

Main Line km H - 131

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ECOLOGICAL SURVEY

OF THE

GRAND CANAL

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Part 3: Baseline vegetation maps in 1km Sections. 1991

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MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 To give nature conservation equal priority with other criteria in the maintenance and development of the canal network.
- 1.2 To maintain the habitat diversity of the canal system, and to increase it where possible.
- 1.3 To maximise diversity by varying management practices along the canal system.
- 1.4 To allow flexibility in management to take into account the variability of nature.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT

2.1 <u>MAINTENANCE</u>

2.1.1 <u>General</u>

. Because of the conservation value of the canals a full-time ecologist should be employed by the Waterways Section.

2.1.2 Dredging

<u>General</u>

. The channel should only be dredged in short sections (of not more than 5km) to allow recolonisation from adjacent lengths.

. Bydraulic machinery should be used where possible as it is more selective and flexible than drag-line dredgers.

. Where possible the spoil should be pulled into the side, and not removed from the channel.

. Dredging should be minimised during the months March to July to avoid the main growing season and to reduce disturbance to nesting birds.

. Natural revegetation of dredging spoil should be monitored annually to decide the best form of management.

Protection of reed fringe

. Dredging should be carried out from one bank only leaving a wide band of marginal vegetation on the offside.

. In sections where the only surviving reedbeds are on the towpath side of the canal the floating dredger should be used to avoid damaging the marginal vegetation.

. Where no reed fringe exists submerged berms should be

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created along the bank to facilitate the growth of shallow-water marginal vegetation outside the navigation area.

. Create artificial islands in a number of the canal harbours as nest sites for mute swans and other breeding waterfowl. (The island in Maynooth Harbour on the Royal Canal provides a successful model).

Spoil deposition

. Spoil should not be dumped on wetlands such as fens and raised bogs or on unimproved grasslands along the canal bank as these are the richest sites botanically.

. Spoil may be dumped in a trench dug between the towpath and the boundary. This should then be recovered with topsoil and allowed to revegetate naturally.

. Alternatively spoil may be dumped between the towpath and the boundary and topsoil spread thinly over this.

. If there are no other suitable places close to the canal bank spoil could be spread thinly in scrub.

Control of plant growth on spoil heaps

. In areas destined to become grassland the early colonising plants should be mowed at least twice in the first year and the cuttings removed. In subsequent years a single late summer mowing should be sufficient.

. In areas where scrub is desirable no management is necessary.

2.1.3 Repair work

Bank protection

. Natural materials or vegetation should be used in bank protection wherever possible instead of sheet piling.

. Where clay is used to build up the banks it should be covered with topsoil or peat from the same site and allowed to revegate naturally.

2.1.4 <u>Towpath revegetation</u>

. Towpaths should not be reseeded after clearance and should be allowed to revegetate naturally.

2.1.5 <u>Bankside trees</u>

Tripping

. Tree-cutting should be avoided during the months of March to July to reduce disturbance to nesting birds and damage to plants during the main growing season.

. Removal of overhanging branches should be confined to those which overhang the canal and catch floating debris or obstruct navigation.

. Pollarding is a suitable management method for Willows. Young growth is trimmed off each year at a height of 2m from the ground producing a solid stem and a crown of young growth.

. Coppicing is suitable for management of shrubs or young Hazel, Willow or Alder trees where access for machinery is necessary. Trunks are cut close to the ground using a slanting cut which sheds rainwater. Branches regenerate from the base or stool.

Selective removal of trees

. Removal of trees should be confined to the winter months to minimise disruption of plant communities and disturbance to nesting birds.

. Priority should be given to removal of exotic or introduced species such as conifers or Sycamore. Native species such as Alder, Willow, Ash etc. should be retained where possible.

. Cut stumps may need to be spot-treated with herbicide to prevent re-growth where trees or shrubs are to be removed from the system altogether.

2.1.6 <u>Scrub</u>

. Scrub clearance should not be carried out as a matter of course, but only when necessary for maintenance purposes.

. Clearance of scrub should be avoided during the months of March to July to reduce disturbance to nesting birds.

. Scrub should not be cleared from both banks at the same time. Instead the vegetation on the first bank should be allowed to stabilise before any work is carried out on the second bank.

2.1.7 <u>Hedgerows</u>

Management methods

. Hedgerows should be trimmed in short lengths on a two to three year rotation.

. Trimming should be carried out in the months October to February to avoid damage to growing shrubs and disturbance of nesting birds.

. Hedgerow trees should be protected from damage during trimming and some young saplings should be allowed to grow to maturity.

Replanting

. Preference should be given in replanting programmes to the use of native tree and shrub species such as those which grow naturally in the surrounding countryside.

