rush (*Juncus gerardi*), Common Saltmarsh-grass (*Puccinellia maritima*), Sea-milkwort (*Glaux maritima*) and Sea Aster (*Aster tripolium*). The protected plant Borrer's Saltmarsh-grass (*Puccinellia fasciculata*), known only from a few locations in Ireland, is found here.

Booterstown Marsh is a site of local/regional ornithological importance. Of particular interest are the high concentrations of Snipe which occur in winter - numbers up to 100 are normal, but as many as 400 (Jan. 1988) have been recorded. The marsh is also used as a high-tide roost by a variety of waders and gulls - regular species are Oystercatcher (100+), Redshank (100+) and Black-headed Gull (several hundreds). Up to 50 Mallard and 40 Teal are regularly seen in autumn and winter. Other species which frequent the marsh include Kingfisher (1-2 birds), an Annex I species under the E.U. Birds Directive, and Grey Heron (5-8 birds). Rarer birds of coastal marshes have been recorded, notably Little Egret and Yellow Wagtail.

Booterstown Marsh is the only saltmarsh in south Dublin and, despite some concerns about the increasing salinity of the site, it remains a valuable habitat for many birds as well as containing a diverse flora including the protected plant Borrer's Saltmarsh-grass (*Puccinellia fasciculata*).

18.11.2009