SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: LOUGH RAMOR

SITE CODE: 000008

Lough Ramor lies in a hollow in the Silurian strata that cover most of eastern Cavan. It is a very shallow lake with a pH of about 7.5 and a maximum depth of 6m. The water is nutritionally poor but suffers periodic enrichment, resulting in algal blooms. Being situated on a different rock type than the other Cavan lakes it differs also in appearance. Much of the shore has semi-natural woodland of Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), willows (*Salix* spp.) and Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), those stands near Virginia being originally planted.

Hazel and Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) scrub is widespread on relatively dry sites with Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), False Brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*), Wood-sedge (*Carex sylvatica*), Common Dog-violet (*Viola riviniana*) and Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*). Where such communities occur on a rocky shore Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*) often grows with roses (*Rosa* spp.) and Heath Dog-violet (*Viola canina*). The scrub grades into woodland in several places on the southern shore and here Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and oak (*Quercus* spp.) occur with some Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*). The bird community in such sites includes Treecreeper, Long-tailed Tit, Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler and, locally, Blackcap. Woodpigeon, Sparrowhawk, Jay, Pheasant and Woodcock are also found.

The islands are mostly covered by willows and in more open places Black-headed Gulls nest. Mallard, Teal and Red-breasted Merganser breed on the island while Great Crested Grebe largely use the mainland shores of the lake.

Freshwater marshes exist in many places around the shore but extensive reedbeds stretching out into the lake are rare. The margins of the marshes are mostly sedge-dominated by such species as Bottle Sedge (*Carex rostrata*), Bladder-sedge (*C. vesicaria*), Tufted-sedge (*C. elata*), Common Sedge (*C. nigra*) and occasionally Water Sedge (*C. aquatilis*). Water Horsetail (*Equisetum fluviatile*), Marsh Cinquefoil (*Potentilla palustris*) and bur-reeds (*Sparganium* spp.) also occur commonly. Also on the fringes occurs a more varied community characteristic of base-poor areas, with such species as Marsh Ragwort (*Senecio aquaticus*), Lesser Spearwort (*Ranunculus flammula*), Devil's-bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*), Common Marsh-bedstraw (*Galium palustre*), Hoary Willowherb (*Epilobium parviflorum*), Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), Sweet Vernal-grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*) and Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*). Cuckooflower (*Cardamine pratensis*) occurs commonly and Marsh Violet (*Viola palustris*) and Greater Spearwort (*Ranunculus lingua*) are to be found in places.

Stretches of the shore with muddy or stony substrates provide niches for Trifid Bur-marigold (*Bidens tripartita*) and the scarce Tasteless Water-pepper (*Persicaria mitis*) and Small Water-pepper (*Persicaria minor*).

The lake supports nationally important numbers of Cormorant (average maximum of 201) and notable concentrations of Whooper Swan, Wigeon, Teal, Mallard and Lapwing. Snipe, Lapwing and Curlew also nest in the fringing marshes.

The plant communities along the lake margins are of note and, combined with the over-wintering bird numbers, make Lough Ramor an important wetland site.

4.11.2009