SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: FEACLE TURLOUGH

SITE CODE: 001634

Feacle Turlough lies approximately 12km west of Athlone in an uneven terrain of glacial deposits. The basin, which runs roughly east - west, but whose edges are sinuous because of encroaching mounds, has an uneven floor with a number of discrete hollows. Outcrop is visible at the western end - elsewhere there is some loose rock. A permanent pond occurs at the north-western end, but there is no apparent inflow.

Patterns of vegetation at this site are extremely simple; all the lower hollows have Amphibious Bistort (*Persicaria amphibia*), along with Marsh Foxtail (*Alopecurus geniculatus*) and Reed Canary-grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*). Above this, Common Sedge (*Carex nigra*) and Creeping Cinquefoil (*Potentilla reptans*) occupy the western section and areas of drier grassland on the eastern side. This spreads onto the esker in the southern section, where there is compact zonation.

The hedges at the western end have a high proportion of Buckthorn (*Rhamnus catharticus*).

A pond by the roadside is covered in a dense mat of Willow Feather-moss (*Amblystegium varium*), and by Common Duckweed (*Lemna minor*), Fat Duckweed (*L. gibba*) and Spiked Water-milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*), with Common Cudweed (*Filago vulgaris*) around the edges.

The Red Data Book species, Northern Yellow-cress (*Rorippa islandica*) is found around the edges of the pond and is occasional throughout the site.

The turlough is largely grazed by sheep and some cattle.

The value of this turlough is that it is at the dry end of the wetness gradient, but seems to be unaffected by any artificial drainage. It is also unusual, it being surrounded by gravelly deposits which may affect its hydrology. Its vegetation is limited in type, but the zonation on the surrounding glacial hills is of interest. The occurrence of Fat Duckweed and Northern Yellow-cress adds to the importance of the site.

24.11.2009