

## Appendix 6.7 Site Synopses of Designated Areas Adjacent to the Proposed Road Development

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**SITE NAME: KILCOLMAN BOG SPA****SITE CODE: 004095**

Kilcolman Bog is situated on the southern foothills of the Ballyhoura Mountains in Co. Cork. It occupies a glacially eroded hollow in Carboniferous limestone. The site comprises a quaking fen fed by calcareous groundwater, with areas of reed swamp, freshwater marsh and wet grassland. The reed swamp is made up of Bottle Sedge (*Carex rostrata*) and Water Horsetail (*Equisetum fluviatile*) with some Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*). This grades into stands of Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*) and Marsh Cinquefoil (*Potentilla palustris*) with many associated species including Ragged-Robin (*Lychnis flos-cuculi*), Marsh Willowherb (*Epilobium palustre*) and Greater Spearwort (*Ranunculus lingua*). There is a small permanent lake but in winter a large flooded area is usual. The surrounding land use is mostly intensive agriculture.

Kilcolman Bog is an important site for wintering waterfowl, with nationally important populations of Whooper Swan (136), Teal (1,060) and Shoveler (201) - figures are average peaks for 5 year period 1995/96-1999/00. The Shoveler population is of particular note as it comprises over 6% of the national total. Other species with important populations include Wigeon (850), Pochard (52), Tufted Duck (38), Coot (146), Lapwing (1,000) and Golden Plover (194), while Mallard (256), Little Grebe (19) and Pintail (7) also occur. The site formerly supported a small

Greenland Whitefronted Goose population but this has since died out. Gulls are also winter visitors, mainly Black-headed Gull (220) and Lesser Black-backed Gull (131). Breeding birds include Little Grebe, Mute Swan, Coot and, on occasions, Shoveler. A feral Greylag Goose population uses the site. The fluctuating water levels provide an unusual habitat which favours two notable plant species, the locally-occurring Red Goosefoot (*Chenopodium rubrum*) and the rare Red Data Book species Golden Dock (*Rumex maritimus*).

Kilcolman Bog is a privately-owned Nature Reserve that has been managed for conservation since the 1970s. Management includes control of the water levels and supplementary feeding of the waterfowl during hard weather. The bird populations have been intensively monitored since the 1970s. Activities such as drainage or forestry on surrounding lands could affect the viability of the site. The site is of ornithological interest because it supports nationally important numbers of three species. Of particular note is the population of Whooper Swan, a species that is listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive. The site is notable as being one of the few sites in the country where almost daily observations have been made over a long period.

19.8.2004

**SITE NAME: KILCOLMAN BOG pNHA****SITE CODE: 000092**

Kilcolman Bog is situated about 4km north-east of Buttevant on the southern slopes of the Ballyhoura Mountains. The following botanical description of the site is based on the 1986 An Foras Forbartha County Report, although other information in this synopsis comes from more recent surveys. Kilcolman Bog, variously described as a bog, marsh or swamp, has in fact quite an area of open water, at least in winter. Fed by calcareous groundwater, the marsh consists of reedswamp, floating fen and open water. The reedswamp, floating fen and open water. The reedswamp is made up of Bottle Sedge (*Carex rostrata*) and Water Horsetail (*Equisetum fluviatile*) with some Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*). This grades into stands of Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifolium*) and Marsh Cinquefoil (*Potentilla palustris*) with many associated species including Ragged Robin (*Lychnis flos-cuculi*), Marsh Willowherb (*Epilobium palustre*) and Greater Spearwort (*Ranunculus lingua*). The fluctuating water levels provide an unusual habitat which favours two interesting plant species, namely the local Red Goosefoot (*Chenopodium rubrum*) and Golden Dock (*Rumex maritima*), a rare species listed in the Red Data Book. The latter species has only been recorded at four sites since 1970.

Kilcolman Bog is perhaps of primary importance for its wintering waterfowl and is unique in Ireland in that bird counts have been carried out daily for thirty years. The site supports 23 species of waterfowl including nationally important numbers of Teal (683), Mallard (600) and Shoveler (63). Regionally or locally important numbers of

Whooper Swan (90), Greenland White-fronted Goose (30), Wigeon (583), Gadwall (9), Pochard (68), Tufted Duck (20), Coot (36), Golden Plover (50), Lapwing (163) and Curlew (150) also occur - all counts are average peaks for the period 1984/85 - 1986/87.

