SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: BALLYTEIGE MARSH

SITE CODE: 001930

Ballyteige Marsh is a coastal brackish marsh located 5km south of Cahore Point. The marsh is separated from the sea by a narrow strip of sand dunes. A body of standing water in the marsh is fed by a small stream flowing from the north. The stream then flows towards the beach, but the presence of a sand bar obstructs the flow into the sea. However, the saltmarsh vegetation in the marsh is evidence of the brackish influence. In that area, saltmarsh species such as Slender Spike-rush (*Eleocharis uniglumis*), Saltmarsh Rush (*Juncus gerardii*) and Sea Arrowgrass (*Triglochin maritima*) occur. Other species present are Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) and Sea Club-rush (*Bolboschoenus maritimus*). Some areas are dominated by Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*), with Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), Brown Sedge (*Carex disticha*) and Greater Pond-sedge (*Carex riparia*). In damper areas, stands of Common Club-rush (*Schoenoplectus lacustris*) are found.

The eastern side of the marsh grades upslope into a species-rich wet grassland and includes such species as Sweet Vernal-grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), Sharp-flowered Rush (*Juncus acutiflorus*), Hard Rush (*Juncus inflexus*), False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), False Fox-sedge (*Carex otrubae*) and Common Spotted-orchid (*Dactylorhiza fuchsii*). The western side is heavily grazed by cattle. There is a large area of bare mud with clumps of rushes (*Juncus maritimus* and *Juncus gerardi*).

The sand dunes on the site form a narrow ridge (50-100m wide) parallel to the sea, with a fairly typical fixed dune flora dominated by Marram (*Ammophila arenaria*) and Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*). Other species present include Kidney Vetch (*Anthyllis vulneraria*), Eyebright (*Euphrasia* spp.) and Pyramidal Orchid (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*). On the landward side of the dune ridge there is an area of dune grassland where Creeping Willow (*Salix repens*) and Burnet Rose (*Rosa pimpinellifolia*) are common.

This site is important as a fine example of a coastal brackish marsh, with a diverse wetland flora. The sand dunes on the site increase the habitat diversity. These habitats are particularly vulnerable to the pressures of coastal development and amenity use, and future management would enhance the quality of this site.

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