SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: LOUGHS ADERRY AND BALLYBUTLER

SITE CODE: 000446

Lying approximately 6km east of Midleton, Co. Cork, in a limestone valley, this site includes two rich lowland lakes surrounded by farmland and marshy ground.

In 1986, An Foras Forbartha provided the following description of the site: Ballybutler Lough once had a larger expanse of open water than at present, but floating fen has invaded from both the north-west and south-east sides. Some of this has now evolved into bog but there are still substantial areas of Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*), with Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) and sedges, including Cyperus Sedge (*Carex pseudocyperus*). On the muddier shores of Lough Aderry Lesser Marshwort (*Apium inundatum*) is frequent, along with pondweeds (*Potamogeton* spp.), Yellow Water-lily (*Nuphar lutea*) and Rigid Hornwort (*Ceratophyllum demersum*).

More recently, the Rare Plant Survey of Co. Cork (1992-93) recorded a very rare grass Orange Foxtail (*Alopecurus aequalis*) growing on exposed mud at the edge of a marshy pool between the two loughs. Associated species included Unbranched Bur-reed (*Sparganium emersum*) and other grasses.

This survey also confirmed the presence of abundant Musk Thistle (*Carduus nutans*), growing in re-seeded and semi-improved fields to the north of Ballybutler Lough. This very rare and threatened species, is listed in the Irish Red Data Book.

This site is also of ornithological value, with Lough Aderry supporting nationally important numbers of Gadwell (average peak 92, 1984/85-1986/87). In addition, both lakes support a variety of waterfowl including Mute Swan, Wigeon, Teal, Mallard, Shoveler, Pochard, Coot and Lapwing.

Ballybutler Lake is a statutory nature reserve while Lough Aderry is a Wildfowl Sanctuary. Both lakes are susceptible to water pollution with agricultural run-off providing the greatest threat.

Generally, the two lakes provide good examples of botanically rich, lowland lakes. However, the site is of particular interest because of the presence of two rare plant species and nationally important numbers of birds.

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