SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: BALLINDANGAN MARSH

SITE CODE: 000899

Ballindangan Marsh is located 1.5km west of the village of Ballindangan and c. 8km south-west of Mitchelstown in East County Cork. This wetland is a small commonage area, inundated with water in the winter and contains a small pond on the northern edge of the marsh. The soil is of organic/alluvial silt.

On the eastern edges of the shallow pond the rare Red Data Book species Golden Dock (*Rumex maritimus*) was found. This species grows on the muddy and shore margins together with Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), Nodding Bur-marigold (*Bidens cernua*), Floating Sweet-grass (*Glyceria fluitans*) and Common Spike-rush (*Eleocharis palustris*). The marsh is occasionally grazed by cattle and it is noted that both some grazing and trampling are beneficial to the habitat of the Golden Dock. It is an annual species, with exacting requirements for its seed germination, needing base areas of mud and fluctuating water levels.

Other species occurring in the marsh include Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*), Hard Rush (*J. inflexus*), Water Horsetail (*Equisetum fluviatile*), Blunt-fruited Water-starwort (*Callitriche obtusangula*) and Marsh Pennywort (*Hydrocotyle vulgaris*). Possible threats to the site's species composition and diversity, as well as the growth of the rare Golden Dock, are drainage of the marsh to create improved agricultural grassland and either overgrazing or undergrazing by stock. Cattle would be the more beneficial grazing stock for the survival of the Golden Dock because of the poached areas they create which may then be colonised by the Dock.

This site contains a healthy, reproductive population of the rare Golden Dock; in this small area over 300 individual plants were found, both on immature and fainting stages of development. The marsh also contains a diversity of other wetland species and so the site is recommended for conservation and inclusion as an NHA.

13.11.2009