

CITATION

GLEN AFFRIC
SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST
Highland (Inverness)

Site code: 697

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: NH 237234, NH 236261, NH 233206

OS 1:50,000 SHEET NO: Landranger Series 25, 26
1:25,000 SHEET NO: Explorer Series 415

AREA: 2265.12 hectares

NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES

Biological

Woodlands: Native pinewood

Birds: Breeding bird assemblage

Non-vascular plants: Lichen assemblage

Dragonflies: Dragonfly assemblage

DESCRIPTION

Glen Affric SSSI lies at the head of Strathglass, 6 km west of the village of Cannich and c40km from Inverness. The majority of the site lies on the southern shores of Loch Beinn a' Mheadhoin and Loch Affric, with two small outliers at Cogie and Coille Ruigh na Cuileige. It is notified for its native pinewood habitats and associated lichen and bird assemblages. The bogs and lochans within the site support a very rich dragonfly assemblage.

The native pinewood is one of the largest in Scotland, predominantly north-facing, with a significant broadleaved element including birch, rowan, aspen, willows and alder. Its ecology is intermediate between western and eastern pinewoods, reflecting the climatic differences across the country. The woodland on the upper slopes and along Loch Affric is more open, with larger areas of dry and wet heath. Small pockets of bog woodland also occur within the site. The diverse ground flora contains many of the species associated with native pinewoods such as creeping ladies tresses *Goodyera repens*, lesser twayblade *Listera cordata*, twinflower *Linnaea borealis* and four species of wintergreen.

The bird assemblage includes several pinewood specialists such as crested tit *Lophophanes cristatus* and Scottish crossbill *Loxia scotica*. Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus* are present in very low numbers and there is also a population of black grouse *Tetrao tetrix*.

Glen Affric is outstanding for the lichen flora that grows on its trees, with a significant number of nationally rare or scarce lichens, including *Bryoria furcellata*, *B. capillaris* and *Calicium parvum*.

The many lochs and bogs support a rich dragonfly community including the rare brilliant emerald *Somatochlora metallica*.

NOTIFICATION HISTORY

First notified under the 1949 Act: 1974

Re-notified under the 1981 Act: 12 April 1984 with a 27.5ha increase in area

Notification reviewed under the 2004 Act: 1 December 2010

REMARKS

Measured area of site corrected from 2,229.09 ha.

Glen Affric SSSI is part of Strathglass Complex Special Area of Conservation (SAC) designated for the European habitats and species listed below :

Habitats: Acidic scree
 Alpine and subalpine heaths
 Blanket bog
 Bog woodland
 Caledonian forest
 Clear-water lakes or lochs with aquatic vegetation and poor to moderate nutrient levels
 Dry heaths
 Montane acid grasslands
 Mountain willow scrub
 Plants in crevices on acid rocks
 Plants in crevices on base-rich rocks
 Tall herb communities
 Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath

Species: Otter *Lutra lutra*

Glen Affric SSSI is part of Glen Affric to Strathconon Special Protection Area (SPA) designated for the bird listed below:

Birds: Golden eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*, *breeding*

Part of Glen Affric SSSI around Loch Affric overlaps with part of West Inverness-shire Lochs SSSI and SPA designated for the birds listed below:

Birds: Black-throated diver *Gavia arctica*, *breeding*
 Common scoter *Melanitta nigra*, *breeding*

For further information on these overlapping designations see the West Inverness-shire Lochs SSSI citation.