SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: NEWCHAPEL TURLOUGH

SITE CODE: 000653

Newchapel Turlough lies some 6km west of Borrisokane in Co. Tipperary. The shore of Lough Derg lies some 3km to the west, over the Kilbarron Hills. The basin lies in Magnesian limestone. The level of the turlough fluctuates as water is conducted in or out of the basin through small passages in the rock. In 1972 the site was designated an Area of Scientific Interest (ASI). It is now redesignated a Natural Heritage Area (NHA).

The basin is occupied by a lough in the northern end, fringed with Water Horsetail (*Equisetum fluviatile*) and Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*), and by unimproved wet grassland, subject to inundation when the water level rises. There are two smaller pools in the southern end. Wet grassland species include Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), with wetland herbs such as Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*), Marsh Pennywort (*Hydrocotyle vulgaris*) and Lesser Spearwort (*Ranunculus flammula*). Specialist species typical of areas of fluctuating water levels include Lesser Marshwort (*Apium inundatum*) and the moss *Fontinalis antipyretica* as well as Water Germander (*Teucrium scordium*), which apart from the shores of Lough Derg and Lough Ree is rare and restricted to turloughs in East Clare and North Tipperary. An area of mature scrub has been included within the NHA because of its ecological position in relation to the turlough. It adds an element of diversity to the whole site.

Areas of the Republic of Ireland are renowned for turloughs, due to the fact that the country is extensively underlain by limestone. Turloughs have been recognised by the European Union as a habitat of international importance. Ireland has a special responsibility to conserve the best of its remaining turloughs. Drainage, or improvement for agriculture, for example by intensive fertilisation, is not consistent with this responsibility.

11.11.2009