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| **3333333333333333333**  **APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT**  **SCREENING REPORT** | **APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT**  **SCREENING REPORT AND**  **CONCLUSION STATEMENT** |

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| **(A) Project Details** | | | | | | |
| **Planning File Ref** | | | Part 8 preparation – Monaduff to Ballinamuck | | | |
| **Applicant name** | | | Longford County Council | | | |
| **Development Location** | | | Monaduff to Ballinamuck, Co. Longford. | | | |
| **Site size** | | | 4.3km long trail, 3m wide | | | |
| **Application accompanied by an EIS (Yes/NO)** | | | No | | | |
| **Distance from nearest Natura 2000 site(s) in km** | | | 9.5km | | | |
| **Description of the project/proposed development**  Construction of c4.3km long, approx. 3m wide gravel/crushed limestone path to accommodate both pedestrians and cyclists and all associated ancillary works including fencing and pedestrian bridges. The proposed path will connect the Sports Grounds at Monaduff to the village of Ballinamuck, constructed alongside the R198 and L1017 roads | | | | | | |
| **(B) Identification of Natura 2000 sites which may be impacted by the proposed development** | | | | | | |
|  | | | | | **Yes/No**  **If answer is yes, identify list name of Natura 2000 site likely to be impacted.** | |
| **1** | **Impacts on sites designated for freshwater habitats or species.**  Sites to consider (but not limited to): Lough Ree SAC; Fortwilliam Turlough SAC; Lough Forbes Complex SAC; | | | *Is the development within a Special Area of Conservation whose qualifying interests include freshwater habitats and/or species, or in the catchment (upstream or downstream) of same?* | The project site is not located within a SAC or in the catchment of same. The project site is approximately 9.5km from Lough Forbes Complex SAC, upstream of the SAC. | |
| **2** | **Impacts on sites designated for wetland habitats - bogs, fens, marshes and heath.**  Sites to consider (but not limited to): Ardagullion Bog SAC; Brown Bog SAC; Clooneen Bog SAC; Derragh Bog SAC; Mount Jessop Bog SAC; Lough Ree SAC; Mount Jessop Bog SAC. | | | *Is the development within a Special Area of Conservation whose qualifying interests include wetland habitats (bog, marsh, fen or heath), or within 1 km of same?* | The project site is not located within a SAC or within 1km of same. | |
| **3** | **Impacts on designated terrestrial habitats.**  Sites to consider (but not limited to): Clooneen Bog SAC; Derragh Bog SAC; Lough Forbes Complex SAC; Lough Ree SAC; Mount Jessop Bog SAC. | | | *Is the development within a Special Area of Conservation whose qualifying interests include woodlands, dunes or grasslands, or within 100m of same?* | The project site is not located within an SAC or 100m of same. | |
| **4** | **Impacts on birds in SPAs**  Sites to consider (but not limited to):  Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA; Glen Lough SPA; Lough Kinale and Derragh Lough SPA; Lough Ree SPA | | | *Is the development within a Special Protection Area, or within 5 km of same?* | The project site is not located within a SPA or 5km of same. | |
| **(C) Identification of Potential Impacts on Habitats and Birds** | | | | | | |
