

## Reasons for Designation as a Special Area of Conservation

Area name: **Cladagh (Swanlinbar) River**

Administrative area: **Fermanagh**

Component ASSI: **Cladagh (Swanlinbar) River**

This area has been designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) because it contains habitat types and/or species which are rare or threatened within a European context. The ASSI citation describes the special interests for which the site was notified in the Northern Ireland context. The interests for which the site was selected as ASSI may differ from the interests selected in a European context.

The habitats and/or species for which this area has been designated as a SAC are listed below. The reasons for their selection are listed, together with a brief description of the habitats and species as they typically occur across the UK. This area contains the interests described although it may not contain all the typical features.

### European interest(s):

#### 1. *Margaritifera margaritifera*

- **for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.**

Freshwater pearl mussel. The freshwater pearl mussel spends its larval stage attached to the gills of salmon and trout. Eventually the larvae drop off and settle in the riverbed gravel where they grow to adulthood. The species is widely distributed in the northern hemisphere but populations have declined sharply throughout Europe. Threats to its survival include disturbance to gravel beds and flow rates, water pollution, and pearl-fishing. The UK is now considered to be the main European stronghold for this species but in recent years it has been lost or has ceased breeding at many sites.

#### 2. Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculus fluitantis* and *Callitriche-Batrachion* vegetation

- **for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.**

Rivers with floating vegetation often dominated by water-crowfoot. Rivers that support characteristic communities of water-crowfoot *Ranunculus* species, which often dominate the plant community in the river channel. This vegetation occurs in relatively unpolluted waters, in a diverse range of river types.

### The Register of European Sites in Northern Ireland

Register reference number: UK0030116

Date of Registration 13 May 2008

Signed by: G R Seymour

on behalf of the Department of the Environment