



March 2010

## APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT

# 2010 Leixlip Local Area Plan 2010 Collinstown Local Area Plan

Submitted to:  
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REPORT



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#### APPENDIX A

NPWS Site Synopsis



### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report is an Appropriate Assessment Screening of the 2010 Leixlip Local Area Plan (LAP) and the 2010 Collinstown LAP.

Following initial screening and consultation with the relevant nature conservation bodies, the recommendations outlined in Section 3 were incorporated by Kildare County Council into the Natural Heritage Objectives of the 2010 Leixlip and Collinstown Local Area Plans. As a result of their incorporation, it is anticipated that no significant effects on the SAC will arise from elements of the Leixlip and Collinstown Local Area Plans 2010.



### 1.1 Terms of Reference

This report is an Appropriate Assessment Screening of the 2010 Leixlip & Collinstown Local Area Plans, in accordance with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC). Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of this Directive state the following:

- 6(3). Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.
- 6(4). If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted.

Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or priority species, the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest.

### 1.2 Methods

This report has been prepared with reference to the following documents:

- Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6 (3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Communities, 2002)
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EC

Appropriate Assessment is carried out in stages, as recommended by the Guidance Documents. There are four stages as follows:

#### 1.2.1 Stage 1: Screening

This initial stage aims to identify the likely impacts of a project or plan on a Natura 2000 site, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans. The impacts are examined to establish whether these impacts are likely to be significant. Assessment of the significance of effects is carried out in consultation with the relevant nature agencies.

#### 1.2.2 Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment

The aim of this stage is to identify the conservation objectives of the site and to assess whether or not the project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans will result in adverse effects on the integrity of the site, as defined by the conservation objectives and status of the site. Stage 2 is carried out in consultation with the relevant nature agencies.

Where it cannot be demonstrated that there will be no adverse effects on the site, it is necessary to devise mitigation measures to avoid, where possible, any adverse effects.



### **1.2.3 Stage 3: Assessment of alternative solutions**

This stage examines alternative ways of implementing the project or plan that, where possible, avoid any adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site. If alternative solutions have been identified that will either avoid any adverse impacts or result in less severe impacts on the site, it will be necessary to assess their potential impact by recommencing the assessment at Stage One or Stage Two as appropriate. However, if it can be reasonably and objectively concluded that there is an absence of alternatives, it will be necessary to proceed to Stage Four of this assessment methodology.

### **1.2.4 Stage 4: Assessment where adverse impacts remain**

For sites that host priority habitats and species, it is necessary to consider whether or not there are human health or safety considerations or environmental benefits flowing from the project or plan. If such considerations do exist, then it will be necessary to carry out the Stage Four assessments of compensatory measures. If no such considerations exist, then establish whether there are other imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) before carrying out the Stage Four assessments. Where IROPI exist, an assessment to consider whether compensatory measures will or will not effectively offset the damage to the site will be necessary before the project or plan can proceed.



## 2.0 STAGE 1: APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING OF LEIXLIP AND COLLINSTOWN LOCAL AREA PLANS 2010

### 2.1 Brief description of project/plan

The 2010 Leixlip Local Area Plan is presented with the aim of the establishment of a framework for the planned, co-ordinated and sustainable development of Leixlip and for the conservation and enhancement of its natural and built environment.

Specific goals of the plan, as translated into objectives and policies outlined in Part B of the plan, are;

- To promote and facilitate the growth and sustainable development of Leixlip as a *Moderate Growth Town* as recognised by the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area and the Kildare County Development Plan.
- To promote and support the growth and sustainable development of Leixlip as a town located in the *Primary Dynamic Cluster* of Leixlip, Maynooth, Celbridge and Kilcock.
- To strengthen the base for new residential development and additional areas for other uses including employment, retail and community uses appropriate for a *Moderate Growth Town* having regard to the area's natural and built heritage.

The 2010 Collinstown LAP is presented with the aim of developing a Major Town Centre in-line with the provisions of the County Development Plan and the prevailing Retail Strategies for the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) and County Kildare.

Specific objectives and policies include:

- To promote and facilitate the growth and sustainable development of Collinstown as a Major Town Centre as recognised by the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area and the Kildare County Development Plan.
- To support and facilitate the development of Collinstown as a vibrant, mixed use area which accommodates employment, services, retailing, residential and community uses within an attractive and sustainable context and founded on the principles of sustainable mobility and development.
- To establish a plan-led context for the preparation of a detailed Masterplan for the development of the lands.
- To facilitate implementation of the Local Area Plan and subsequent Masterplan.

