SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: DERRIES WOOD

SITE CODE: 000416

Derries Wood is situated less than 2km south-west of Ballybrittas, adjacent to the main Dublin - Portlaoise Road. Much of the site is disturbed bog habitat, lying in the former flood plain of the nearby River Barrow.

The site mainly consists of a mixed coniferous plantation grading from mature Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) to newly planted Sitka Spruce (*Picea sitchensis*). In more open areas and in more recently planted sections, the native trees of Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*), Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) occur, beneath which Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) and Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*) grow. In parts, for instance Fox Covert at the south-eastern end, mature Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) is found. Also included in the site is Rathdoire Lake with its associated reed-beds, a fen area with tussocks of sedge in a shallow lake (Dease's Bog) and a disused gravel pit.

Derries Wood is of conservation significance, particularly for the presence of populations of several rare insects, most notably *Criorhina ranunculi* (Diptera, Syrphidae) in Beechwood and *Chrysops caecutiens* (Diptera, Tabanidae) on old bog habitat.

The varied array of conifers of different species, ages and quality as well as the native species present add to the interest of this site. Stands of mature Beech support a rich diversity of insects. In addition, the lake, fen areas and disused gravel pit, as well as small sections of bog, result in a diversity of habitats on the site. These serve as refuges for a variety of threatened animals and birds, including Sika Deer, Pine Marten, Mute Swan and various duck species.

6.11.2009