SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: LOUGH GOLLER

SITE CODE: 000048

Lough Goller is a small lake situated about 2.5km south of Lisdoonvarna, Co. Clare. It lies between 60m and 91m above sea-level, and is in a region of shales and sandstones. A river flows from the lake at the southeast end.

The lake has a substantial area of open water and is surrounded by a fringe of Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*), Great Fen-sedge (*Cladium mariscus*) and several other sedge species (*Carex* spp.). Blanket bog and rough grassland surround these wetlands.

The waters of Lough Goller are slightly alkaline and the presence of extensive reed beds, particularly in the south-western corner, indicates that the lake is quite productive.

Spring Quillwort (*Isoetes echinospora*), a rare plant in Ireland, was found in Lough Goller in June 1990. It occurred along the southern shore of the lake, growing on stoney substrate covered by muddy sediment. The occurrence of this species in alkaline water but on acidic sediment may indicate that the occurrence of this species is related more to the pH of the sediment than to that of the water, as in the rest of Ireland and Europe, the plant is found in relatively acidic conditions.

The lake was used by Greenland White-fronted Geese up to 1990. It is still used by some wintering waterfowl, while the marginal vegetation provides nesting sites for birds.

Most of the bog is being actively cut or has been afforested in the last number of years, and the water quality of the lake may have been affected by fertiliser runoff from the planting schemes.

The main interests of the site are the occurrence of Spring Quillwort, and its use as a wintering area for geese. Afforestation and peat cutting, however, have reduced the quality of the site. The Greenland White-fronted Geese may have abandoned the site due to disturbance arising from site preparation and planting.

4.11.2009