| **1** | | **Impacts on designated rivers, streams, lakes and freshwater dependant habitats and species**  **If ‘Yes’ is recorded in answer to question 1 in Table B, please answer the following.**  Does the development involve any of the following: | | | | |
| 1.1 | | Works within the boundary of a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) excluding small extensions/alterations to existing buildings. | | | |  |
| 1.2 | | Discharge to surface water or groundwater within 5km of SAC. | | | |  |
| 1.3 | | Abstraction from surface water or groundwater within 5km of SAC | | | |  |
| 1.4 | | Removal of topsoil within 500m of watercourses. | | | |  |
| 1.5 | | Infilling or raising of ground levels within 100m of watercourses. | | | |  |
| 1.6 | | Construction of drainage ditches within 1km of SAC. | | | |  |
| 1.7 | | Installation of wastewater treatment systems; percolation areas; septic tanks within 500m of watercourses. | | | |  |
| 1.8 | | Construction within a floodplain or within an area liable to flood. | | | |  |
| 1.9 | | Crossing or culverting of rivers or streams within 5km of SAC. | | | |  |
| 1.10 | | Storage of chemicals, hydrocarbons or organic wastes within 1km of a watercourse. | | | |  |
| 1.11 | | Development of a large-scale which involves the production of an EIAR. | | | |  |
| 1.12 | | Development of quarries/mines. | | | |  |
| 1.13 | | Development of windfarms. | | | |  |
| 1.14 | | Development of pumped hydro-electric stations. | | | |  |
| 1.15 | | Construction of roads or other infrastructure on peat habitats within 1km of rivers, streams, lakes and freshwater-dependant habitats. | | | |  |
| **2** | | **Impacts on designated wetlands – bogs, fens, marshes and heath**  **If ‘Yes’ is recorded in answer to question 2 in Table B, please answer the following.**  Does the development involve any of the following: | | | | |
| 2.1 | | Works within the boundary of a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), excluding small extensions/alterations to existing buildings. | | | |  |
| 2.2 | | Construction of roads or other infrastructure on peat habitats within 1km of bog, marsh, fen or heath habitat within a Natura 2000 site. | | | |  |
| 2.3 | | Development of a large scale within 1km of bog, marsh, fen or heath habitat within a Natura 2000 site which involves the production of an EIS. | | | |  |
| **3** | | **Impacts on other designated terrestrial habits (woodland, grasslands)**  **If ‘Yes’ is recorded in answer to question 3 in Table B, please answer the following.**  Does the development involve any of the following: | | | | |
| 3.1 | | Works within the boundary of a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). | | | |  |
| 3.2 | | Development within 200m of Natura 2000 site with woodland, grassland or coastal habitats. | | | |  |
| 3.3 | | Development of a large scale within 1km of Natura 2000 site with woodland, grassland or coastal habitats which involves the production of an EIS. | | | |  |
| **4** | | **Impacts on birds in SPAs**  **If ‘Yes’ is recorded in answer to question 4 in Table B, please answer the following.**  Does the development involve any of the following: | | | | |
| 4.1 | | Works within the boundary of a Special Protection Area (SPA) excluding small extensions/alterations to existing buildings. | | | | |
| 4.2 | | Erection of wind turbines within 5km of a SPA. | | | |  |
| 4.3 | | Proposed discharges directly to SPA. | | | |  |
| 4.4 | | Development of cycleways or walking routes within 100m of SPA. | | | |  |