. Planting of shrub and tree species should be done in autumn or spring, but not during severe frosts.

2.1.8 Grassland

Grazing

. Grazing of individual sites either by sheep or cattle should be consistent from year to year.

. Boundary fencing should be repaired where necessary to control stock.

. Stocking rates should be lower than the average on agricultural land to avoid damage to canal banks and poaching of towpath soils.

. Fencing should be erected along the water's edge where banks are gently sloping to prevent poaching of bank structure.

Mowing

. Mowing can also be used to maintain grassland on the towpath and verges. Species-rich grasslands should be mown once per year in late July or August when the main flowering season is over.

. A footpath 1m wide can be cut through the grassland twice a year (May/June and August/September) if necessary, to provide pedestrian access.

. All hay or other cut vegetation should be removed from the towpath to maintain the low nutrient status of the grassland.

. Plant species colonising bare ground after disturbance of the towpath may need to be controlled by more frequent mowing during the first 2 to 3 years.

Berbicides

. In general, herbicides should not be used as these may damage non-target grassland species. Spot treatment of woody plants may be used as necessary.

2.1.9 <u>Wetlands</u>

. Grazing in such areas should be limited to light stocking to allow full flowering of the wetland species and to avoid poaching.

. Where grazing is not feasible and scrub development is undesirable, these wetland areas will have to be cut once a year

(August), possibly by hand.

2.1.10 Aquatic vegetation

Environmental control

. Water depth should be managed to limit the growth of aquatic vegetation in the navigation channel.

. Boat traffic during the summer months can be used to keep the navigation channel clear of plant growth.

. Reducing to the minimum the input of plant nutrients by controlling all possible sources of pollution will help to control the spread of invasive plant species.

Mechanical cutting

. Cutting should be carried out twice per year (once in early summer and once in late summer) using a boat-mounted cutter.

. Cutting should be limited to the central navigation channel leaving marginal vegetation fringes as intact as possible.

. Cuttings should be disposed of away from the canal or should be composted and used elsewhere.

Herbicides

. Herbicides should only be used where all other methods of controlling plant growth have been tried and have failed.

. Herbicides must be used early in the growing season, as the decomposition of a large amount of vegetation in the channel could result in serious decxygenation of the water.

. Herbicides must not be used on stretches of the canal that support protected plant or animal species, or in those areas which have been identified as containing a high diversity of aquatic plants.

Biological control

• The introduction of herbivorous fish such as grass carp (<u>Ctenopharvngodon idella</u>) should not be considered because of potential impacts on aquatic ecosystem.

If the barley straw experiment at Abbeyshrule on the Royal Canal proves successful, the same method should be used to control algae at other sites on the canal system.

2.1.11 Masonry

. The vegetation growing on stone-walls and similar structures adds to the diversity of the system, and should not be removed as a matter of course but only when necessary for maintenance purposes.

. Use only mechanical methods to clean and maintain stonework. Herbicides should not be used as they may enter the water and have damaging effects on aquatic plants.

2.1.12 <u>Water quality</u>

. All direct discharges other than feeder streams should be eliminated and the water quality of the streams themselves should be monitored to ensure early detection of pollution sources.

2.2 RECREATIONAL MANAGEMENT

2.2.1 <u>Boat traffic</u>

. Speed limitations should be strictly enforced for all boat traffic to prevent damage to canal banks from wash.

. Boat design also affects the force of the wash - highpowered boats designed for cruising on rivers and lakes should be discouraged from using still-water canals.

. Regulations regarding permits and mooring must be strictly enforced to prevent ecological damage at sites where large numbers of boats are found in a small area.

. Disposal of effluent from boats into the canal should be prohibited to ensure continued high water quality.

2.2.2 Angling

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. Re-stocking should be limited to the species of fish already found in the canal to avoid any imbalance in the predator-prey relationships which might affect invertebrate populations.

. Areas of the canal known to be important for breeding and overwintering wildfowl (especially swans) should not be developed for coarse angling due to the risk of contamination with discarded lead weights. Alternatively the use of lead weights along the canal should be banned.

. Herbicide spraying as a fisheries management method should be discontinued.

. Limits should be placed on the interference with bank vegetation to facilitate anglers.

. Angling may need to be restricted in certain ecologically sensitive areas or at certain times of year to avoid disturbance to birds.

METHODS AND DEFINITIONS

The canal was surveyed in 1 km stretches according to the method devised by the BWB (Tandy, 1989) based on techniques developed by the Nature Conservancy Council (NCC, 1985). 1:2500 base maps were used, and expanded laterally to allow the canal corridor to -be mapped in greater detail. The definition and symbols used in the maps are given below.

