

## CITATION

### LOCHS OF BUTTERSTONE, CRAIGLUSH AND LOWES SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST

Perth and Kinross

Site code: 1082

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: NO 046440, NO 060449

OS 1:50,000 SHEET NO: Landranger Series 52 or 53  
1:25,000 SHEET NO: Explorer Series 379

AREA: 257.96 hectares

## NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES

**Biological: Freshwater habitats: Oligo-mesotrophic loch**  
**Fens: Open water transition fen**  
**Basin fen**  
**Birds: Breeding bird assemblage**  
**Greylag goose *Anser anser*, non-breeding**

## DESCRIPTION

The three lochs that comprise Lochs of Butterstone, Craiglush and Lowes SSSI are situated to the north-east of Dunkeld. These clear water lochs are of particular importance as examples of moderately nutrient rich, naturally mesotrophic lochs, a rare and decreasing habitat type in Britain. Fringing the three lochs is a diversity of wetland habitats including outstanding areas of basin and open water transition fen. The wetland habitats support a wide variety of breeding birds including osprey. The lochs are also used by roosting greylag geese in the winter.

The aquatic flora is exceptionally diverse and an outstanding number of pondweeds and other macrophytes have been recorded in the 3 lochs; of particular note is the internationally rare slender naiad *Najas flexilis* at one of its few locations in eastern Scotland. Around the lochs is a variety of transition fens from emergent vegetation at the loch edge including reed *Phragmites communis* and bottle sedge *Carex rostrata* swamp grading through to raised bog, alder and birch woodland in the drier areas. Alder buckthorn *Frangula alnus* is found in one of its few Scottish locations around Loch of the Lowes.

Sitting between Lowes and Craiglush is an unusual basin fen. This extensive and virtually undisturbed 'quaking bog' consists mainly of a carpet of bog mosses and open reed swamp with bottle sedge *Carex rostrata*, slender sedge *Carex lasiocarpa* and bog myrtle *Myrica gale* together with bladderwort *Utricularia* sp and many-stalked spike-rush *Eleocharis multicaulis*. It is of outstanding interest and is probably unique in Tayside.

The site is important for its wintering wildfowl, most notably its roosting population of Icelandic greylag geese, and also the diversity of breeding birds, which includes ospreys at one of the longest established eyries in Scotland and other water and wetland birds.

## **NOTIFICATION HISTORY**

Notified under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 Act: 1972

Re-notified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981: 19 April 1985

Notification reviewed under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004:  
10 September 2010

## **REMARKS**

Measured area of SSSI corrected (from 259.3 ha).

Most of Lochs of Butterstone, Craiglush and Lowes SSSI is part of the Dunkeld - Blairgowrie Lochs Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which is designated for the European habitats and species listed below:

Habitats: Clear-water lakes or lochs with aquatic vegetation and poor to moderate nutrient levels  
Very wet mires often identified by an unstable 'quaking' surface

Species: Otter *Lutra lutra*  
Slender naiad *Najas flexilis*