### 2.2 Brief description of Natura 2000 site

Rye Water Valley/Carton Special Area of Conservation, (Site Code 002162), also designated as a Natural Heritage Area (Site Code: 001398) lies within the area covered by the Leixlip LAP.

#### ***Rye Water Valley/Carton Special Area of Conservation, (Site Code 002162)***

This site is located between Leixlip and Maynooth. It extends along the Rye Water, a tributary of the River Liffey. The main importance of the site lies in the presence of several rare and threatened plant and animal species, and of a rare habitat, thermal, mineral, petrifying spring. The woods found on Carton Estate and their birdlife are of additional interest.

NPWS site synopsis for the above SAC is given in Appendix A. There are currently no site synopses available for pNHAs.



### 2.3 Assessment criteria

#### 2.3.1 Describe the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on the Natura 2000 site

The river Rye Water flows through the centre of Leixlip/Collinstown, and is part of the Rye Water Valley/Carton Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Proposed land zonings and developments adjacent to the SAC that are likely to give rise to impacts on the Natura 2000 site are summarised in the table below.

<b>Agricultural Zoning</b>	This zoning occurs in an area adjacent to/within the river Rye Water towards the northwestern extent of the Leixlip Local Area Plan, and in an area adjacent to the River Rye Water to the south of Leixlip town centre (Land Use Zoning Objectives Map). These two zoned areas lie directly adjacent to/within the SAC, and <i>'may allow the development of tourism-related projects such as tourist caravan parks or camp sites, and amenity uses such as playing fields or parks adjacent to/within the SAC.'</i>
<b>Amenity and Open Space Zoning</b>	<p>The area of the Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC that lies within the development plan is zoned in this category, as well as many of the zoned areas of the town that lie adjacent to the SAC. This zoning may allow landscaping of public open space and the development of playgrounds and recreation facilities adjacent to/within the SAC.</p> <p>AR1 (ii): <i>'The extension of the high quality, well-lit pedestrian route along the riverside up to Liffey Bridge. The route shall also be suitable for the requirements of disabled users.'</i></p>
<b>Cycle Path Objective - ref. Land Use Zoning Objectives Map</b>	The planned provision of a cycle path along the existing pedestrian route along the Rye Water at Ryevale Lawns to Pound St. is an objective of the Council (Leixlip LAP 2010). If the cycle path is developed on the SAC side of the existing pedestrian route, this is likely to give rise to impacts on the Natura 2000 site.
<b>Major Town Centre Zoning - Collinstown LAP</b>	<i>'The development of this site will provide for the delivery of open space along the Royal Canal which shall be landscaped and developed as a publically accessible amenity, in-line with the protection of its ecological and amenity value'. This area lies directly adjacent to the Royal Canal pNHA, but is not in the vicinity of the Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC.</i>





## Cumulative Impacts

No cumulative impact is anticipated on the SAC.

### 2.3.2 Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the Natura 2000 site by virtue of:

<b>Size and scale</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Agricultural: possible impacts from development of tourism-related projects and amenity uses</li> <li>■ Amenity and Open Space: possible impacts from development of playgrounds/recreation facilities</li> <li>■ Cycle path: Possible habitat loss if developed on SAC side of existing pedestrian route – corridor likely to be ca. 2m wide</li> </ul>
<b>Land-take</b>	<p>Unknown: if the cycle path is developed on the SAC side of the existing pedestrian route, ca. 1km long x 2m wide land-take may be required; future developments within Agricultural and Amenity and Open Space zonings may occur adjacent to/within SAC boundary – land-take may be up to 0.2 Ha; which would represent a 0.002% loss of habitat from the SAC (SAC area = 72.28 Ha)</p>
<b>Distance from Natura 2000 site or key features of the site</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Agriculture: adjacent to/within SAC boundary.</li> <li>■ Amenity and Open Space: adjacent to/within SAC boundary</li> <li>■ Cycle path: may be located adjacent to SAC boundary; currently the exact location is undefined</li> </ul>
<b>Resource requirements (water abstraction etc.)</b>	<p>None</p>
<b>Emissions (disposal to land, water or air)</b>	<p>If the proposed cycle path is located directly adjacent to/within the SAC: Potential run-off from increased surface area of hard standing added by construction of cycle track by existing pedestrian route along the Rye Water from RyeVale Lawns to Pound Street.</p>
<b>Excavation requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <u>If the proposed cycle path is located directly adjacent to/within the SAC:</u> The proposed cycle path is likely to require some excavation to lay path foundations.</li> <li>■ <u>Agricultural &amp; Amenity and Open Space Zonings:</u> potential permitted developments within these zoned areas may require excavation to lay foundations</li> </ul>
<b>Transportation requirements</b>	<p>None likely; however developments potentially permitted within Agricultural and Amenity and Open Space zonings may require the construction of access routes for logistical reasons.</p>
<b>Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning etc.</b>	<p>Unknown</p>



