SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: LOUGH MACNEAN UPPER

SITE CODE: 000986

Upper Lough Macnean is a mesotrophic lake about 10km to the north-west of Cuilcagh Mountain. The lake is split into two main basins by a shallow area between Rosscorkey Island, joined to the northern shore by a narrow isthmus, and Copas Point on the Cavan shore. The majority of the lake and its catchment lie on Upper Visean Sandstone and consequently the water chemistry is comparatively low in calcium.

Much of the shore is exposed with little swamp or marsh development, however the shape of the lake is complex enough for there to be sheltered areas with swamps of Common Club-rush (*Schoenoplectus lacustris*), and also of Common Spike-rush (*Eleocharis palustris*). Parts of the Cavan shore have a distinctive flora as a result of being on Upper Limestone rather than sandstone, with exposures featuring the notable plant Northern Bedstraw (*Galium boreale*) which has a limited distribution in Ireland.

In places a heathy community has been described, with species such as Star Sedge (*Carex echinata*), Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*) and Heath Wood-rush (*Luzula multiflora*). Low-lying, wet grassland in an unimproved condition was confirmed in 1994 and these areas are included within the proposed National Heritage Area (NHA).

The diverse aquatic plant community, featuring species restricted to nutrient poor water, and some notable species including Six-stamened Waterwort (*Elatine hexandra*) and Needle Spike-rush (*Eleocharis acicularis*), combine to make this an important lake for its aquatic communities. The relatively low intensity of land use adds to the importance of the lake as a functional unit.

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