SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: LOUGH BODERG/LOUGH BOFIN

SITE CODE: 001642

Lough Boderg/Lough Bofin is a complex of connected Upper Shannon lakes which also includes Lough Scannell, and lie on the border between Cos Roscommon and Leitrim. Lough Bofin and Lough Scannell are close to Dromod, Co. Leitrim while Lough Boderg lies about 4km south of Drumsna. It is connected by a short channel to Kilglass/Grange Lough.

Apart from the aquatic habitats of the lake itself, the main terrestrial and semi-aquatic habitats are woodland on the lakeshore which grades down to a stony lakeshore with a well developed typical 'Shannon flora', and reed swamps.

Most of the woodland occurs as a narrow fringe (sometimes widening) around a good deal of the lakes particularly in the Dromod area and the eastern shores of Lough Boderg (north and south of its link with Lough Bofin). Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) often predominates with Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and willows (*Salix* spp.) behind. The limit of flooding occurs well inside this strip indicated by flotsam of dead reed stems. This woodland has been described from the Dromod lakeshore in 1973 as being quite open with a well-developed rich ground flora dominated by a Black Bog-rush (*Schoenus nigricans*) and Glaucous Sedge (*Carex flacca*) sward with such plants as Grass-of-parnassus (*Parnassia palustris*) and Yellow-sedge (*Carex flava* agg.). Spindle Tree (*Euonymus europaeus*) is also recorded.

Derrygrasten Wood (on the peninsula between Lough Scannell and Lough Bofin) is described (in 1973) as a managed Ash-Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) wood with a very rich ground flora which includes Toothwort (*Lathraea squamaria*), a scarce plant parasitic on the roots of trees in old woodland. It is thus probably part of the original oak (*Quercus* spp.) woodland ground flora.

Further south on this peninsula (around Rabbit and Otter Islands) abundant Spindle Tree, Guelder-rose (*Viburnum opulus*) and Buckthorn (*Rhamnus catharticus*) are present. The scarce and localised plant Marsh Stitchwort (*Stellaria palustris*) is reported here also. Vertical aerial photographs taken in 1993 confirm that this woodland fringe is still present.

A similar habitat on Lough Boderg (on the north facing peninsula, across the linking channel, south of Derrycarne Wood) was visited during the 1993 survey. Here the local plant Pale Sedge (*Carex pallescens*) is present. Common Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*) is noticeably abundant on tussocks of Black Bog-rush and Skullcap (*Scutellaria galericulata*).

The stony lakeshore here contains a typical 'Shannon Flora' with abundant submerged Shoreweed (*Littorella uniflora*), Yellow-sedge, Purple-loosetrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), Lesser Spearwort (*Ranunculus flammula*) and Cowbane (*Circuta virosa*) among the

stones. A small patch of Water Germander (*Teucrium scordium*) is present here also. Water Germander is a scarce species almost confined to the River Shannon lakes. These stones become completely colonised by a species-rich sward at higher levels.

The other main extensive habitat briefly visited in 1993 at this site is an area of very old cut-away in the north east of Lough Boderg creating an environment which floods in winter and contains widespread Bog-myrtle (*Myrica gale*) with locally abundant Royal Fern (*Osmunda regalis*), surrounded by deep water drains. This area is bordered on its east side by fields with dominant Marsh Foxtail (*Alopecurus geniculatus*), and on its western side by a hill of mineral soil which becomes an island (with a causeway) during floods.

The Internationally Important Greenland White-fronted Goose frequents a number of improved fields around this site but these are so diffuse that most have not been included in the site.

Lough Boderg/Lough Bofin is a complex of Upper Shannon lakes with a long convoluted shoreline containing many areas of wild and typical limestone terrestrial and semi-aquatic shoreline habitats.

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