<b>Other</b>	<p>If the proposed cycle path is located directly adjacent to/within the SAC: Increased levels of human activity and disturbance adjacent to the SAC.</p> <p><u>Similar effects anticipated if projects potentially permitted within Agricultural and Amenity and Open Space zonings are developed adjacent to/within SAC boundary.</u></p>
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### 2.3.3 Describe any likely changes to the site arising as a result of:

<b>Reduction of habitat area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <u>If the proposed cycle path is constructed within the SAC:</u> some loss of habitat is likely</li> <li>■ <u>Agricultural &amp; Amenity and Open Space Zonings:</u> potential permitted developments within these zoned areas may reduce habitat area within the SAC</li> </ul>
<b>Disturbance to key species</b>	<p>The SAC is selected for the key species narrow-mouthed whorl snail (<i>Vertigo angustior</i>) and Desmoulin's whorl snail (<i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i>), which favour humid, wet habitats – the exact combination of conditions it requires is rare. The proposed development of a cycle path along the existing footpath is unlikely to cause disturbance to these key species, as they are unlikely to be present in the area</p> <p><u>Higher levels of human activity in the areas of public open space along the River Ryewater, arising from the cyclepath objective, may result in some disturbance to bird/mammal species such as bats that may use the River Ryewater as wildlife corridor and connective feature. If these areas are lit; there is a possibility of disturbance to nocturnal fauna species, most notably bats.</u></p> <p><u>Agricultural &amp; Amenity and Open Space Zonings:</u> potential permitted developments adjacent to/within the SAC are likely to increase disturbance to key species within the SAC</p>
<b>Habitat or species fragmentation</b>	<p>Providing that the cycle path is constructed on the side of the pedestrian route opposite to the SAC, no impacts are likely.</p> <p><u>Agricultural &amp; Amenity and Open Space Zonings:</u> potential permitted developments adjacent to/within the SAC – some changes to the site are likely</p> <p>Lighting may cause habitat fragmentation to some nocturnal species including bats, otter and some aquatic species for which the SAC is designated.</p>
<b>Reduction in species density</b>	<p>Reduction in species density is possible especially for bats and other nocturnal species, as a result of lighting.</p>
<b>Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc.)</b>	<p><u>If the proposed cycle path is located directly adjacent to/within the SAC:</u> potential increase in levels of runoff from increased hard-standing surface area as a result of cycle track construction may increase levels of silt and chemicals flowing into the Rye Water (water quality).</p>
<b>Climate change</b>	<p>None likely</p>



**2.3.4 Describe any likely impacts on the Natura 2000 site as a whole in terms of:**

<p><b>Interference with the key relationships that define the structure of the site:</b></p>	<p>The site is selected as an SAC primarily for the presence of a mineral spring at Louisa Bridge, Leixlip, which corresponds with the habitat ‘petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) (7220)’, which is a priority habitat on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive, as well as a range of riparian and woodland habitats. The chief risk is disturbance to the mineral spring and associated marsh and seepage areas; no impacts on this area are likely as cycle path construction is planned downstream of this.</p> <p><u>Agricultural &amp; Amenity and Open Space Zonings:</u> potential permitted developments adjacent to/within the SAC may impact on the mineral spring at Louisa Bridge and its associated marsh and seepage areas, as these zonings occur upstream of the spring area</p>
<p><b>Interference with key relationships that define the function of the site</b></p>	<p>The site is designated for a range of birds of interest including long-eared owl, little grebe, woodcock and blackcap, and kingfisher which is an Annex I species on the EU Birds Directive. It also supports the Annex II (EU Habitats Directive) protected rare snail species <i>Vertigo angustior</i> and <i>V. moulinsiana</i>, as well as a range of plant species of interest.</p> <p>Providing that the planned cycle path is constructed outside of and not adjacent to the SAC, impacts on relationships that define the function of the site are unlikely.</p> <p><u>Agricultural &amp; Amenity and Open Space Zonings:</u> potential permitted developments adjacent to/within the SAC may impact on key relationships that define the function of the site; the main risk is disturbance to protected rare bird, snail and plant species.</p> <p>It is likely that bats are using the river at Leixlip as well as other fauna. Any disturbance due to lighting and human activities are likely to directly and adversely impact any mobile species of the SAC such as kingfisher and otter, thus interfering with relationships that define the structure of these sites.</p>

