

CITATION

LOCH LUBNAIG MARSHES
SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST
Stirling

Site code: 1004

PLANNING AUTHORITY: Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: NN559157

OS 1:50,000 SHEET NO: Landranger Series 57

1:25,000 SHEET NO: Explorer Series 365

AREA: 63.13 hectares

NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES

Geological: Geomorphology : Fluvial geomorphology of Scotland

Biological: Fens: Open water transition fen

Invertebrates: Flies

Invertebrates: Freshwater pearl mussel (*Margaritifera margaritifera*)

DESCRIPTION

Loch Lubnaig Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located at the north west end of Loch Lubnaig 10 km north west of Callander. The site is nationally important for its fluvial geomorphology, open water transition fen habitat, rare fly species, and freshwater pearl mussels. It is an integral part of the freshwater system which includes the rivers Balvag, Leny and Teith, and the lochs Doine, Voil and Lubnaig. This system supports an outstanding range of freshwater, and notably riverine, plant and animal communities in natural succession. Several of these communities are the most species-rich of their type in Britain.

This area shows excellent examples of fluvial (river) geomorphologic landforms and processes. The River Balvag flows into Loch Lubnaig forming a spit shaped delta. The river has an unusually straight channel, bounded by levees that rise above the marshes, and are lined with alders. Included in the site is an isolated small lake, Lochan Buidhe, that developed as a result of a spit advancing into the loch. The lochan is to the west of the River Balvag.

The Loch Lubnaig Marshes comprise the largest and least disturbed area of open water transition fen communities in Stirling Council. The openwater and fen areas support an exceptionally large number of plants and plant communities. Aquatic plant species include the nationally-scarce least water-lily *Nuphar pumila* and smooth stonewort *Nitella flexilis*. The regionally uncommon species present here are the six-stamened waterwort *Elatine hexandra* and the translucent stonewort *Nitella translucens*. The marginal plants species in the fen include the nationally scarce tufted loosestrife *Lysimachia thyrsiflora* which is locally abundant. The locally rare

marsh stitchwort *Stellaria palustris* approaches its northern limit of distribution here. Plant species of note are the early marsh-orchid *Dactylorhiza incarnata* and the slender sedge *Carex lasiocarpa*.

The rich invertebrate fauna includes two notable species of crane fly and a large number of water beetle species. A rare Red Data Book species of snail killing fly is here, *Tetanocera freyi*. The azure damselfly *Coenagrion puella* and the lake limpet *Acroloxus lacustris* reach their northern distribution limit here.

Freshwater pearl mussels are present in the river. The freshwater pearl mussel is listed as an endangered species as a result of its dramatic decline throughout its European range. Scotland is seen as a stronghold for this species. The populations of Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar* and trout *Salmo trutta*, the river bed substrates and the high water quality of the River Balvag are all important for the long-term survival of freshwater pearl mussel in this river.

A colony of juniper *Juniperus communis* is found here on the hills on the west side within the SSSI, but this is not a notified feature of this site.

NOTIFICATION HISTORY

First notified under the 1981 Act: 26 June 1986

Notification reviewed under the 2004 Act: 30 September 2010

REMARKS

Measured area of site corrected (from 62.9 ha)

Part of Loch Lubnaig SSSI overlaps part of the River Teith Special Area of Conservation (SAC), which is designated for the European species listed below:

- Species : Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar*
- : Brook lamprey *Lampetra planeri*
- : River lamprey *Lampetra fluviatilis*
- : Sea lamprey *Petromyzon marinus*