



Scottish Natural Heritage

**GLENMORE FOREST**  
**Site of Special Scientific Interest**

**SITE MANAGEMENT STATEMENT**

Site code: 1665

**EAST HIGHLAND AREA**

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**Purpose**



This is a public statement prepared by SNH for owners and occupiers of the SSSI. It outlines the reasons it is designated as an SSSI and provides guidance on how its special natural features should be conserved or enhanced. This Statement does not affect or form part of the statutory notification and does not remove the need to apply for consent for operations requiring consent.

We welcome your views on this statement.

**Description of the site**

Glenmore Forest lies on the north-west slopes of Cairn Gorm and is predominantly a Caledonian pine forest growing over a variety of glacial and fluvial-glacial deposits and landforms.

Glenmore Forest has been notified as an SSSI for its geomorphological features, native pine woodland which includes bog woodland habitats, its associated assemblage of flowering plants and its populations of Capercaillie, Scottish crossbill and narrow-headed ant.

There are extensive Quaternary deposits and landforms produced by the melting of the last Scottish ice sheet: e.g. eskers, kames, terraces, meltwater channels and kettle holes within Glenmore Forest. These features provide important evidence for the reconstruction of the pattern of deglaciation at the end of the last Ice Age and the associated climate changes. These landforms form an integral part of the suite of Earth science features for which the Cairngorms is internationally important.

Glenmore Forest is an important and linking component of the chain of native pinewoods stretching from Glenfeshie to Abernethy which together form the largest expanse of native pinewood remaining in the UK. Around 400 ha of the site is self-sown native pinewood together with a similar area of planted Scots pine of local origin which is now being managed for conservation. Small areas of juniper *Juniperus communis* scrub occur and alder *Alnus glutinosa*, willows *Salix* species and Scots pine

*Pinus sylvestris* form bog woodland in wetter areas. At lower altitudes scattered tree regeneration of birch, willow, rowan and Scots pine is expanding on to areas of open heath whilst at higher elevations a natural tree line is developing.

The site is notified for its vascular plant assemblage that contains many species associated with native pinewoods including One-flowered wintergreen *Moneses uniflora* (Red Data book) Twinflower *Linnaea borealis*, Small cranberry *Vaccinium microcarpum* and Intermediate wintergreen *Pyrola media*. The site is also notified for its populations of Scottish crossbill *Loxia scotica*, Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus*, and narrow-headed ant *Formica exsecta*.

When monitored during 2003, the Quaternary of Scotland features were in favourable condition. The geomorphological structures and erosion processes were intact and functioning.



When monitored during the year 2000, the biological notified natural features were found to be in favourable condition. All target species within the vascular plant assemblage were located and the three known populations of One-flowered wintergreen *Moneses uniflora* were thriving. Pinewood regeneration was found to be occurring in forest gaps and at the tree line and browsing levels were moderate and not restricting regeneration. Removal of exotic trees and regeneration had ensured predominance of native species. Deadwood levels were above minimum requirements. Numbers of capercaillie recorded at lek sites have been increasing and productivity has been good, this site recorded the highest productivity of any site monitored in Scotland in 2006. The narrow-headed ant population is stable and comprises the largest population in the United Kingdom. There are no monitoring results for Scottish crossbill.

Glenmore Forest SSSI is a component of the Cairngorms Special Protection Area which has been designated for its populations of Scottish crossbill, Osprey, Golden eagle, Dotterel, Capercaillie, Merlin and Peregrine. Glenmore Forest is particularly important for Scottish crossbill and Capercaillie. Golden eagle occasionally hunt over the higher parts of Glenmore Forest but this component SSSI is not a key site within the SPA for this species. Osprey regularly hunt over Loch Morlich, this loch forms part of the SPA but not the SSSI. Peregrine falcon and merlin are intermittent breeders on Glenmore Forest SSSI and regularly hunt over the site. Dotterel rarely use the upper parts of this SSSI usually when snow forces them to lower levels in spring.

When monitored between 1999 and 2003, the bird species were considered to be in favourable condition. However, there are no condition monitoring results for merlin or Scottish crossbill.

Glenmore Forest is also part of Cairngorms Special Area of Conservation and River Spey Special Area of Conservation. Glenmore Forest contains significant areas of Caledonian forest and bog woodland habitats as well as areas of heaths (wet, dry and, alpine and sub-alpine), juniper scrub, acidic scree, associated plants in crevices and loch interest. It also supports regular use by otters and an important spawning river for Atlantic salmon.