**2.3.5 Provide indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of:**

<p><b>Loss (Estimated percentage of lost area of habitat)</b></p>	<p>Unknown: Some possible if cycle track is constructed within the SAC</p>
<p><b>Fragmentation</b></p>	<p>Some habitat fragmentation is likely as a result of potential landscaping of public open spaces and recreational facility and tourism-related project development, and construction of cycle track (if within/adjacent to SAC).</p>
<p><b>Disruption &amp; disturbance</b></p>	<p>Some day-time levels of disturbance along the river due to human disturbance. If lit, there will be some permanent night-time effects also. Temporary disruption is likely during construction phase of cycle route/potentially permitted developments.</p>



***Change to key elements of the site (e.g. water quality etc.)***

Risk of pollution to the SAC and pNHA as a result of construction of cycle path or other potentially permitted developments within areas of the SAC zoned as Agricultural or Amenity and Open Space.

### **2.3.6 Describe from the above those elements of the project or plan, or combination of elements, where the above impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale or magnitude of impacts is unknown**

The Natural Heritage objectives outlined in the 2010 Leixlip LAP in Section 12.2, and 2010 Collinstown LAP in Section 9.2, aim to ameliorate the likely impacts on Rye Water Valley/Cartron and the pNHAs in the vicinity of Leixlip.

Following initial screening and consultation with the relevant nature conservation bodies, the recommendations in Section 3.0 overleaf were incorporated by Kildare County Council into the Natural Heritage Objectives of the 2010 Leixlip and Collinstown Local Area Plans. As a result of their incorporation, it is anticipated that no significant effects on the SAC will arise from elements of the Leixlip and Collinstown Local Area Plans 2010.



### 3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Measures which were incorporated during the finalisation of the 2010 Local Area Plans are outlined as follows:

- **To conserve and protect Riparian (beside rivers) Corridors:** New development will not be permitted within a minimum of 10m from either side of all watercourses measured from the top of the bank, apart from in exceptional circumstances, to provide:
  - Visual amenity of the river;
  - Public space and access;
  - Public walkway/cycle ways/lighting;
  - Spaces to allow for the conservation and enhancement of landscape features, such as tree coverage;
  - Spaces to conserve and enhance biodiversity capacity.
- In all instances a buffer of 2.5m of vegetation shall be retained along the river bank to mitigate against pollution risks, reduce flooding potential and maintain habitat. Redevelopment shall seek to create riparian buffer strips of at least 2.5m, along either side of all watercourses measured from the top of the bank. Riparian buffers have the greatest potential to control environmental damage, reduce flooding potential and maintain habitats.
- In the event of lighting being proposed along river corridors an Ecological Impact Assessment (and where necessary an Appropriate Assessment) including bat and otter survey shall be conducted by specialists. The recommendations of the specialist studies shall be implemented. No lighting will be installed without prior consultation with NPWS and shall be in line with advances in knowledge into the impact of lighting on bats and other species and also to reflect advances in technology in the lighting industry.



## 4.0 DATA COLLECTED TO CARRY OUT THE ASSESSMENT

### *The assessment was carried out by:*

Aisling Dower, M.Sc., AIEEM - Ecologist, Golder Associates Ireland

### *Sources of Data:*

Existing information from NPWS

### *Level of assessment completed:*

Desktop study and Screening report issued to National Parks and Wildlife (NPWS). Submission by Dr. Linda Patton, NPWS.

The results of the assessment can be accessed and viewed at the Planning Office, Kildare County Council, Aras Chill Dara, Naas, County Kildare and on [www.kildarecoco.ie](http://www.kildarecoco.ie)



## Report Signature Page

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# APPENDIX A

## NPWS Site Synopsis





### SITE: RYE WATER VALLEY/CARTON SAC

#### SITE CODE: 001398

This site is located between Leixlip and Maynooth. It extends along the Rye Water, a tributary of the River Liffey.

The Rye Water in Carton Estate is dammed at intervals, creating a series of lakes. Reed Grass (*Glyceria maxima*) is frequent around the lakes, along with Yellow Flag (*Iris pseudacorus*), Reed Canary-grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*), Water Forget-me-not (*Myosotis scorpioides*), Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*) and Starwort (*Callitriche* spp.). Along the remainder of the site the river has recently been dredged and much of the Reed fringe removed.