The site is intensively managed for conservation with an observatory having been built and a sluice gate erected in 1992 to control water levels. In 1993, Kilcolman Bog was declared a National Nature Reserve. The main threats to the site appear to be nearby agricultural improvements and land reclamation. The site is of ornithological interest because it supports nationally important numbers of three species and regionally or locally important numbers of ten others. The fact that the site has been well documented over many years is of additional value. Botanically too, the site is of interest due to the presence of Golden Dock (*Rumex maritima*), a rare Red Data Book species.

19/12/1995

**SITE NAME: EAGLE LOUGH pNHA****SITE CODE: 001049**

Eagle Lough is situated in County Cork, 2km north-east of Buttevant. It is situated in a limestone area, which has a major influence on the site. The lough is a fluctuating lake and thus displays many features of a turlough, the famous 'vanishing lakes' from the limestone country of Counties Clare and Galway. Farmland surrounds the water body, except around the northern edges, where some small deciduous woods occur. Close to the lake shore, Sedges are common - especially Hairy Sedge (*Carex hirta*) - along with Fake Fox-sedge (*C. otrubae*) and Carnation Sedge (*C. panicea*). The southern shore is heavily poached by cattle, but it is within this disturbed microhabitat that the fourth Irish record of Orange Foxtail (*Alopecurus aegajis*) was made in 1992. This species is to be included in the next edition of the Red Data Book of Vascular Plants. A healthy population of some thousands of plants occurs, associate with such other wetland species as Thread-leaved Water-Crowfoot

(*Ranunculus trichophyllus*), Small Sweet-grass (*Glyceria declinata*), Lesser Marshwort (*Apium inundatum*), Redshank (*Polygonum periscana*), Pink Water-spreadwell (*Veronica catenata*) and Shoreweed (*Littorella uniflora*). Cattle grazing is a major land use here, but it is essential for the maintenance of the Orange Foxtail's habitat. The main threat to the site would be from drainage, which should be prevented. Eutrophication does not appear to be a problem, probably because the fluctuating water levels cause a flushing-out of the system, especially in winter. It is believed that Eagle Lough is the only turlough-type lake in Cork, and this fact, along with the presence of rare plants here, makes the site of at least regional importance.

**SITE NAME: ARDAMADANE WOOD pNHA****SITE CODE: 001799**

AUTHOR: RUTH GILBERT

Ardamadane Wood is located north of Blarney village, 6km north-west of Cork City. It is situated along the banks of the River Martin. The site is bounded in parts by the river, the old Blarney-Mallow road and on the eastern side by an embankment and the new Cork road. This site comprises mainly dry deciduous woodland of Oak (*Quercus petraea*) and Birch (*Betula pubescens*) with some scrub woodland and improved agricultural grassland. Threats to this particular site include eutrophication of the river from fertilizer run off and litter/domestic rubbish dumping in the woodland adjacent to roads. The following description is compiled from the An Foras Forbatha (1972) report for 3 sites around Blarney - Ardamadane Woods (1799) north of the village and 2 sites to the south - Blarney Castle Woods (1039) and Blarney Lake (1798). Together they encompass some 53 ha. The woodland at Blarney has a rich soil due to the influence of the nearby limestone and is able to support a wide variety of plants and animals. Blarney Castle Woods comprises an old estate woodland with Oak, Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*). Ardamadane Woods consists of a patch of scrub with Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and Ash and a linear Oak and Birch Wood stretching northwards along the R. Martin towards Waterloo (the river is also included in this site). The Blarney lake site includes the artificial lake near the Castle.

The base-rich woodland of Blarney Castle Wood is probably the most interesting site botanically, with a species-rich groundflora. Species include Pignut (*Conopodium majus*), Sanicle (*Sanicula europaea*), Garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*), Goldilocks buttercup (*Ranunculus auricomus*) and the Violets - Common dog-violet (*Viola tiniviana*) and Early dog-violet (*V. reichenbachiana*). The two parasitic species - Ivy broomrape (*Orbanche hederaceae*) and Toothwort (*Lathraea squamaria*) are found occasionally, usually in places with deeper soils, while the rocky areas support the growth of wood melic (*Melica uniflora*) and Bearded Couch (*Elymus caninus*). The flora of Ardamadane Wood is not as species-rich and includes species of more acid conditions such as Great

Wood-rush (*Luzula sylvatica*). The three sites are of some importance to birds with Woodcock using the area in winter and a variety of species breeding in the area. Near the river and lake the aquatic communities include beds of sedges (e.g. Greater pond-sedge (*Carex riparia*), Bladder-sedge (*C. vesicaria*), Smooth-stalked sedge (*C. laevigata*) and Great Fen-sedge (*Cladium mariscus*) and stands of tall herbs such as Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), Great willow herb (*Epilobium hirsutum*) and Hemp-agrimony (*Eupatorium cannabinum*). At the rivers edge are found Nodding bur-marigold (*Bidens annua*), Blue water-speedwell (*Veronica anagallis-aquatica*) and Mints (*Mentha* species).