**Conclusion:**

If the answer to all of the above is **No**, significant impacts on habitats within Natura 2000 sites can be ruled out.

No further assessment is required in relation to habitats.

If the answer is **Yes**, you will require further information, which should be provided in the form of a Natura Impact Statement which should address the particular issues of concern as identified through the above.

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| **Consideration of potential impacts on protected species within SACs** |

Currently, one of our Special Areas of Conservation is designated for species as well as for habitats, namely Lough Ree SAC, which includes habitat for otters *Lutra lutra*. Activities could have an impact on this protect species. Please tick if you are concerned that the proposed development could have an impact on these species.

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| **Species** | **Relevant Site(s)** | **Activities which could have impacts on species** | **Possible Impacts Identified Yes/No** |
| Otter | Lough Ree | Activities that interfere with river banks. | No |

**Conclusion:**

If the answer to all of the above is **No**, significant impacts on species can be ruled out.

If the answer is **Yes**, then further information is likely to be required in relation to potential for impact on that particular species.

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| **(D) Summary of Impacts** | | | | |
| **Natura 2000 Sites within impact zone** | | | Cloneen Bog, Lough Forbes Complex and Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog and located approximately 10km from project site | |
| **Qualifying features of Natura 2000 Site** (attach site synopsis from National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)) | | | See Site Synopsis below | |
| **(E) Assessment of Likely Significant Effects (from Tables above)** | | | | |
| **Describe how the project or plan (alone or in combination) could affect the Natura 2000 site(s).** | | | | |
| From the tables above, it is considered the project (alone or in combination) will not affect the Natura 2000 sites. | | | | |
| **If there are potential impacts, explain whether you consider if these are likely to be significant.** | | | | |
| N/A | | | | |
| **(F) Relevant Advice Received** | | | | |
| **Documentation reviewed for making this statement.** | | | | |
| Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities (2010)  Assessment of Plans and Projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites (2001)  Managing Natura 2000 sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the ‘Habitats’ Directive (2018)  Relevant Site Synposis. | | | | |
| **Persons/Bodies consulted with for the making of this statement.** | | | | |
| Longford County Council Planning Department | | | | |
| **(G) SCREENING CONCLUSION STATEMENT**  *Selected relevant category for project assessed by ticking box.* | | | | |
| **1** | AA is not required because the project is directly connected with/necessary to the conservation management of the site | | |  |
| **2** | No potential significant affects/AA is not required | | | **x** |
| **3** | Significant effects are certain, likely or uncertain.  Seek a Natura Impact Statement  Reject proposal. (Reject if potentially damaging/inappropriate) | | |  |
| **Justify why it falls into relevant category above (based on information in above tables)** | | | | |
| The proposal has no potential significant affects on the Natura 2000 network for the following reasons:   1. The project site is not located within a SAC or in the catchment of same to impact on sites designated for freshwater habitats or species. 2. The project site is not located within a SAC or within 1km of same to impact on sites designated for wetland habitats – bogs, fens, marshes and heath. 3. The project site is not located within an SAC or 100m of same to impact on designated terrestrial habitats. 4. The project site is not located within a SPA or 5km of same to impact on birds in SPAs. | | | | |
| **Name:** | | Lorraine O’Connor | | |
| **Position:** | | Regeneration Officer (Executive Planner) | | |
| **Date:** | | 27/07/2020 | | |



**Site Name: Lough Forbes Complex SAC**

**Site Code: 001818**

This site consists of a number of different habitats, and is centred around Lough Forbes, a lake formed by a broadening of the River Shannon. As well as the lake itself, there is also a series of raised bogs, callow grasslands and a variety of other aquatic and terrestrial habitats to the west of Newtown Forbes on the Longford/Roscommon boundary.

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):

[3150] Natural Eutrophic Lakes [7110] Raised Bog (Active)\* [7120] Degraded Raised Bog [7150] Rhynchosporion Vegetation [91E0] Alluvial Forests\*

Active raised bog comprises areas of high bog that are wet and actively peatforming, where the percentage cover of bog mosses (Sphagnum spp.) is high, and where some or all of the following features occur: hummocks, pools, wet flats, Sphagnum lawns, flushes and soaks. Degraded raised bog corresponds to those areas of high bog whose hydrology has been adversely affected by peat cutting, drainage and other land use activities, but which are capable of regeneration. The Rhynchosporion habitat occurs in wet depressions, pool edges and erosion channels where the vegetation includes White Beak-sedge (Rhynchospora alba) and/or Brown Beak-sedge (R. fusca), and at least some of the following associated species, Bog Asphodel (Narthecium ossifragum), sundews (Drosera spp.), Deergrass (Scirpus cespitosus) and Carnation Sedge (Carex panicea).

The raised bogs, located on the south-eastern shore of Lough Forbes, are known as the Ballykenny-Fishertown complex. These bogs are of international importance as unique examples of Shannon River edge bogs and they are also the most northerly intact bogs adjacent to the River Shannon. The central core areas of the bogs are quite wet and spongy, with a good complement of bog mosses and well developed hummocks. Ballykenny Bog is unusual in that some of its margins are intact, a rare feature in the Irish midlands. Between the Camlin River and this bog, a complete transition from raised bog to callow grasslands can be seen, while the interface between the bog and lake is colonised by a narrow band of deciduous woodland.

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In the wetter areas of the bog surface, Rhynchosporion vegetation is sometimes found. Sphagnum cuspidatum is frequent, along with Bogbean (Menyanthes trifoliata), White Beak-sedge and Common Cottongrass (Eriophorum angustifolium). The relatively rare Brown Beak-sedge has also been recorded. Degraded raised bog is largely confined to the marginal areas of uncut high bog where drainage effects from adjoining turbary are most pronounced. The plant species composition of degraded raised bog is generally similar to that of active raised bog, however species typical of very wet bog conditions are either much reduced in abundance or absent. In general, the most frequent vascular species are Deergrass, Common Cottongrass, Hare’s-tail Cottongrass (E. vaginatum), Heather (Calluna vulgaris), Cross-leaved Heath (Erica tetralix), Bog Asphodel and Carnation Sedge. The most frequent lower plant species present are the lichen Cladonia portentosa and the mosses Hypnum cupressiforme and Sphagnum capillifolium.

