

## SITE SYNOPSIS

**SITE NAME: BANDON VALLEY ABOVE INISHANNON**

**SITE CODE: 001740**

The Bandon River flows almost due east for much of its course, following a natural synclinal valley that itself extends to Cloyne. At Inishannon however, the river turns abruptly to the south, crossing several ridges before reaching the sea at Kinsale. The interest of the valley lies partly in its aquatic habitats since the river has not been deepened artificially as is so often the case. Four areas of scientific interest are located along the river. This site covers a section of the river 3km east of Bandon running approximately a further 4km downstream to Inishannon.

The recent survey of this area reports it to be very scenic. Woodlands occur where the meanders of the valley approach the valley's edge and create steep slopes. The woodlands are semi-natural, mostly planted with species such as Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) mixed in with the native oaks (*Quercus* spp.). Some areas of commercial plantation occur near the railway tunnel and at Drumkeen Wood. The spread of Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*) is limited to small areas of the site.

Lower down in the Bandon Valley birdlife is more associated with woodland and involves characteristic species like owls, Sparrowhawk, Woodcock and Jay.

Cormorant and Heron fish throughout the river.

The valley is reported to have Otter in many places, a species listed in Annex II of the E.U. Habitats Directive as it is threatened within the E.U.

This area is important as it contains an example of oak woodland on steep valley sides. The Bandon Valley is especially valuable for its woodlands and unmodified river bed, which are a rare habitat in a European context.

## SITE SYNOPSIS

**SITE NAME: BANDON VALLEY WEST OF BANDON**

**SITE CODE: 001034**

The Bandon River flows almost due east for much of its course, following a natural synclinal valley that itself extends to Cloyne in East Cork. At Inishannon however, the river turns abruptly to the south crossing several ridges before reaching the sea at Kinsale. The interest of the valley lies partly in its aquatic habitats since the river has not been deepened artificially as is so often the case. Four Areas of Scientific Interest are located along the river. This site covers a section of river approximately 3km in length running downstream to within 1km west of Bandon. The Castlebernard Estate woodlands run along sections of the bank here.

The banks of the river have old estate woodlands with mature oak (*Quercus* spp.) and some Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*) and Cherry Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*) invasion is occurring but as yet is not widespread. Felling of woodlands in this area has recently been widespread and hence greater importance can be placed on the remaining areas.

The 1986 An Forbas Forbatha report notes that the upper part of the Bandon River, before it sinks into a narrow gorge at Bandon, floods occasionally in winter and at such times attracts birds such as Lapwing and Curlew as well as Mallard and Teal. Cormorant and Heron fish throughout the course of the river.

The Bandon Valley is reported to have Otters in many places, a species listed on Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive as it is threatened within the EU.

The main land uses within the site are tree felling and clearing. This has much reduced the area of interest in recent years. Fishing is also important in this area.

This site is important as it contains remnants of broadleaved oak woodland. The Bandon Valley is especially valuable for its woodlands and unmodified river bed, a rare enough habitat in a European context.

16.11.2009

## SITE SYNOPSIS

**SITE NAME: BANDON VALLEY BELOW INISHANNON**

**SITE CODE: 001515**

The Bandon River flows almost due east for much of its course, following a natural synclinal valley that itself extends to Cloyne. At Inishannon however, the river turns abruptly to the south crossing several ridges before reaching the sea at Kinsale. The interest of the valley lies partly in its aquatic habitats since the river has not been deepened artificially as is so often the case. Four areas of scientific interest are located along the river. This site below Inishannon is the most downstream of the four sites and is located approximately 7km east of Bandon in Co. Cork.

Below Inishannon the river becomes tidal before it becomes brackish, and extensive reed-beds develop of Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*), Reed Sweet-grass (*Glyceria maxima*) and various sedges (*Carex* spp.). Summer Snowflake (*Leucojum aestivum*), Yellow Loosestrife (*Lysimachia vulgaris*) and Sweet-flag (*Acorus calamus*) occur locally with Smooth-stalked Sedge (*Carex laevigata*) and Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*), usually associated with woodlands.

Shippool Wood is a former separate area of scientific interest which is now joined to the Bandon Valley site. This wood is reported in 1972 in the An Forbas Forbartha report to be a deciduous woodland on the banks of the Bandon River with some oak (*Querus* spp.) and birch (*Betula* spp.) and other deciduous species. The woodland has been underplanted with coniferous trees. In 1981 An Foras Forbartha reported the wood in some parts were semi-natural in character and had an ecologically interesting flora and fauna. A recent survey of this woodland found it to be predominantly conifer trees.

In 1986 the Hairstreak butterfly was reported to occur in Shippool Wood.

This site is important for its wetlands including the extensive areas of Common Reed and the more diverse areas of wetland vegetation. The general flora surrounding Shippool Wood may also be of interest.