Threats to the survival of these sites are - coniferous afforestation of the woodland communities and the encroachment of agricultural activity e.g. grazing pressures, clear felling and agricultural improvement. Where possible, management agreements should be made with the landowners. As a whole, the three sites compose a very caved area including interesting aquatic and terrestrial habitats. The base-rich woodland (Blarney Castle Woods) is an example of a type not widely found in Cork County, where acid upland woods are more common. The sites are all easily accessible and close to Cork city, and they could therefore form a useful environmental education resource within the area.

18/12/1995

**SITE NAME: BLARNEY BOG, CO. CORK pNHA****SITE CODE: 001857**

AUTHOR: RUTH GILBERT

Blarney Bog is a small area of Reed grass (*Phalaris anandinnacea*) fen, situated in the flat valley floor of the River Blarney. It is located a half km west of Blarney Town and 4.5 km north west of Cork City. It is bounded on the north side by a new road development and to the south of the river by the fences of the agricultural land abutting the wetland site. This wet area was formed through ponding of the Blarney river by a natural blockage at Gothic bridge to the west of the site (probably a fault in the underlying bedrock). Sediments brought downstream from the Blarney river and its tributaries have accumulated and the soil is a fine silt with some peat. There was greater peat accumulation on the south side of the river (Inchancomain townland) but this has been cut away in the past, the only evidence of this activity remaining at the field edges. The vegetation on the south side is also of a more acidic nature. The area is damp throughout the year and is flooded in the winter particularly at the western side of the site. The main habitats of the area are lowland wet grassland, both grazed and ungrazed and freshwater marsh/fen. The dominant species of the wet grassland are Reed grass (*Phalaris anandinnacea*), Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*) and grasses such as Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), Tufted Hair-grass (*Deschampsia caespitosa*) and Yorkshore Fog (*Holcus lanatus*). Land to the west is generally wetter with herbs such as Greater Tussock-Sedge (*Carex paniculata*), Greater pond-sedge (*Carex riparia*) and Bladdersedge (*C. vesicana*); commonly occurring herbs are Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*) and Common Valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*), locally distributed in the sward are Yellow Loosestrife (*Lysimachia vulgaris*) and Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*). The land nearer the Blarney road is drier with a mixture of grasses and sedges, the ungrazed areas are more tussocky with herbs such as Common Sand (*Rumex acetosa*) and Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*). There is a new road development occurring in the north of the site and soil/subsoil has been bulldozed onto some of this

grassland, there is considerable disturbance to the area (see Ranger Photograph 2). South of the river the land is wetter with scattered Willow Trees (*Salix* species), Purple moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*), Tufted Hair-grass (*Deschampsia caespitosa*) and Soft rush (*Juncus effusus*) dominate the vegetation, the wetter areas supporting the growth of March cinquefoil (*Potentilla palustris*), Bog bean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*), Devil's bil scabious (*Succisa pratensis*) and Common yellow-sedge (*Carex demissa*). Towards Horgan's bridge in the east of the site, is an area dominated by tussocks of Greater tussock-sedge (*Carex paniculata*). The water course flora is not particularly rich but contains Common duckweed (*Lemna minor*), Floating sweetgrass (*Glyceria fluitans*) and Fool's Watercress (*Apium nodiflorum*), less frequently found are Branched and Unbranched bur-reed (*Sparganium erectum* and *S. emersum*) and Pondweeds (*Potamogeton* species). The area as whole is used by a variety of bird species, birds noted to be breeding in the site include: the Sedge and Grasshopper Warblers, Reed Bunting, Stonechab, Meadow Pipet, Snipe and Mallard. In the water Snipe and Mallard are seen feeding in the area and also Teal. Hen Harriers, a species listed in Annex 1 of the EU Bird's Directive and also a Red Data Book species whose status is threatened in Ireland, are regularly seen in this area, hunting over the wetter ground and sometimes nesting in the reed beds. The area is threatened by the road developments to the north of the site, this has disturbed and destroyed some of the grassland and the closer proximity of the traffic may disturb the birds which breed in the area. It may also alter the hydrology of the site.

## SOURCES:

1. Report on lands at Blarney Bog, Co. Clare for Cork County Council by CAAS (Environmental Services) Ltd. R. Goodwillie Sept. 1990
2. Ranger site return 1993.