

## CITATION

**NORTHERN CORRIES, CAIRNGORMS  
SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST  
HIGHLAND (Badenoch and Strathspey)**

Site code: 1243

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: NH 974030

OS 1:50,000 SHEET NO: Landranger Series 36  
1:25,000 SHEET NO: Explorer Series OL57

AREA: 1966.89 hectares

## NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES

**Geological: Quaternary geology and geomorphology: Quaternary of Scotland**  
**Biological: Upland habitats: Upland assemblage**  
**Biological: Woodlands: Native pinewood**  
**Biological: Birds: Breeding bird assemblage**  
**Biological: Vascular plants: Vascular plant assemblage**

## DESCRIPTION

The SSSI covering the Northern Corries, Cairngorms is situated on the northern slopes of the Cairngorms approximately 6km south-east of Aviemore.

The Northern Corries represent a microcosm of the geomorphology of the Cairngorms and, as part of the wider assemblage of landforms, they occupy a central position between the high plateaux and the Glenmore basin.

The Cairngorm mountains form one of the finest assemblages of glacial, periglacial and glacio-fluvial landforms and erosion surfaces in Britain and Europe. The Northern Corries include fine examples of corries, a classic example of an arête, well developed boulder moraines associated with the Loch Lomond Re-advance, a protalus rampart and a slab avalanche site. Periglacial boulder lobes and solifluction sheets are particularly well developed in Allt Creag an Leth-choin.

The Northern Corries, Cairngorms SSSI has been notified for its mosaic assemblage of upland habitats. There is an exceptional altitudinal sequence of semi natural vegetation from pinewood habitats at c350m asl through a range of bog woodland, juniper scrub, subalpine heaths and mires to arctic-alpine communities at c1200m asl. Montane habitats include snowbed, fell-field, alpine moss heath, scree and associated vegetation.

As a result of a reduction in grazing by red deer, native Scots pine and juniper are becoming re-established in the high moorland and, together with emergent willows, are creating a sub-alpine scrub zone of particular interest. This site provides the best example in Britain of the re-establishment of forest cover and scrub at high altitudes.

The Northern Corries, Cairngorms SSSI holds an important assemblage of breeding birds; Scottish crossbill, capercaillie, peregrine falcon, merlin and dotterel all nest within the site, while other species such as golden eagle and osprey include the Northern Corries within their home ranges.

The Northern Corries, Cairngorms SSSI is also notified for its assemblage of flowering plants (with twenty nationally scarce species). Some of the best cliff and scree flora in the Cairngorms is found high up in the magnificent cliff buttresses, ridges and deeply indented gullies of the site. A number of rare species grow here including alpine saxifrage *Saxifraga nivalis*, Highland saxifrage *Saxifraga rivularis*, hare's-foot sedge *Carex lachenalii* and curved wood-rush *Luzula arcuata*.

## NOTIFICATION HISTORY

First notified under the 1981 Act: 13 July 1984

Re-notified under the 1981 act: 13 February 1989 with a 2.48 ha decrease in area

Notification reviewed under the 2004 Act: 30 March 2009

Citation reviewed under the 2004 Act: 15 November 2022

## REMARKS

Measured area of site corrected from 1966.37 ha.

Northern Corries, Cairngorms SSSI is part of the Cairngorms Special Area of Conservation (SAC) designated for the European habitats and species listed below and also part of the Cairngorms Special Protection Area (SPA) designated for the birds listed below.

Habitats:

- Acid peat-stained lakes and ponds
- Acidic scree
- Alpine and subalpine heaths
- Blanket bog
- Bog woodland
- Caledonian forest
- Clear-water lakes or lochs with aquatic vegetation and poor to moderate nutrient levels
- Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone
- Dry heaths
- Hard-water springs depositing lime
- High-altitude plant communities associated with areas of water seepage
- Juniper on heaths or calcareous grasslands
- Montane acid grasslands
- Mountain willow scrub
- Plants in crevices on base-rich rocks
- Plants in crevices on acid rocks
- Tall herb communities
- Species-rich grassland with mat-grass in upland areas
- Very wet mires often identified by an unstable 'quaking' surface

Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath

Species: Green shield-moss *Buxbaumia viridis*  
Otter *Lutra lutra*

Birds: Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus*, breeding  
Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*, breeding  
Golden eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*, breeding  
Merlin *Falco columbarius*, breeding  
Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*, breeding  
Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*, breeding  
Scottish crossbill *Loxia scotica*, breeding

Part of the Northern Corries, Cairngorms SSSI overlaps approximately 500m of the River Spey Special Area of Conservation (SAC) designated for the European species listed below.

Species: Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar*  
Freshwater pearl mussel *Margaritifera margaritifera*  
Otter *Lutra lutra*  
Sea lamprey *Petromyzon marinus*