

CITATION

RANNOCH MOOR
SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST
Highland (Lochaber), Argyll and Bute, Perth and Kinross

Site code: 1331

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: NN 350520

OS 1:50,000 SHEET NO: Landranger Series 41,42,50,51
1:25,000 SHEET NO: Explorer Series 385

AREA: 10,102.96 ha

NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES:

Biological	:	Freshwater habitats	Dystrophic loch
	:	Freshwater habitats	Oligotrophic loch
	:	Upland habitats	Blanket bog
	:	Birds	Breeding bird assemblage
	:	Invertebrates	Moths
	:	Invertebrates	Flies
	:	Invertebrates	Beetles
	:	Vascular plants	Vascular plant assemblage

DESCRIPTION:

Rannoch Moor Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located in the central Highlands, approximately 10 km north of Bridge of Orchy. The SSSI lies in a high-level basin at about 300 m altitude and encompasses one of the most extensive and undisturbed blanket bog and fen complexes in Britain. Internationally significant bog and freshwater habitats and associated vascular plant assemblages are present across the site.

Blanket bog occupies hollows, level ground and gentle slopes, the precise species composition reflecting overall wetness and water movement. Where mineral-enriched water flows through areas of bog, plants more typical of fen habitats occur, sometimes forming features known as 'ladder fens', in which narrow strips of vegetation and open water alternate for up to several tens of metres on gentle slopes. On the steeper slopes associated with the numerous knolls and small hills, the bog grades into wet heath on shallow peat.

Rannoch Moor contains numerous dystrophic and oligotrophic waterbodies which vary in size from small lochans to large lochs such as Loch Bà and Loch Laidon. Many of the small lochans have a predominantly peaty substrate resulting in a very low nutrient status, and consequently low species diversity. However, the larger lochs support vegetation typical of oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters including water lobelia and bulbous rush.

Uncommon and significant plant species comprise a vascular plant assemblage which includes marsh clubmoss *Lycopodiella inundata*, tall bog sedge *Carex magellanica*, dwarf birch *Betula nana*, least water-lily *Nuphar pumila* and floating bur-reed *Sparganium angustifolium*. This is the only place in Britain where the Rannoch-rush *Scheuchzeria palustris* is found.

A wide range of open water and moorland bird species, many of which are uncommon or of restricted distribution but regularly breed at the site, form a notable breeding bird assemblage. Species present include: black-throated diver, greenshank, dunlin, common sandpiper, greylag goose, red and black grouse, stonechat and wheatear.

The SSSI also supports a particularly diverse invertebrate fauna with three nationally scarce beetles: *Gyrinus opacus*, *Bembidion bipunctatus*, *Dytiscus lapponicus*; uncommon flies including two nationally rare species: *Brevicornu kingi* (Mycetophilidae) and *Tasiocera fuscescens* (Tipulidae); and several notable moth species including: *Apamea zeta* (Noctuidae), *Carsia sororiata*, *Eurois occulta* (Noctuidae), *Ectoedemia weaveri* (Nepticulidae) and *Coleophora genistae*.

NOTIFICATION HISTORY:

First notified under the 1949 Act: 1955 as Rannoch Moor. Then 1957 and 1962 as Loch Ba and Lochan na h'Achlaise and in 1972 and 1975 as Rannoch Moor
Re-notified under the 1981 Act: 19 April 1985 (with a 850 ha decrease in area)
Notification reviewed under the 2004 Act: 9 February 2009

REMARKS

Measured area of site corrected (from 10,232 ha)

Rannoch Moor SSSI is designated as Rannoch Moor Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and in part as part of the River Tay SAC for the European habitats and species listed below and in part as part of Rannoch Lochs Special Protection Area (SPA) for the birds listed below.

Habitats	Acid peat stained lakes and ponds Blanket bog Clear water lakes or lochs with aquatic vegetation and poor to moderate nutrient levels Depressions on peat substrates Dry heaths Very wet mires often identified by unstable quaking surface Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath
Species	Atlantic salmon <i>Salmo salar</i> Brook lamprey <i>Lampetra planeri</i> River lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> Sea lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> Fresh water pearl mussel <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i>
Birds	Black-throated diver <i>Gavia arctica</i>