Rineanna prior to the building of Shannon Airport in 1936. One can just make out the north tip of Dernish Island in the bottom of this picture. We are grateful to the family of the late Gerard McCoy for supplying us with the use of this photograph.

# Foreward

*Dr. Brendan O'Regan*

Despite extensive engineering and construction work in the vicinity over the years, and the constant noise of airlines landing and taking-off, the Shannon Airport Lagoon hosts a wealth of mammals due to the varied plant and insect life which the habitat supports. Out of the nine mammal orders recorded in Ireland, species from seven are routinely identified in this region. It is exciting to watch these mammals living their varied life cycles. Their world of courtship, mating, reproduction, growth, hunting and defence is being enacted before our eyes.

For thousands of years, birds and wildlife have sheltered from Atlantic storms along our coastline and in the Shannon Estuary. Few could have imagined that in the early forties winged flying machines would use the Shannon Estuary, initially at Foynes and subsequently across the river at Rineanna for shelter and re-fuelling in preparation for their onward journeys. The lagoon area was developed to facilitate the landing of the seaplane and the subsequent arrival of jet aircraft dispensed with the use of the lagoon. While contractors were building along the edge of the lagoon, animals and birds were busy building a habitat of their own.

The creativity which compels people to devote their talent and skills to promote a particular interest, such as bird-watching, is illustrated by this beautiful and important reference book – Shannon Lagoon a Unique Irish Habitat.

I hope this book will generate further interest in the wildlife of the lagoon area not only for knowledgeable enthusiasts, but also for future generations. It is a book that can be enjoyed by both young and old. Continued co-operation between the many different interests at Shannon will add to its international status as a place where people would wish to visit.

Ní neart go cur le chéile.

Brendan O'Regan
11th July 2003

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