Canal Corridor

The zones within the boundary structures. i.e. channel

verges towpath cuttings embankments boundaries

(The term 'canal corridor' is used in BWB literature to mean the canal property plus a zone 50 metres wide on either side of it. Although the adjacent land-use was noted it was not possible, given the limitations of the survey, to do a detailed study of the corridor as defined by the BWB and the more restricted definition was used).

Bank verge (bkv)

The strip of land between the tow-path and the channel.

Boundary verge (bdv) The strip of land between the tow-path and the boundary.

Nearside (ns)

The bank of the canal which carries the towpath,

Offside (ofs) The bank opposite the towpath side.

Boundary (bd)

Hedgerow (hg) Fence (fc) Wall Ditch Stream/drain SLOPE The direction of a slope is indicated by an open-headed arrow bottom of slope top of slope

Embankment:

Cutting:







CHANNEL FEATURES

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Bridge: Road, accommodation or foot-bridge Locks: Locks: Inflow: Poaching/ Trampled margins: bank channel

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VEGETATION

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Channel Vegetation



Emergents in channel

Floating-leaved vegetation

Emergent marginal fringe

Fringe transitional between channel and bank

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hrag . ros
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Terrestrial Vegetation:

Dense open cover Flora dominated by herbs and grasses

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Sparse open cover 25% of the area is unvegetated - usually indicates recent levelling or dredging.

/////// Dense scrub

Sparse scrub - offers little resistance to penetration, or small patches of dense scrub.

Reeds, sedges

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Woodland

Trees and Shrubs:

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tr	tree < 5m tall
TR	tree > 5m tall
TR	tree with well-developed canopy
al/AL	Alder
as/AS	Ash
be/BE	Beech
bi/BI	Birch
br	Bramble
el/EL	Elder
hw/HW	Hawthorn
hz/HZ	Hazel
hc/HC	Horse Chestnut
ok/0K	Oak
pn/PN	Pine
po/PO	Poplar
ro/RO	Rowan
sy/SY	Sycamore
wl/WL	Willow

Shading:

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Heavy shade

Light shade

(Length of arrow indicates area influenced by shading)

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LIST OF MAPS

		MAP NO.
The	Grand Canal: Circular Line	H - 6
The	Grand Canal: Mainline	6 - 131
	Locks 1 and 2	6
	Lock 3	7
	Locks 4 and 5	8
	New Bridge	8.
	Locke 6 and 7	ģ
	Ballyfermot Bridge	9
	Jock 9	10
	LUCK 0 New Dridge (MEA)	10
	New Diluge (MSV) Glandalkin Bridge	10
	Ciondalkin Bridge	10
		10
	LOCK 11	13
	Lucan Bridge and Lock 12	10
	Gollierstown	17
	Hazelhatch	20
	Aylmer's Bridge	22
	Lock 13	23
	Henry Bridge	24
	Ponsonby Bridge	27
	Devonshire Bridge and Lock 14	29
	Lock 15	30
	Sallins	33
	Leinster Agueduct	35
	Digby Bridge and Lock 16	37
	Landestown Bridge and Lock 17	38
	Lock 18	39
	Cock/Burgh Bridge	41
	Bonunge/Healy Bridge	42
	Binn/a Bridge (Bobertstown)	45
	Josh 10 (Isutern)	45
	LOCK 19 (LOWLOWII)	40
	Bond Bridge Chas (See Pridee	40
		47
	Hamilton Bridge	53
	Hartley Bridge (Ticknevin)	20
	LOCK 20	57
	Blundell Aqueduct	62
	Colgan and George's Bridges	64
	Rathmore Bridge	65
	Cartland Bridge	67
	Trimblestown Bridge	69
	Rhode Bridge	73
	Toberdaly Bridge	74
	Killeen Bridge	79
	Nolesworth Bridge (Daingean)	81
	Chevenix Bridge (Ballycommon)	87
	Lock 31	97
	Looko 33 and 33	90
	Luurð 12 allu 23 Took 34	07
	LUUR 29 Commingum/Dight Duides and Task A	72 E 03
	Lappincur/Digby Bridge and LOCK 2	J 73
	LOCK 20	94
	Tullamore Harbour	95

