Site Name: Lisduff Turlough SAC

Site Code: 000609

Lisduff Turlough is located just south of Athleague in Co. Roscommon, about 3 km from the River Suck. It lies in a shallow basin among low hills of glacial drift, with occasional rock outcrops. There is a semi-permanent over-ground inflow from the north-west arm of the turlough and the site is relatively wet. Some pools persist into the summer months and have a good development of fen peat. The ground water is highly calcareous and there is precipitation of marl.

The site is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) selected for the following habitats and/or species listed on Annex I / II of the E.U. Habitats Directive (* = priority; numbers in brackets are Natura 2000 codes):

| [3180] Turloughs* |

The vegetation of Lisduff turlough reflects the oligotrophic and strongly calcareous groundwater chemistry of the area. It is dominated by sedges (Carex spp.), except in the hollows that occur in a line on the eastern edge, where Amphibious Bistort (Polygonum amphibium) is found. The central pools contain Shoreweed (Littorella uniflora), Common Sedge (Carex nigra), Bulbous Rush (Juncus bulbosus) and the moss, Scorpidium scorpioides, and at their edges give way to Common Sedge, Carnation Sedge (Carex panicea) and Jointed Rush (Juncus articulatus), with some Purple Moor-grass (Molinia caerulea) and Common Spike-rush (Eleocharis palustris). At the highest edges of the turlough, the vegetation grades to sedge heath, with scattered clumps of Black Bog-rush (Schoenus nigricans), Heath-grass (Danthonia decumbens) and Sea Plantain (Plantago maritima). Grassland dominated by Tall Fescue (Festuca arundinacea) is present at the southern end and the north-west corner, while patches of calcareous grassland occur around outcropping rock in the north-east.

The site is of ornithological importance for its waders and wintering wildfowl: Wigeon (310), Teal (97), Mallard (67), Pintail (5), Pochard (119), Golden Plover (143), Lapwing (250) and Curlew (70). The above figures are the average of 5 counts made over 3 seasons, 1984/85-1986/87. Bewick’s Swan and Snipe also occur regularly at the site. Snipe, Redshank (1 pair) and Dunlin (1-5 pairs) nest at the site. Dunlin, Pintail, Pochard and Golden Plover are listed in the Red Data Book, the latter species and Bewick’s Swan also on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive.

The site is little-modified by grazing or drainage, and there is little human influence on the site at present.
Lisduff Turlough has a good zonation of oligotrophic vegetation types, including some communities that are rare in turloughs. It is of high ecological value as one of the few turloughs in near-pristine condition. The birdlife of the site adds significantly to its importance.