SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: CRANBERRY LOUGH

SITE CODE: 001630

Cranberry Lough is a unique and botanically rich lake occupying a low-lying area within a raised bog near Ballydangan, County Roscommon. The eastern side of the lake is formed by the dry margins of the bog which is colonised mainly by Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*). The western side of the site is bounded by a mature conifer plantation. In between the lake and forestry, an extensive area of reed-beds has developed adjacent to the raised bog which on the western side is colonised by tall willow (*Salix* spp.) scrub.

The dense swards of emergent vegetation in the reed-beds are comprised of Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*), Great Fen-sedge (*Cladium mariscus*), Bottle Sedge (*Carex rostrata*) and Lesser Tussock-sedge (*Carex diandra*). The open water is colonised by floating plants such as the Yellow Water-lily (*Nuphar lutea*) and Common Duckweed (*Lemna minor*).

A 'scraw' or floating mat of vegetation separates the lake in two parts. It is based on Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*) and the colourful Marsh Cinquefoil (*Potentilla palustris*) and supports an abundance of *Spaghnum* and other mosses. Where more acidic conditions prevail, Bog-myrtle (*Myrica gale*), Round-leaved Sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*) and Cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccus*) occur with sedges such Bog-sedge (*Carex limosa*) and Dioecious Sedge (*Carex dioica*). In other areas of the scraw, more herb rich communities occur. These areas are comprised of an unusual abundance of Ragged-Robin (*Lychnis flos-cuculi*) and other flowering herbs such as Wild Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*), Marsh-marigold (*Caltha palustris*), Marsh Lousewort (*Pedicularis palustris*) and Hoary Willowherb (*Epilobium parviflorum*).

Cranberry Lough is in a very natural, undisturbed location and is quite attractive to wildlife in the area. Nesting bird species recorded include Sedge Warbler, Reed Bunting, Snipe, Curlew, Little Grebe and Moorhen. Whooper Swans have also been observed here in the winter.

24.11.2009