Lough Forbes is a medium sized lake underlain by limestone. It has extensive swamps of Common Reed (Phragmites australis) which provide good cover for wildfowl, although numbers have declined recently, possibly due to the increase in cruisers and other pleasure boats. Freshwater marshes are also a common feature along the lakeshore. These areas contain a good diversity of aquatic and emergent vegetation, comprised of species such as sedges (Carex vesicaria, C. rostrata and C. acuta), Bogbean, Common Spike-rush (Eleocharis palustris), Fine-leaved Waterdropwort (Oenanthe aquatica), Water Plantain (Alisma plantago-aquatica), Cowbane (Cicuta virosa), Common Club-rush (Scirpus lacustris) and Reed Canary-grass (Phalaris arundinacea).

The site contains extensive areas of woodland. The wet woodland types present include willow woodland, Ash-Alder woodland on slightly higher ground, Ash-oak woodland at the highest levels and birch woodlands on dried-out or cut-away bog. The principal woodland type, however, is a drier mixed oak-Ash woodland. The total area of woodland within the SAC is estimated at over 170 ha, of which at least 40 ha are alluvial woodland. Several individual woodlands exceed 40 ha and there is good continuity. There is little woodland on the Roscommon side of the lough. The majority of the woodland within the SAC is recorded as having been present in part or in full on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey maps from the 1840s. These may be considered therefore as potentially ancient or long-established woodlands, a conclusion reinforced by the presence of a number of relatively rare species and ancient woodland indicator species.

The dry Pedunculate Oak (Quercus robur) – Ash (Fraxinus excelsior) woodland is dominated by Pedunculate Oak and Ash, up to 20 m tall, with occasional Alder (Alnus glutinosa), Rowan (Sorbus aucuparia) and Yew (Taxus baccata), as well as a variety of exotic species, principally Sycamore (Acer pseudoplatanus), Beech (Fagus sylvatica) and lime (Tilia sp.). The shrub layer is variable in cover and species, with Hazel (Corylus avellana), Holly (Ilex aquifolium), Hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna), Spindle (Eunoymus europaea), willows (Salix caprea and S. cinerea subsp. oleifolia) and the relatively rare species Bird Cherry (Prunus padus), Buckthorn (Rhamnus catharticus) and Alder Buckthorn (Frangula alnus). The introduced and invasive

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Cherry Laurel (Prunus laurocerasus) and Rhododendron (Rhododendron ponticum) are locally abundant. The herb layer consists of Bramble (Rubus fruticosus agg.), Enchanter’s-nightshade (Circaea lutetiana), violet (Viola sp.), Bluebell (Hyacinthoides non-scripta) and several species of ferns, e.g. Dryopteris filix-mas, D. affine, D. dilatata and Polystichum setiferum.

Areas of birch woodland are dominated by birch, occasional Alder on more base-rich sites, Rowan, Holly and Scots Pine (Pinus sylvestris). Rhododendron forms thickets in some stands. The herb layer is relatively species-poor with Bramble, Purple Moorgrass (Molinia caerulea), Bracken (Pteridium aquilinum), Wood-sorrel (Oxalis acetosella) and abundant mosses, e.g. Polytrichum species.

Extensive areas of alluvial woodland fringe the shores of Lough Forbes and the Shannon, as well as extending along some of the tributaries. Three main types occur: willow woodlands, Alder-Ash woodlands and Ash-oak woodlands.

The willow woodland stands are generally found fringing the rivers and lake, and are usually quite narrow due to the hilly/boggy landscape which tends to rise steeply from the river. This results in a mostly narrow floodplain, but in places, lower lying ground may be flooded at times of high water levels. These woodlands are generally structurally complex stands of multi-stemmed Rusty Willow (Salix cinerea subsp. oleifolia), up to 8 m tall, where the roots are in permanently waterlogged, acidic to neutral, base-rich silty soils. Birch (Betula sp.) and Alder are occasional. A thin shrub layer of Hawthorn may be present in drier locations. Ivy (Hedera helix) and Bramble occur only in small amounts. The field layer consists of tall herbaceous species such as Reed Canary-grass, Yellow Loosestrife (Lysimachia vulgaris), Purple Loosestrife (Lythrum salicaria), Meadowsweet (Filipendula ulmaria), Marsh Ragwort (Senecio aquaticus), Yellow Iris (Iris pseudacorus) and Marsh-marigold (Caltha palustris). The moss layer is poorly developed with just a scattering of species such as Rhizonmium punctatum and Mnium hornum.

