

CITATION

RIVER AYR GORGE SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST East Ayrshire and South Ayrshire

Site code: 1356

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: NS 460253

OS 1:50,000 SHEET NO: Landranger Series 70
1:25,000 SHEET NO: Explorer Series 326

AREA: 57.18 hectares

NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES

Biological: Woodlands: Upland oak woodland
Biological: Invertebrates: Beetle assemblage

DESCRIPTION

The site, lying immediately south of Failford, encompasses a sandstone gorge containing one of the best examples of upland oak woodland in Ayrshire. Over much of the site the woodland is dominated by oak with an understorey of predominantly birch, as well as holly, rowan and hazel.

The combination of topography and vegetation has produced microclimatic and habitat conditions favourable for an important fauna of beetles, especially saproxylic species associated with rotting wood and fungi growing on dead wood. The site supports a number of Nationally Scarce beetles including *Microscydmus nanus*, which occurs in rotting wood, leaf litter and moss, and *Phloiophilus edwardsii* and *Tetratoma ancora*, which occur in fruiting bodies of the fungus *Phlebia radiata*. Other beetle species, which are not saproxylic, also occur, including some Nationally Scarce species that feed on oak foliage, and the Red Data Book rove beetle *Ilyobates nigricollis*, which occurs in woodland leaf litter.

NOTIFICATION HISTORY

Notified under the 1949 Act: 1962, 1972.

Re-notified under the 1981 Act: 2 November 1983, with a net reduction in area of approximately 13 hectares.

Notification reviewed under the 2004 Act: 29 September 2009

REMARKS

Measured area of site corrected (from 57.4 hectares).