



**Scottish Natural Heritage**  
All of nature for all of Scotland

**LOCH OF ABOYNE**  
**Site of Special Scientific Interest**

**SITE MANAGEMENT STATEMENT**

**Site code: 1025**

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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**

The site incorporates the loch and a section of marshy ground at the eastern corner. The loch is crescent shaped, the banking of the disused Deeside railway line forming the south eastern boundary. A wooded promontory extends northwards from this into the loch. A stone-faced dam at the western end of the loch incorporates a spill way that drains into a burn flowing through the adjacent golf course. There are landing stages at the north-east end of the loch, tubular metal towers on the north and south banks and a ramp in the centre of the loch, all of which are used by one of the occupiers, a water ski club.

The loch is fed by one small burn on the northern edge and it is considered to be supplemented by underground springs. It is mesotrophic, with high pH values associated with limestone in the catchment. Twenty-two species of open-water plant have been recorded including eight species of pondweed. Two of these plants are nationally scarce: the grass-wrack pondweed, which was found here in 1978, its only site in Scotland, and the smooth stonewort. Several regional rarities such as red pondweed, spring quillwort and translucent stonewort have also been recorded. Five types of marginal vegetation occur around the edge of the loch.

There is less information on the aquatic invertebrate fauna of the site, but six species of leech have been recorded. The loch's bird population is diverse, with thirty-eight species breeding and at least fifty eight species recorded using the site.

<b>Natural Features of Loch of Aboyne SSSI</b>	<b>Feature Condition (date monitored)</b>
Mesotrophic loch	Unfavourable Declining (June 2004)
Grass-wrack pondweed <i>Potamogeton compressus</i>	Not yet assessed

Site condition monitoring was carried out in 2004 for cycle 1 of the national programme. This assessed the loch as being in an unfavourable, declining condition, mainly due to perceived changes in the structure of the communities of aquatic plants and the loss of several characteristic species, in particular broad-leaved and red pondweeds and smooth and translucent stoneworts. In addition, an algal bloom had recently been noted and total phosphorous levels were above suggested limits. There was also some evidence of increased sediment load.

### **Past and present management**

Loch of Aboyne was created in Victorian times, by damming, to form a boating lake. No details have been found of the loch's subsequent use, but water-skiing has occurred on the site since the late 1960's.

The caravan park on the wooded peninsula was developed in the 1970s. In 1979 a new access route was constructed to the water-ski hut which skirted around the marshy ground included in the SSSI.

The loch was registered as a 'large raised reservoir' under the terms of Section 1 of the Reservoirs Act 1975, requiring that the dam was subject to regular inspection by an engineer.

The dam was inspected in 1986 and the engineer's report required the freeboard to be increased, either by raising the crest of the dam or lowering the level of the spillway. As NCC felt the aquatic macrophyte interest of the site would be damaged by lowering the spillway (and therefore the water level), negotiations were entered into with the owner, leading to the signing of a management agreement to help pay for remedial work on the dam and subsequent associated costs.

The main recreational use of the loch is by Aberdeen Water Ski Club, for training and competitions. The agreed levels of usage are detailed in the lease.

Aboyne Golf Club has abstracted water from the loch since 1983, to water the greens. There is a small hut housing the pump equipment on the bank of the loch, just to the south of the dam.

There is little documented information about the level of other recreational uses of the loch. The use of rowing boats and fishing are mentioned in the management policy appended to the agreement and canoeing has been recorded. There is an informal path around the loch.

The caravan site is not within the SSSI and all the caravans are on mains sewage.

In the last 10 years, a road has been built close to the loch to access a lodge adjacent to the loch. An additional area of land close to the eastern end of the site has been developed into a golf course.

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

We wish to work with the owners and occupiers 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 to monitor the effectiveness of the management agreement.

**1) To maintain the freshwater loch and associated habitats, in particular the submerged aquatic flora including the rare pondweed**

The water level needs to be maintained, which will be primarily achieved through the survey and repair (if necessary) of the dam and spillway. Excessive water abstraction could also be damaging and needs further consideration. A gentle current is required to maintain clear and open water for the rare pondweed.

Water quality is considered an important contributory factor to the diversity of the aquatic flora. Actions that could result in nutrient enrichment or pollution, such as spraying or dumping near the loch edge, need to be avoided. The loch does appear to be affected by diffuse nutrient inputs from the surrounding golf-course.

Physical damage to the vegetation will be principally due to recreational usage; the disturbance and breaking up of submerged vegetation by boat wakes, propellers and skis. Bank erosion, or change in species composition of emergent vegetation, could be affected by the boat generated wave action, dumping or trampling.

**Other factors affecting the site**

The burn from the Loch of Aboyne flows, through the adjacent golf course, to the Tarland Burn which is part of the River Dee Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Any works adjacent to or within the loch or burn, for example to the dam at the western end of the loch, could affect the River Dee SAC. SNH will work with the landowners to ensure that the River Dee SAC is not affected by any such works.

Date last reviewed: 26 May 2011.