SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: THOMASTOWN BOG

SITE CODE: 001593

This site is situated 3km west of Duleek, Co. Meath. The site consists of a raised bog surrounded by wet woodland and wet grassland. The site is in a hollow surrounded by farmland on higher ground and is bordered by an embanked railway track on the northern side. The site is dissected by broad deep drainage channels throughout.

The raised bog was described during an earlier survey as having no bog pools and was considered to be drying out. The species recorded from the bog include Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*), Cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccus*), Common Cottongrass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*), Hare's-tail Cottongrass (*Eriophorum vaginatum*), Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*) and Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*).

Wet woodland is the commonest habitat occurring at the site. It is considered to be spontaneous in origin. Large areas of this woodland are flooded during periods of high rainfall as the surrounding farmland drains into this site. The main species are willow species (*Salix* spp.), Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*), Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*), and Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*). The south-east section of the woodland has willow and large Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) as the dominant tree species. There is some regenerating Wych Elm (*Ulmus glabra*) and a number of large dead Wych Elms were seen.

These wet woodlands have a rich ground flora with Yellow Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*) dominant and associated species include Wild Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*), Marsh-marigold (*Caltha palustris*), Ragged-Robin (*Lychnis flos-cuculi*), Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), Meadow Vetchling (*Lathyrus pratensis*), Common Marsh-bedstraw (*Galium palustre*), Bog Stitchwort (*Stellaria alsine*) and Marsh Foxtail (*Alopecurus geniculatus*). Also recorded were Marsh Cinquefoil (*Potentilla palustris*), Cuckooflower (*Cardamine pratensis*) and Lesser Spearwort (*Ranunculus flammula*).

A number of fields containing wet grassland vegetation occur along the southern boundary of the site. These fields contain vegetation dominated by Yellow Iris with Marsh Speedwell (*Veronica scutellata*), Brooklime (*Veronica beccabunga*), Marsh Ragwort (*Senecio aquaticus*), Meadow Vetchling, Tufted Forget-me-not (*Myosotis laxa*), Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*) and Lesser Spearwort as associated species.

Other habitats recorded at the site include reed beds dominated by Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) on the south-western border of the site, water channels with Yellow Iris and bur-reed (*Sparganium* spp.) and streams.

Tree-felling has occurred on the eastern border of the site in recent times and there is evidence of an unsuccessful attempt to plant Sitka Spruce (*Picea sitchensis*). Some areas of the site are grazed by cattle and sheep.

The site is notable for an excellent diversity of habitats and rich flora. The site has remained largely undisturbed due to difficulty of access.

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