Alder-Ash woodland is the most extensive type of alluvial woodland at this site. This community occurs behind the willow woodland on slightly more elevated land that nonetheless is regularly flooded. The main canopy species are Alder and Ash, with occasional Pedunculate Oak, birch and Sycamore. Rusty Willow and Hawthorn are the principal shrub species, with a small amount of Guelder-rose (Viburnum opulus), Bird Cherry and Hazel. The herb flora is species-rich and is dominated by Meadowsweet, with Remote Sedge (Carex remota) and Golden Saxifrage (Chrysosplenium oppositifolia). Geophytes include Bluebell and Lesser Celandine (Ranunculus ficaria). Other characteristic species include Ivy, Enchanter’s-nightshade, Reed Canary-grass, Yellow Iris, Cuckooflower (Cardamine pratensis), Yellow Loosestrife and Broad Buckler-fern (Dryopteris dilatata). Where grazing occurs, Creeping Bent (Agrostis stoloniifera) is abundant. The moss layer is mostly poorly developed, with Thamnobryum alopecurum, Calliergonella cuspidata and Conocephalum conicum being the most frequent species. The rare Elongated Sedge (Carex elongata) occurs locally.

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Ash-Pedunculate Oak alluvial woodland occurs behind the Alder-Ash woodland where the land is subject to occasional flooding or where the water-table is high. Ash and Pedunculate Oak are the dominant canopy species, with occasional Sycamore, Beech and Horse-chestnut (Aesculus hippocastanum). The shrub layer is formed chiefly from Hazel, with Elder (Sambucus nigra), Hawthorn and occasional Bird Cherry, along with regenerating Ash and Sycamore. It is essentially a wetter version of the Oak-Ash woodland described above, but the field layer is characterised by moistureloving species such as Golden Saxifrage, Remote Sedge, Wood-sedge (Carex sylvatica) and Bugle (Ajuga reptans). While the field layer is diverse and species-rich, the moss layer is only moderately developed, the most common species being Thamnobryum alopecurum, Thuidium tamariscinum and Rhytidiadelpus triquetrus.

Areas of callows (winter-flooded grassland) along the Camlin River are also included within this site. Like the internationally important Shannon Callows, these wet grasslands are included for their botanical interest as well as for the waterbirds that they support. Both Lough Forbes and the callow grasslands provide good habitat for a range of wintering waterfowl species though most occur in relatively low numbers. Counts in two of the winters in the 1995/96 to 1999/00 period are as follows: Cormorant (51), Whooper Swan (40), Wigeon (419), Teal (444), Shoveler (6), Tufted Duck (49) and Goldeneye (11). The bogs were formerly used by part of the Loughs Kilglass and Forbes Greenland White-fronted Goose wintering population, but these appear to have now been abandoned in favour of grassland sites elsewhere. Merlin has been recorded within the site and may nest. Whooper Swan and Merlin are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive. Red Grouse are known from the bogs. Red Grouse is a Red Listed species in Ireland as it has declined in numbers in recent decades.

The raised bogs are vulnerable to water loss from peat-cutting and drainage, though ongoing restoration work involving blocking of drains is occurring. There are no known threats to the wintering birds though the increased use of the River Shannon system by leisure craft could cause disturbance.

The importance of the Lough Forbes site lies in its excellent diversity of habitats, some of which, for example the raised bogs, are rare and threatened. The site is also of ornithological importance for its wintering waterfowl, breeding Merlin and Red Grouse. The presence of Whooper Swan and Merlin is of particular note as these species are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive.

**Site Name: Clooneen Bog SAC**

**Site Code: 002348**

Clooneen Bog lies approximately 3 km south-east of Roosky in Co. Longford on the east bank of the River Shannon, just north of Lough Forbes. It is located almost entirely in the townlands of Clooneen, Bunanass, Edercloon and Cloonart (North and South). The site comprises areas of high bog, including bog woodland and cutover bog, and is bounded by a mineral ridge to the east and agricultural fields to the north. Although it would have originally adjoined the River Shannon to the west and Lough Forbes to the south, it is now separated from these by a road and agricultural fields.

