

CITATION

MEIKLE LOCH & KIPPET HILLS SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST

Aberdeenshire

Site code: 1144

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: NK029311 & NK031321

OS 1: 50 000 SHEET NO: Landranger Series 30
1: 25 000 SHEET NO: Explorer Series 421

AREA: 71.7 hectares

NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES

Geological : Quaternary geology : Quaternary of Scotland
and geomorphology
Biological : Birds : Greylag goose *Anser anser*, non-breeding
: Pink-footed goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*,
non-breeding

DESCRIPTION

Meikle Loch and Kippet Hills are located 7 km to the east of Ellon.

Geology

Kippet Hills is a site of longstanding interest for studies of Quaternary geomorphology and stratigraphy in north-east Scotland. It demonstrates a representative suite of landforms and deposits of sand and gravel associated with the so-called 'red drift' which was laid down by the last ice sheet as it moved northwards along the coast from Strathmore. The fine assemblage of features comprises a 3km long esker ridge and other ice-contact glaciofluvial landforms, including the impressive kettlehole occupied by Meikle Loch. The erratic (exotic) stones and marine shells contained in the deposits indicate that much of the material was derived from offshore. Kippet Hills is therefore a key site demonstrating the onshore direction of movement of the last ice sheet and the pattern of deglaciation in the coastal lowlands north of Aberdeen.

Biology

Meikle Loch is a small eutrophic loch with little aquatic vegetation. It lies in an area of intensive farming and is one of the major roosts for the large numbers of greylag and pinkfooted geese which occur in the Grampian lowlands from autumn to spring. Between 15 and 20% of the NW European population of pinkfooted geese and up to 10% of the greylag population use the loch regularly and the loch is consequently of European and international importance for these species.

Other wildfowl occur in smaller numbers on passage and in winter, including teal, pochard, wigeon and tufted duck.

NOTIFICATION HISTORY

First notified under the 1949 Act: 1971.

Re-notified under the 1981 Act on 26 March 1985.

Notification reviewed under the 2004 Act: 13 June 2011.

REMARKS

Measured area of site corrected (from 71.95 ha).

Part of Meikle Loch and Kippet Hills SSSI is part of the Ythan Estuary, Sands of Forvie and Meikle Loch Special Protection Area (SPA) which is designated for the birds listed below. The species highlighted by an asterisk is most relevant to the area of this SSSI.

Common tern *Sterna hirundo*, breeding

Little tern *Sternula albifrons*, breeding

Sandwich tern *Sterna sandvicensis*, breeding

Pink-footed goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*, non-breeding*

Waterfowl assemblage, non-breeding

Eider *Somateria mollissima*, non-breeding

Redshank *Tringa totanus*, non-breeding

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*, non-breeding