

CITATION**LOCH OF GIRLSTA
SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST
Shetland Islands**

Site Code:1030

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: HU 433522

OS 1: 50,000 SHEET NO: Landranger Series 3
1: 25,000 SHEET NO: Explorer Series 467

AREA: 99.23 ha.

NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES**Biological : Freshwater and estuarine fish: Arctic charr (*Salvelinus alpinus*)
: Freshwater habitats: Mesotrophic loch****DESCRIPTION:**

The Loch of Girlsta, 11km north of Lerwick, is the only site in Shetland for Arctic charr (*Salvelinus alpinus*) and one of the best deep valley mesotrophic lochs in Shetland (i.e. one of moderate nutrients).

Arctic charr (*Salvelinus alpinus*) are adapted to cold, deep waters and were among the first fish to re-enter freshwater when the last ice age ended.

Although the loch is surrounded by deep acid peatlands, it overlies a band of crystalline limestone and contains plants characteristic of a mesotrophic loch. The loch has steep sides and, at around 25 metres, is the deepest in Shetland. This results in the vegetation being restricted to a narrow band around the edge.

NOTIFICATION HISTORY

First notified under the 1949 Act: 1972

Renotified under the 1981 Act: 10 May 1983

Notification reviewed under the 2004 Act: 19 September 2008

REMARKS

Measured area of site corrected (from 101.7ha).