

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: LOUGH KINALE AND DERRAGH LOUGH SPA

SITE CODE: 0004061

Lough Kinale is a relatively small lake that is situated immediately downstream of Lough Sheelin, both lakes being near the top of the catchment of the Inny River, a main tributary of the River Shannon. Derragh Lough, a much smaller system, is connected to Lough Kinale and the Inny River. The site is located on the border of Cos Cavan, Longford and Westmeath. This is a typical limestone system and is very shallow (maximum depth of Lough Kinale is c. 4 m). As with Lough Sheelin, the trophic status of the lake has varied greatly since the 1970s due to pollution. It was recently (1998-2000) classified as a highly eutrophic system. The lake was formerly an important Trout fishery.

The site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, of special conservation interest for the following species: Pochard and Tufted Duck. The E.U. Birds Directive pays particular attention to wetlands and, as these form part of this SPA, the site and its associated waterbirds are of special conservation interest for Wetland & Waterbirds.

Lough Kinale has two main basins, almost separated by swamp formations. Reed swamp is frequent around the lakes, with Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) and Tufted-sedge (*Carex elata*) occurring commonly. A calcium-rich small sedge marsh occurs along parts of the shoreline. This is characterised by species such as Long-stalked Yellow-sedge (*Carex lepidocarpa*), Marsh Pimpernel (*Anagallis tenella*), Knotted Pearlwort (*Sagina nodosa*), Marsh Pennywort (*Hydrocotyle vulgaris*) and Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*). Areas of bog occur around the margins of the lakes in places, some having been planted with conifers.

White-clawed Crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*), a species that is listed on Annex II of the E.U. Habitats Directive, has been recorded (2009) from the waterway linking Lough Kinale and Derragh Lough.

Lough Kinale and Derragh Lough is an important site for wintering waterfowl, especially diving duck. It supports nationally important populations of two species, i.e. Pochard (951) and Tufted Duck (449) – all figures are average peaks for the 5 seasons 1995/96-1999/2000. A large population of Mute Swan (120) also uses the site. Coot (199), whilst still occurring in substantial numbers, formerly had a population of national importance. A number of other species are found, in relatively low numbers, including Great Crested Grebe (25), Mallard (130) and Goldeneye (22). Marginal grassland areas outside of the site attract feeding wildfowl and waders such as Lapwing and Golden Plover.

Lough Kinale and Derragh Lough SPA, whilst relatively small in area, is of conservation significance for holding nationally important populations of two species, Pochard and Tufted Duck.

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