SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: LOUGH MACASK

SITE CODE: 001914

Lough Macask is a small pond north-west of Kilkenny that fluctuates in size over the year. It is isolated from the underlying limestone by glacial till with a shale content from the Slieve Ardagh Hills. The substrate is generally mineral without much content of peat, except, perhaps in the centre.

The permanently flooded part contains plant species such as Broad-leaved Pondweed (*Potamogeton natans*), Water-plantain (*Alisma plantago-aquatica*) and Common Water-crowfoot (*Ranunculus aquatilis*) with the floating duckweeds, *Lemna minor*, *L. trisulca* and *Spirodela polyrhiza*. Towards the edge, Branched Bur-reed (*Sparganium erectum*) is important, leading into a zone of Floating Sweet-grass (*Glyceria fluitans*), Lesser Spearwort (*Ranunculus flammula*), Pink Water-speedwell (*Veronica catenata*), mints (*Mentha aquatica* and *M. arvensis*) and forget-me-nots (*Myostis scorpioides* and *M. laxa*). The surroundings of the pond are grazed and poached when the water levels are high. Silverweed (*Potentilla anserina*), Amphibious Bistort (*Persicaria amphibia*), Marsh Foxtail (*Alopecurus geniculatus*) and Marsh Ragwort (*Senecio aquaticus*) characterise this area.

The vegetation shows that the site is similar in some ways to a turlough. It therefore differs from most other wetlands around Kilkenny and has a certain interest for this reason. In addition it contains Greater Duckweed (*Spirodela polyrhiza*) which is not found elsewhere in the county.

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