To the north-west of Carton Bridge a small clump of Willows (*Salix* spp.), with Dogwood (*Cornus* sp.) some Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) occurs. The ground flora found here includes Golden Saxifrage (*Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*), Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), Common Valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*), Wavy Bitter-cress (*Cardamine flexuosa*) and Bittersweet (*Solanum dulcamara*).

The woods on Carton Estate are mostly old demesne woods with both deciduous and coniferous species. Conifers, including some Yew (*Taxus baccata*) are dominant, with Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), Oak (*Quercus* sp.), Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), Ash and Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) also occurring. The ground flora is dominated by Ivy (*Hedera helix*) with such species as Hedge Woundwort (*Stachys sylvatica*), Wood Speedwell (*Veronica montana*), Woodruff (*Galium odoratum*), Wood Avens (*Geum urbanum*), Common Dog-violet (*Viola riviniana*), Wild Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*), Ramsons (*Allium ursinum*), Ground-ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*) and Ivy Broomrape (*Orobanche hederarum*) also occurring.

Hairy St. John's-wort (*Hypericum hirsutum*), a species legally protected under the Flora Protection Order (1987), occurs in Carton Estate; there is an old record from the estate for the similarly protected, Hairy Violet (*Viola hirta*), but this has not been recorded from here in recent years. Another species listed in the Red Data Book, Green Figwort (*Scrophularia umbrosa*), occurs on the site in several locations by the Rye Water. The woods at Carton Demesne are the site of a rare Myxomycete fungus, *Diderma deplanatum*.

Within the woods, Blackcap, Woodcock and Long-eared Owl have been recorded. Little Grebe, Coot, Moorhen, Tufted Duck, Teal and Kingfisher, the latter a species listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive, occur on and about the lake.

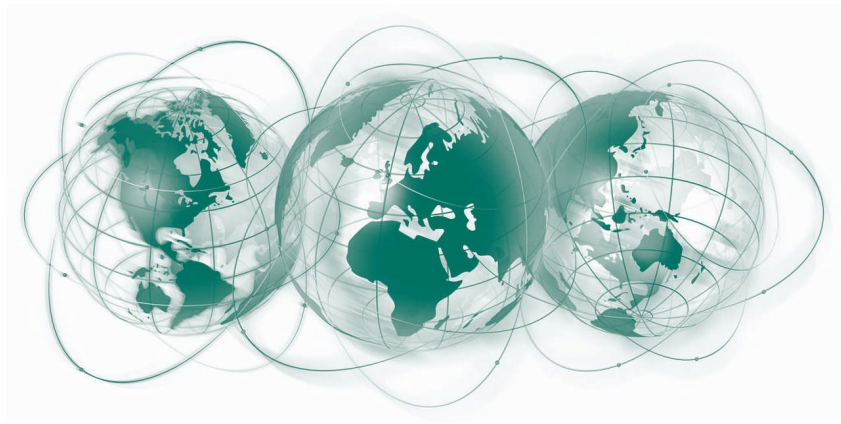
The marsh, mineral spring and seepage area found at Louisa Bridge supports a good diversity of plant species, including Stoneworts, Arrowgrass (*Triglochin palustris*), Purple Moor-grass (*Molinea caerulea*), Sedges (*Carex* spp.), Common Butterwort (*Pinguicula vulgaris*), Marsh Lousewort (*Pedicularis palustris*), Grass-of-parnassus (*Parnassia palustris*) and Cuckooflower (*Cardamine pratensis*). The mineral spring found at the site is of a type considered to be rare in Europe and is a habitat listed on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive. The Red Data Book species Blue Fleabane (*Erigeron acer*) is found growing on a wall at Louisa Bridge. The Rye Water is a spawning ground for Trout and Salmon, and the rare, White-clawed Crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) has been recorded at Leixlip. The latter two species are listed on Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive. The semi-aquatic snails *Vertigo angustior* and *V. moulinsiana* occur in marsh vegetation near Louisa Bridge; both are rare in Ireland and Europe and are listed on Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive. The scarce Dragonfly, *Orthetrum coerulescens*, has been recorded at Louisa Bridge.

The main importance of the site lies in the presence of several rare and threatened plant and animal species, and of a rare habitat, thermal, mineral, petrifying spring. The woods found on Carton Estate and their birdlife are of additional interest.

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