SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: GRANNYFERRY

SITE CODE: 000833

The Blackwater is a small tributary of the River Suir in south Kilkenny joining the main river upstream of Waterford. Its lower reaches (5km or so) are tidal and although the river embankments are still generally intact, various sluices and valves do not always operate successfully so that there is some flooding in the valley bottoms, especially on spring tides.

This site consists of reed-swamp, marshes and wet fields with a salt influence which declines from south to north. At the southern end there are saltmarsh communities with Saltmarsh Rush (*Juncus gerardi*), Sea Arrowgrass (*Triglochin maritima*), Sea Aster (*Aster tripolium*) and various sedges (*Carex distans, C. otrubae*). Slender Spike-rush (*Eleocharis uniglumis*), Strawberry Clover (*Trifolium fragiferum*) and Brookweed (*Samolus valerandi*) are species of interest which grow in the fresher conditions just above the saltmarsh. There is also a little Meadow Barley (*Hordeum secalinum*) which is now a protected species because of its marked decline this century, caused by drainage and grassland improvement.

Upstream, the vegetation changes into beds of Lesser Pond-sedge (*Carex acutiformis*), Hard Rush (*Juncus inflexus*) and Yellow Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*) along the railway line, though the persistence of Sea Club-rush (*Bolboschoenus maritimus*) reminds one of the proximity of the sea. On the eastern side Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) occurs in abundance with Marsh-marigold (*Caltha palustris*) and some sedges. There has been some reclamation here and the vegetation has been extensively modified from its natural condition.

Small numbers of Mallard and Water Rail occur within the area and in summer there are, most probably, Sedge Warbler and Reed Bunting nesting.

12.11.2009