SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: WOODVILLE WOODS

SITE CODE: 000927

Woodville Woods proposed Natural Heritage Area (NHA) comprises a substantial estate woodland and peripheral lake/wetland in Co. Offaly, about 3km north of Birr, between the N52 and the L115 roads.

The main portion of the centre of the wood is oak (*Quercus* spp.), mainly mature, up to 20m tall, and is Ivy (*Hedera helix*) covered. There are large stands of Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) to the north and east. There are local patches of conifers throughout, and Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) is also present. Ground cover consists largely of Ivy, Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) and Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) with abundant Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*). In places Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*) has become well established.

To the east of the woodland a small accreted lake has been included, this is now colonised mainly by Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*), Common Club-rush (*Schoenoplectus lacustris*), Water Horsetail (*Equisetum fluviatile*), Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*) and a variety of other wetland species, and can harbour considerable numbers of Snipe.

A herd of Fallow deer inhabit the wood. Notable native mammals recently recorded include; Pine Marten, Red Squirrel and Badger.

Large stands of native deciduous trees are rare in Ireland – in its location this site is outstanding.

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