SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: BANDON VALLEY WEST OF BANDON

SITE CODE: 001034

The Bandon River flows almost due east for much of its course, following a natural synclinal valley that itself extends to Cloyne in East Cork. At Inishannon however, the river turns abruptly to the south crossing several ridges before reaching the sea at Kinsale. The interest of the valley lies partly in its aquatic habitats since the river has not been deepened artificially as is so often the case. Four Areas of Scientific Interest are located along the river. This site covers a section of river approximately 3km in length running downstream to within 1km west of Bandon. The Castlebernard Estate woodlands run along sections of the bank here.

The banks of the river have old estate woodlands with mature oak (*Quercus* spp.) and some Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*) and Cherry Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*) invasion is occurring but as yet is not widespread. Felling of woodlands in this area has recently been widespread and hence greater importance can be placed on the remaining areas.

The 1986 An Forbas Forbatha report notes that the upper part of the Bandon River, before it sinks into a narrow gorge at Bandon, floods occasionally in winter and at such times attracts birds such as Lapwing and Curlew as well as Mallard and Teal. Cormorant and Heron fish throughout the course of the river.

The Bandon Valley is reported to have Otters in many places, a species listed on Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive as it is threatened within the EU.

The main land uses within the site are tree felling and clearing. This has much reduced the area of interest in recent years. Fishing is also important in this area.

This site is important as it contains remnants of broadleaved oak woodland. The Bandon Valley is especially valuable for its woodlands and unmodified river bed, a rare enough habitat in a European context.

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