SITE SYNOPSIS

Site Name: Ballyvaughan Turlough SAC

Site Code: 000996

This site consists of a small, rather dry turlough and is situated about 1.5 km south-west of Ballyvaughan in Co. Clare.

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 the turlough floor is dominated by shrubby species. Shrubby Cinquefoil (*Potentilla fruticosa*) is abundant, with most of the plants reaching up to 1 m. This species is rare and is listed in the Irish Red Data Book. Other shrubs found include Buckthorn (*Rhamnus catharticus*) and Guelder-rose (*Viburnum opulus*). Herbaceous plants are also common, including species such as Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), Glaucous Sedge (*Carex flacca*), Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), plantains (*Plantago* spp.), buttercups (*Ranunculus* spp.) and Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*).

The turlough is partly surrounded by Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) scrub, with some Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) also found. This scrub grades into small patches of woodland in places, and here Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*) and Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) occur as understorey species.

Small areas of limestone pavement and grassland occur between the Hazel scrub and the turlough, and these support a typical flora, which includes Common Spotted-orchid (*Dactylorhiza fuchsii*), Common Birds-foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Quaking-grass (*Briza media*), Wood Sage (*Teucrium scorodonia*) and Burnet Rose (*Rosa pimpinellifolia*).

The site is relatively undisturbed with few signs of grazing or attempts at agricultural improvement.

The site is important for the occurrence of Shrubby Cinquefoil in abundance. For its small size, the site has a high diversity of plant species. Turloughs are threatened habitats which are listed, with priority status, on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive and, as such, are of considerable conservation significance.