SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: LOUGH OURNA

SITE CODE: 000650

Situated close to the N52 between Nenagh and Borrisokane in Co. Tipperary, Lough Ourna is an old Area of Scientific Interest (ASI) that has been re-designated a Natural Heritage Area (NHA).

The lake is a mosaic of reed-beds dominated by Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) and open water. The water is shallow and the water level fluctuates, creating conditions for dense growth of the bulky moss *Fontinalis antipyretica* and Lesser Marshwort (*Apium inundatum*), both somewhat amphibious species. Around much of the lake there is a rapid transition to improved agricultural grassland, but the wetland margins still support a variety of marsh species such as Common Marsh-bedstraw (*Galium palustre*) and Tufted Forget-me-not (*Myosotis laxa* subsp. *caespitosa*). Golden Dock (*Rumex maritimus*), a rare and decreasing species in Ireland listed in the Irish Red Data Book, had been recorded from Lough Ourna, and may still be present in the seed bank at least.

Woodland, probably planted in origin, which fringes the eastern shore, has been included in the NHA designation. It is a mature mixture of native and non-native broad-leaved species.

This is an interesting and unusual lake in the process of terrestrialisation. The wetland habitats are of interest particularly if they still harbour Golden Dock. The woodland adds diversity to the site and its own interest is promoted by its ecological position in relation to the lake.

11.11.2009