

CITATION

RAVENSHALL WOOD
SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST
Dumfries and Galloway

Site code: 1334

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: NX 510531

OS 1:50,000 SHEET NO: Landranger Series 83
1:25,000 SHEET NO: Explorer Series 312

AREA: 41.13 hectares

NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES

Biological:	Woodlands:	Upland oak woodland Upland mixed ash woodland
	Non-vascular plants:	Lichen assemblage
	Vascular plants:	Vascular plant assemblage

DESCRIPTION

Ravenshall Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) lies five kilometres south-east of Creetown. The upland oak woodland is on the seaward facing cliffs and is one of the best examples of maritime-influenced broadleaf woodland in Dumfries & Galloway. The upland mixed ash woodland is confined to the ravine of Kirkdale Glen, which although just above sea level, this type of woodland is more commonly found in upland locations and is dominated by ash, with oak, elm, birch and hazel.

Within the Wigtown area the maritime sea-cliff woodland at Ravenshall Wood SSSI is unique. Within the wider geographical area of south-west Scotland, there is only one other comparable site. These woodlands are unusual in a Scottish context and provide a rare combination of woodland microclimate and hyper-oceanic context.

Under the strong influence of wind and salt-spray, the woodland has been sculptured to the form of the steep ground it occupies, with wind-pruned, stunted oaks, ash, wych elm and hazel. It is classified as Ancient of semi-natural origin and has been regularly harvested over centuries.

Due to these maritime influences, a specialised assemblage of lichen species is found. The site is particularly noted for its well-developed lungworts *Lobaria spp.* Lichen communities have developed on sea-shore rocks and within Ravenshall Wood itself, with close to 130 species having been identified, ten of which are nationally scarce.

A rich invertebrate fauna includes 113 species of beetle, of which six are notable. The invertebrates include the Scotch argus butterfly *Erebia aethiops*, two species of grasshopper and a rare cave-dwelling woodlouse *Trichoniscoides saeroeensis*.

The plant communities include the nationally scarce holy-grass *Hierochloa odorata* at one of a small number of sites in Dumfries & Galloway, seaside centaurry *Centaureum littorale*, lax-flowered sea-lavender *Limonium humile*, and dotted sedge *Carex punctata*.

In addition to the woodland, further habitats of strandline, saltmarsh, maritime base-rich grassland, hard-cliff and the willow carr and reed beds formed in spring lines add to the floral interest of the site.

NOTIFICATION HISTORY

Notified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981: 20 December 1988.

Notification confirmed on 15 September 1989 with a 2.1 ha reduction in area.

Notification reviewed under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004: 21 May 2010 and 1 March 2016 (citation only).

Part denotification confirmed under the 2004 Act: 10 May 2018 with a 0.55 ha reduction in area.

REMARKS

Area of site reduced from 41.68 ha to 41.13 ha.