Kilbeggan Bridge	95
Cox's Bridge and Locks 27 and 28	96
Shra Bridge	98
Lock 29 and Ballycowan Bridge	100
Corcoran's Bridge	104
Becan's Bridge	105
Henesy's Bridge	106
Lock 30	107
Lock 31	108
Plunkett Bridge	111
Derry Bridge	116
Macartney Aqueduct	118
Gallen/Armstrong Bridge	121
Noggus Bridge	122
Lock 32 and Glvn Bridge	123
Lock 33 and Belmont Bridge	125
L'Estrange Bridge	128
Lock 34 and Clononev Bridge	129
Griffith Bridge	130
Locks 35 and 36 and Shannon Harbour	131
Barrow Line:	
Locke 20 and 21	B4
Lock 22 and Clenarce Bridge	RQ
Dock 22 and Gienalee Blidge Dethengen Bridge	B13
Lock 22 and Grencer Bridge	B14
Wilson Bridge	B16
Milson Blidge Mmerag Bridge	B18
Lock 24 and Macartney Bridge	B21
Monagterevan and Lock 25	$B_{24}/25$
Clocheen Bridge	B25
Fisherstown Bridge	B30
Courtwood Bridge	B31
Vicarctown	B35
Camac Acueduct and Rallymanus Bridge	B37
Willtown Bridge	B41
Lock 26. Cardington and Lennon's Bridges	B45
Locks 27 and 28 and Augustus Bridge	B46
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Naas Branch:	
Locks 1 and 2	N1
Lock 3	N2
Tandy's Bridge and locks 4 and 5	N3
Naas Harbour and Ploopluck Bridge	N4
Jigginstown Bridge	N5
Limerick Bridge	N6
Connaught Bridge	N7
Hoare's Bridge	N10
Mooney's Bridge	N11
Corbally Harbour	N12

Milltom Poodon.	MAP NO.
Littletown Bridge	
Ruband Dridge	M2
Rubano briage	M3
	M5
Pluckerstown Bridge	M7
Milltown Bridge	M11
Fen	M13
Edenderry Branch:	
Downshire Bridge	P 1
Edenderry Harbour	
	52
Kilbeggan Branch:	
Campbell and Brook's Bridges	K1
Odlum's Bridge	K3
Tong's and Wood of O Bridges	K4
Whelan's and Murphy's Bridges	K7
Lowertown Bridge	KQ
Grange Bridge	K 11
Skeahanagh Bridge	
Kilbergan Harbour	RIJ VIA
	K14

km SECTIONS OF THE GRAND CANAL; MAINLINE AND CIRCULAR LINE, kms 1-131.















411 (hannel bKv - 2 in Elodca 2519. Growlandia TP= tarmor por Erte = q 1 sapling 6. no sku soc Nighch. Hzo very clear. . not contributions zannich ellia Ramanculus accinatus broken in prints => Grocked along UKU Eladea. Hipmons ruberis (small churs) Call bricke Hippuris vulga: 13 marichyllum Adum Channel-Joanne crocata (Aliona vegetution yellow dying? why " Willing #- Phalanis arunchmanea. giyæna naxima. Malland Ecosian of 6kv + rubbish dumping white gunge an H20 sturface g cub. # . both sides Plwag Away bed at lokin intern fishing? BKV-cut.








































1-850 haw stop Phraguetes. 2 wet- we -Irisda Willow . 2 290 E $I\!\!R$ Phragmites with (sual) inch C.auferfl. old open hi Phragmiles uet 1-700 haw an slope, saluesp on TP quet (lus) at the (acc, sam). Phragmites. Phal / C. acutif bk v C. acutif K opached . thragmits Myosotis Callitriche Nisturtum fast - Ploning les dom. Phalaris . hg-haw Fc . Ho murky .____ Channel - (Phalans - C. acutifler line of Salix. glycevia no hg Filip Aprium Willow Linestate bk S Briza Som S Primp sax Heracleum Sparganum er. Northerrow Sty - Flow entra l Iris.

atout the from Bridge Alamageton lucers: emst of sank Myrichyllum. beside Stream Calcus Legiton Stark vege embruted Balt . fuchi : +300 Scrab. who feas behind Thoronfors Mrm. mil /alc halans med Polygala Look look channel: S Washinha Wet in hollow pupulter. لمعا jal. verun ple. lapte W-Guera mal -glycern Mentu at totus torm ng-old gaps No FC bol = drain. pogening at drain Some damage to 690 Ashrium Embarkmant of Catto. *vet* bkr, (halaris Tinfler X hg Phalouns, Glycera + Nashing Phalaris On TP Crategus. tp, 6kr, boly - dom Alitica wante ngoin 2 and 45 Ę overgrown Du **F.**ø Gravel dunping the Urhea alless re. unsurfaced ite Heartenn old, broken tarmac Gal. don kr / Tall gass Gat Cul <u>'</u>K 14 lris Eale LIC jacess hand. Arhan elast feeder cut. (hamet-C Alesana. yanto Nashutun operesso halfc. Elodea At lucens. Urbia dioria Galum operite. KILLE












































































































































































































