

Original description of the NSA from the publication *Scotland's Scenic Heritage* published by the Countryside Commission for Scotland in 1978, and available on the Scottish Natural Heritage website at <http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/B464646.pdf> (6.52mb)

LOCH RANNOCH AND GLEN LYON NATIONAL SCENIC AREA

Perth and Kinross (with a small part in Stirling)

Description from *Scotland's Scenic Heritage* 1978

The shores of Loch Rannoch, an open, spacious loch are richly wooded. Pine, birch, oak, ash, larch, chestnut, holly, alder, cypress and juniper abound. On the south slopes of the loch is the great Black Wood of Rannoch, a remnant of the native pinewoods of Scotland.

The north slopes are fringed with a more open canopy of birch woods which frame the views to be obtained from here of the almost perfect cone of Schiehallion, soaring skywards. Westwards along the broad loch are views of the distant hills of Rannoch and Glen Coe. The Loch of Dunalistair is a creation of hydro-electric works, but its reed beds and willow beds, and tranquil shallow waters set amongst meadows and woodlands, offer a pleasing contrast with the bigger loch to the west.

Glen Lyon is separated from Rannoch by the broad summits of Cairn Mairg. Said to be the longest glen in Scotland, it exhibits along its length a great diversity of glen scenery. Deeply entrenched between Cairn Mairg and Ben Lawers and Meall Ghaordie (1,039m) it descends from bare wild mountains around Cashlie to Gallin and Meggernie where a change occurs. Here it becomes a broad strath with Meggernie Castle set in the midst of woodlands, its park traversed by the broad leisurely loops of the River Lyon.

The woodlands clothing the lower slopes of the mountains contrast well with the barer but colourful higher slopes, and as one descends the glen, the farmlands of the strath and the woodlands of the lower slopes become ever richer and more varied. At each turn of the road, a new scene of river, wood, mountain and meadow is revealed, until at the Pass of Lyon the river rushes through a light rocky gorge closely screened by magnificent canopies of beech to open finally on to the pleasant purlieu of Fortingall.

W.H. Murray has written (1963): 'Glen Lyon has no counterpart in Scotland. Other glens..... show a similar change from desolate upper reaches to lower fertility..... Others possess some unique feature of gorge, or loch, or waterfall, or forest, not to be seen in Glen Lyon. But there is none that displays such varied loveliness of river and woodland scene and maintains it unmarred throughout so great a length of changing landscape.'