

CITATION

MORTON LOCHS
SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST
Fife

Site code: 1192

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: NO 461265

OS 1:50,000 SHEET NO: Landranger Series 59
1:25,000 SHEET NO: Explorer Sheet 371

AREA: 52.82 hectares

NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES

Biological:	Freshwater habitats:	Loch trophic range
	Coastlands:	Sand dunes
	Birds:	Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>), non-breeding

DESCRIPTION

Morton Lochs Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located 2km south of Tayport, at the western (inland) edge of the Tentsmuir sand dune system. The site contains representative areas of open water, fen and reed-swamp, dune grassland, scrub and woodland habitats.

There are three lochs within the site, representing a range of trophic status from nutrient poor to relatively nutrient rich water. Associated with the open water is a range of pondweed *Potamogeton* spp., stonewort *Chara* spp. and plants such as spiked water-milfoil *Myriophyllum spicatum*. On areas of open mud to the west of the north loch the nationally scarce mudwort *Limosella aquatica* has been recorded. The lochs are fringed with scrub, woodland and a range of fen and reed swamp vegetation types, including greater pond-sedge *Carex riparia*, bladder sedge *Carex vesicaria* and sea club-rush *Bolboschoenus maritimus*.

On drier land to the west of the north and south lochs are areas of remnant dune vegetation with sand sedge *Carex arenaria* and bell heather *Erica cinerea*. Areas of former dune slacks can be found to the north and east of the lochs. These wetter hollows support species such as marsh stitchwort *Stellaria palustris*, which occurs here at the northern limit of its range in Britain.

The old railway line, which forms the site's eastern boundary, supports a diverse botanical interest including field gentian *Gentianella campestris*, wild parsnip *Pastinaca sativa*, grass-of-Parnassus *Parnassia palustris*, common wintergreen *Pyrola minor*, moonwort *Botrychium lunaria* and bristle club-rush *Isolepis setacea*.

The lochs are of regional significance as a refuge for passage and wintering wildfowl and in autumn the site regularly supports nationally important numbers of teal.

NOTIFICATION HISTORY

Part notified under the 1949 Act: 1952 as Morton Lochs Railway Line SSSI.

Part notified under the 1949 Act: 1952 and 1956 as Morton Lochs NNR.

Re-notified under the 1981 Act: 21 February 1984 as Morton Lochs SSSI with a 25.7 ha increase in area.

Notification reviewed under the 2004 Act: 23 February 2011

REMARKS

Measured area of site corrected (from 49.6 ha).