SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: DIRK BAY

SITE CODE: 001498

This site is located 9km south-west of Clonakilty close to Galley Head in west Cork.

Sand dunes and freshwater marsh comprise most of the site, which lies at the back of Red Strand. In the 1986 An Foras Forbartha County Report, a number of local or rare plant species were recorded in the dunes, namely Dodder (*Cuscuta epithymum*), Wild Clary (*Salvia verbenaca*) and Autumn Lady's-tresses (*Spiranthes spiralis*). During the rare plant survey of Co. Cork (1992-93), another local species was added to this list, namely Cowslip (*Primula veris*), a rare plant in west Cork. The dune grassland slopes down to a reed swamp and, on the transitional marshy area, Strawberry Clover (*Trifolium fragiferum*) and Lesser Water-parsnip (*Berula erecta*) occur.

The presence of Wild Clary is of particular interest, since it is a rare species listed in the Irish Red Data book.

A considerable part of the dune system has been re-seeded and fertilised for sheep grazing. Other parts are suffering from sand removal and rubbish dumping.

This site is of interest because sand dunes are an unusual habitat in west Cork and this system, although small and somewhat damaged, is of great botanical value.

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