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):

[7110] Active Raised Bog\* [7120] Degraded Raised Bog [7150] Rhynchosporion Vegetation [91D0] Bog Woodland\*

Active Raised Bog (ARB) habitat comprises areas of high bog that are wet and actively peat-forming, where the percentage cover of bog mosses (Sphagnum spp.) is high, and where some or all of the following features occur: hummocks, pools, wet flats, Sphagnum lawns, flushes and soaks. Degraded Raised Bog (DRB) corresponds to those areas of high bog whose hydrology has been adversely affected by peat cutting, drainage and other land use activities, but which are capable of regeneration. The Rhynchosporion habitat occurs in wet depressions, pool edges and erosion channels where the vegetation includes White Beak-sedge (Rhynchospora alba) and/or Brown Beak-sedge (R. fusca), and at least some of the following associated species, Bog Asphodel (Narthecium ossifragum), sundews (Drosera spp.), Deergrass (Scirpus cespitosus) and Carnation Sedge (Carex panicea).

This site consists of a narrow bog dome, with cutover bog to the north, south and west. An interesting feature is the extensive area of bog woodland growing on a flush in the northern section of the bog. There is also a large flush to the south-east associated with a marginal area which slopes relatively steeply towards an extensive region of old cutover. Wet grassland in this area floods from Lough Forbes.

Much of the high bog has vegetation typical of the Midland Raised Bog type, with Heather (Calluna vulgaris), Common Cottongrass (Eriophorum angustifolium) and Deergrass all occurring abundantly. Other species present include Cranberry

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(Vaccinium oxycoccos), Cross-leaved Heath (Erica tetralix), White Beak-sedge and Bog Asphodel. In the narrow central region of the high bog there are small pools containing the bog moss Sphagnum cuspidatum, Great Sundew (Drosera anglica) and Bogbean (Menyanthes trifoliata). Bog mosses are plentiful between these pools, with S. capillifolium, S. magellanicum and S. fuscum noted. These pools are associated with a depression and become algal-filled tear pools towards the margins of the high bog.

Results from surveys of Clooneen Bog in 1999 indicate the area of ARB to be 10 ha, corresponding with sub-central ecotope, active flush (soak) and bog woodland. The open bog woodland is dominated by lichen encrusted Downy Birch (Betula pubescens), with a field layer of Purple Moor-grass (Molinia caerulea) and Hare’s-tail Cottongrass (Eriophorum vaginatum) and ericaceous shrubs such as Heather, Crowberry (Empetrum nigrum), Bog-myrtle (Myrica gale) and Bilberry (Vaccinium myrtillus). Mosses such as Hylocomium splendens and Breutelia chrysocoma are also abundant. Species such as Sphagnum recurvum, S. imbricatum and S. palustre are less common. There are also several ferns present including Hard Fern (Blechnum spicant) and Broad Buckler-fern (Dryopteris dilatata). The flush to the south-east is dominated by Purple Moor-grass and may be associated with an area that has subsided. There are occasional clumps of Bog-myrtle, with some small Rhododendron (Rhododendron ponticum) bushes encroaching. This latter species is an invasive, non-native species. Common Reed (Phragmites australis) is associated with this flush, indicating some groundwater influence.

The current extent of DRB as estimated using a recently developed hydrological modelling technique, based largely on Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) data, is 7.6 ha.

Old cutover to the north is dominated by Purple Moor-grass, with cottongrass, Heather and Carnation Sedge. There is some active regeneration in the north-east, with cottongrass dominating over bog moss (S. cuspidatum). Birch and Gorse (Ulex europaeus) scrub occurs on old cut-away to the west and east. An extensive area of cut-away to the south is dominated by Purple Moor-grass and Heather, with Bogmyrtle occurring abundantly in places. This area forms a mosaic with wet grassland and there is some flooding from Lough Forbes.

Current land use on the site consists of mechanised peat-cutting to the north-west and south-west of the high bog. Some areas of cutover have been reclaimed for agriculture to the south-east and there are small conifer plantations to the east. Damaging activities associated with these land uses include drainage and burning. These are all activities that have resulted in loss of habitat and damage to the hydrological status of the site and pose a continuing threat to its viability. The bog is generally Sphagnum-poor due to burning, but regeneration is taking place.

Clooneen Bog is a site of considerable conservation significance as it consists of a raised bog, a rare habitat in the E.U. and one that is becoming increasingly scarce and under threat in Ireland. Ireland has a high proportion of the total E.U. resource of this habitat type (over 60%) and so has a special responsibility for its conservation at

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an international level. Bog woodland is listed as a priority habitat on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive - priority status is given to habitats and species that are threatened throughout the E.U. The areas of degraded raised bog and Rhynchosporion are also of conservation importance, being habitats that are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive.

