SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: LOUGH GOWNA

SITE CODE: 000992

Lough Gowna is located 10km north-west of Granard on the River Erne. It is a medium sized lake divided into two main sections by a narrow channel at Dernaferst Bridge. The substrate is Silurian grits and slates and it is situated in a drumlin filled basin with many bays and inlets. Nearby Sean Lough is of similar habitat and included in the site. The site was not visited recently.

In 1975 An Foras Forbartha described the lake as having a relatively low base status with a pH of 7.5 and this is indicated by the presence of two plants, Water Lobelia (*Lobelia dartmanna*) and Quillwort (*Isoetes lacustris*), which have an oligotrophic habit. A stonewort of limited distribution, *Nitella flexilis*, is also present. Common plankton organisms present include diatoms (*Asterionella* spp.), blue-green algae (*Anabaena* spp., *Coelosphaerium* spp.) and crustaceans (*Daphnia* spp., *Diaptomus* spp.).

Peat bog occurs along the shore in the north and east where the unusual Lesser Bulrush (*Typha angustifolia*) occurs along with the unusual upland Lemon-scented Fern (*Oreopteris limbosperma*). Elsewhere the shores are stony being either flat or sloping. A woodland fringe is present in places with willow (*Salix* spp.), alder (*Alnus* spp.), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and Holly (*Ilex aquilifolium*). Some scattered oak (*Quercus* spp.) occurs and the ground flora includes Common Cow-wheat (*Melampryum pratense*), Hand Fern (*Blechnum spicant*) and Hay-scented Buckler-fern (*Dryopteris aemula*).

This is an important site for wintering waterfowl with nationally important populations of Great Grebe (51) along with Whooper Swan (29) and Golden Plover (65), species listed in Annex I of the EU Birds Directive (Counts 1988). Several other species are also present.

Nutrient inflow is leading to eutrophication and is a threat to the oligotrophic communities. Algal blooms are quite common resulting in fish kills – in this important coarse fishing area this is a serious threat.

With its importance for wintering waterfowl and the presence of interesting oligotrophic plant communities which are scarce in the midlands, this site has high scientific interest.

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