When monitored during 2004, Atlantic salmon were found to be in unfavourable but recovering condition because there are less than the Scottish average of juvenile salmon present, and the autumn component of the adult population has declined from when the site was first designated. Other Natura features present on the SSSI that were also found to be in unfavourable condition when monitored in May 2007 include wet heath, dry heath, alpine and sub-alpine heath and Caledonian pinewood. As with Atlantic salmon, these features were monitored at the larger SAC scale and therefore the locations where these features were considered unfavourable may lie outwith this SSSI. The reasons for these failures include trampling by animals and people, browsing and burning in sensitive areas. Further fieldwork is planned in order to determine the extent of the unfavourable features in relation to ownership boundaries throughout the Natura site.

Capercaillie	Twinflower
	

Natural features of Glenmore Forest SSSI	Condition of feature (and date monitored)	Other relevant designations
Quaternary of Scotland	Favourable – maintained (2003)	
Capercaillie	Favourable – maintained (April 2000)	SPA
Scottish crossbill	No monitoring results available	SPA
Narrow-headed ant	Favourable – maintained (October 2000)	
Vascular plant assemblage	Favourable – maintained (June 2000)	
Native pinewood	Favourable – maintained (October 2000)	SAC

<b>Features of overlapping Natura sites that are not notified as SSSI natural features (*asterisk denotes present on SSSI)</b>	<b>Feature condition (date monitored)</b>	<b>SPA or SAC</b>
Acid peat-stained lakes and ponds	Favourable – maintained (July 2004)	SAC
Acidic scree*	Favourable – maintained (May 2007)	SAC
Alpine and sub alpine heaths*	Unfavourable – no change (May 2007)	SAC
Blanket bog	Unfavourable – no change (May 2007)	SAC
Bog woodland*	Favourable – maintained (September 2002)	SAC
Caledonian forest*	Unfavourable – no change (November 2002)	SAC
Clear-water lakes or lochs with aquatic vegetation and poor to moderate nutrient levels*	Favourable – maintained (July 2004)	SAC
Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone	Unfavourable - no change (May 2007)	SAC
Dry heaths*	Unfavourable - no change (May 2007)	SAC
Hard-water springs depositing lime	Favourable – maintained (May 2007)	SAC
High altitude plant communities associated with areas of water seepage	Unfavourable – no change (May 2007)	SAC
Juniper on heaths or calcareous grasslands*	Favourable – maintained (May 2007)	SAC
Montane acid grasslands	Unfavourable - recovering (May 2007)	SAC
Mountain willow scrub	Unfavourable - no change (May 2007)	SAC
Plants in crevices on acid rocks*	Favourable – maintained (May 2007)	SAC
Plants in crevices on base-rich rocks	Unfavourable - no change (May 2007)	SAC
Species-rich grassland with mat-grass in upland areas	Unfavourable - no change (May 2007)	SAC
Tall herb communities	Favourable – maintained (May 2007)	SAC
Very wet mires often identified by an unstable 'quaking' surface	Favourable – maintained (May 2007)	SAC
Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath*	Unfavourable - no change (May 2007)	SAC
Atlantic salmon*	Unfavourable - recovering (October 2004).	SAC

Freshwater pearl mussel	Unfavourable - recovering (October 2000)	SAC
Green shield-moss	Favourable - maintained (January 2003)	SAC
Otter*	Favourable – maintained (September 2004)	SAC
Sea lamprey	Favourable – maintained (September 2002)	SAC
Dotterel*	Favourable - maintained (August 1999)	SPA
Golden eagle*	Favourable - maintained (August 2003)	SPA
Merlin*	No monitoring results available	SPA
Osprey*	Favourable – maintained (June 2003)	SPA
Peregrine*	Favourable – maintained (June 2002)	SPA

### **Past and present management**

There are historical records of Glen More from the 17<sup>th</sup> century describing the wood and small scale extraction of timber. Large scale extraction began in 1783. For a period in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century the area was turned into a sheep run and later into a deer forest. There would have been little tree regeneration during this period. Further felling occurred in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

In 1923 Glen More was acquired by the Forestry Commission which fenced the woodlands against red deer and planted over 1000ha using Scots pine of NE Scotland, possibly Strathspey, origin together with Norway and Sitka spruce. There was little felling during the 1939-45 war. Glenmore Forest Park was established in 1948 to promote recreation within the forest and in 1992 part of the park was designated as the Glenmore Forest Caledonian Pinewood Reserve.

Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) now manages Glenmore Forest Park as a multiple use forest with timber production, recreation and conservation all important. Within the park certain areas have one or more of these uses as the priority. An updated 'Forest Design Plan' (FDP) was adopted in 2007 and this outlines management for the foreseeable future.

