SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: DRUMMAN'S ISLAND (LOUGH KEY)

SITE CODE: 001633

Drumman's Island is a densely wooded drumlin on the south shore of Lough Key within Lough Key Forest Park. The dominant habitat is semi-natural woodland considerably modified by additional planting. The canopy trees are Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), the latter being the most common species. The Pedunculate Oaks are large and adjacent trees touch in places. Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) has been planted around the margins of the woodland while firs (*Abies* spp.) have been planted on the north-west side. The shrub species are Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Cherry Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*). The exotic species Cherry Laurel is particularly abundant on the northern part of the island and along the path that encircles the island.

The woodland occurs on a freely drained soil. Such areas are usually clear-felled and put to agricultural use. The ground flora includes Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Wood-sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*), Enchanter's-nightshade (*Circaea lutetiana*), Male-fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*), Broad Buckler-fern (*Dryopteris dilatata*), Scaly Male-fern (*Dryopteris affinis*), Lady-fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*), Common Dog-violet (*Viola riviniana*), Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), Ivy (*Hedera helix*), Bugle (*Ajuga reptans*), Lords-and-ladies (*Arum maculatum*), Red Campion (*Silene dioica*) and Wood Speedwell (*Veronica montana*). There is a wide variety of mosses and liverworts growing at ground level and on the bark of trees. The thallose lichen Lungwort (*Lobaria pulmonaria*) occurs on the branches of tall oak trees. This species is usually confined to oceanic woodlands in Ireland.

The site also includes sections of the reed-beds at the southern end of the island. These are dominated by Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*). Areas of species-rich littoral woodland occur on the lake fringes with tree species such as willow (*Salix* spp.) forming a canopy. The uncommon shrub Buckthorn (*Rhamnus catharticus*) is particularly abundant in this habitat on the northern side of the island. The rare plant Bird's-nest Orchid (*Neottia nidus-avis*) has been recorded at the south-eastern margin of the island.

The spread of Cherry Laurel and Sycamore should be controlled to maintain the interest of the woodland. In spite of the occurrence of exotic tree and shrub species, the woodland is of considerable value as it is one of the only oakwoods on good soil in the country. The diverse nature of the woodlands and the presence of at least two uncommon plant species also enhance the value of the site.

24.11.2009