SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: MONALTY LOUGH

SITE CODE: 001608

Monalty Lough lies 2.5km to the west of Carrickmacross and is set in typical cattle pasture in the glacial drift of the drumlin belt, underlain by Upper limestone.

A lot of the lake shore is fringed by a belt of Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) which is in turn backed by a narrow strip of wet woodland or scrub, often dominated by willow species (*Salix* spp.). A tongue of Common Reed and willow dominated woodland has spread from the north to the south shore between two basins dividing the lake into two. Any low lying wet grassland adjacent to the lakeshore is dominated by Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*) with rushes (*Juncus* spp.) and wetland herb species. Although not studied in detail, the aquatic component of the vegetation appears to be interesting, with five stonewort species (Characeae) recorded.

There is a lot of cover for nesting waterfowl in the reed-beds around the lake and a wide variety of species are regularly recorded here.

There are large numbers of small lakes in the general area. Monalty has been selected as a Natural Heritage Area because of the richness of the birdlife. The water quality is poor due to nutrient runoff from adjacent farmland, and although this is a cause for grave concern, it does not yet appear to be a serious threat to the wildfowl population.

24.11.2009