Part of the Glenmore Forest Park has been given Caledonian Pinewood Reserve (CPR) status by FCS as a means of identifying a natural reserve area covering 1054ha within the larger Forest Park (3567ha). The CPR is located at the eastern side of the Forest Park. The CPR is managed with conservation and informal recreation as the main objectives and there has been considerable recent effort devoted to habitat restoration. For example, areas of scattered "granny pines" which had been under-planted have been cleared of non-native trees and re-stocking by natural regeneration is being promoted. Recently, work has commenced on cutting rank heather in order to enhance natural regeneration. Considerable positive management for Capercaillie has also taken place recently through, for example, the removal of deer fencing. Continued deer control should still allow the expansion of the

pine wood and establishment of a natural tree line. FCS employs stalkers to cull red and roe deer.

Timber production is centred on plantations outside the CPR and the SSSI. In 2007 the FDP decided to change the entire Forest Park to native woodland and in the long term superseding the CPR. It is proposed to restock these areas with Scots pine of local provenance and native broadleaves which will be beneficial to the SSSI as it will remove a seed source of exotic tree species and extend the area of native woodland.

In 2007 a new Glenmore National Nature Reserve was declared. This NNR (2119.5ha) to a large extent overlaps the FCS Glenmore CPR. NNR status provides a recognition and additional focus for awareness raising and enjoyment of the sites special qualities and management.

Recreation takes place throughout the park but is concentrated around the camp site, visitor centre, car parks and various trails. These trails are for walking, cycling and cross country skiing and include an all-ability trail. There are also Ranger-led walks during the summer. A footpath network from Coire Cas car park towards Aviemore has also been developed.

The FCS Glenmore Centre is a key location for interpretation of native pinewoods in Strathspey. Sportscotland Glenmore Lodge Outdoor Centre is a major focus for mountain sports and orienteering.

Much habitat restoration has already taken place but some elements will require continued management action (e.g. to manage grazing levels by deer and remove regeneration of exotic tree species). All significant drain blocking for bog woodland is complete and there may be further opportunities to restore small scale wetland for capercaillie brood habitat management.

### **Objectives for Management** (and key factors influencing the condition of natural features)

We **wish** to work with the owner to protect the site and to maintain and where necessary enhance its features of special interest. SNH aims to carry out site survey, monitoring and research as appropriate to increase our knowledge and understanding of the site and its natural features and monitor the effectiveness of the management.

The EU Habitats and Birds Directives oblige Government to avoid in SACs and SPAs, the deterioration of natural habitats and the habitats of species, as well as disturbance of the species for which the areas have been designated, in so far as such disturbance could be significant in relation to the objectives of these Directives. The objectives below have been assessed against these requirements. All authorities proposing to carry out or permit to be carried out operations likely to have a significant effect on the European interests of this SSSI must assess those operations against the relevant Natura conservation objectives (which are listed on our website through the SiteLink facility).

1. To ensure that all the protected natural features are in favourable condition and, that the conservation objectives for the Natura features are met.

2. To promote continued restoration and regeneration of Caledonian and bog woodland, wet and dry heath through the management of deer, non-native trees and drainage.
3. To promote the continued restoration of alpine and sub-alpine heath through appropriate recreational management.
4. To promote the continued restoration of Atlantic salmon through appropriate riparian habitat management.
5. To increase the breeding population and breeding success of Capercaillie on the site, through appropriate habitat and recreational management.
6. To increase the populations of important plant species through appropriate conservation management.
7. To maintain the geomorphological features in favourable condition through maintenance of important relict landforms and allowing natural riverine processes to continue to operate and associated features to develop.

#### **Other factors affecting the natural features of the site**

The continuing vulnerable state of the Scottish capercaillie population is a major factor affecting future management of this site. Further positive management for this species is likely but viable populations require larger areas of suitable habitat than exist on this site. Management of areas outside the SSSI will therefore also influence this species' status on this site.

To support FCS regarding the management of Glenmore NNR, including the provision of appropriate infrastructure and visitor management for public access, recreational and educational use within and adjacent to the site.

Glenmore Forest is one of the most important areas for informal recreation in Strathspey and the Cairngorms National Park, attracting large numbers of visitors at all seasons and there is the potential for this use to damage or disturb the features of interest, many of which are sensitive (e.g. Capercaillie). Future changes in the recreational use of the site and visitor management will be important factors.

Date last reviewed: 30 October 2008