CITATION **RIVER FESHIE**
SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST
HIGHLAND (Badenoch and Strathspey)

Site code: 1361

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE:		NN 845917 (Map A) NN 854970 (Map B) NH 850023 (Map C) NH 841061 (Map D)
OS	1:50,000 SHEET NO:	Landranger Series 35, 36 and 43
	1:25,000 SHEET NO:	Explorer Series 403
AREA:		598.82 hectares

NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES

Geological: Geomorphology: Fluvial Geomorphology of Scotland
Geological: Quaternary Geology and Geomorphology: Quaternary of Scotland

DESCRIPTION

Glen Feshie is an important site for the study and understanding of fluvial (river) geomorphology. The SSSI is made up of four separate areas which together provide a key assemblage of features associated with the River Feshie, a highly active gravel-bedded river, which is a tributary of the River Spey. The site includes the confluence of the two rivers near to Kincraig.

Area A contains a braided channel pattern where the highest rates of bank erosion and platform (channel position) changes in Scotland have been recorded. It is characterised by a readily available source of sediment, a wide area of potentially active floodplain and a system of channels which are periodically occupied, widened and abandoned. This area also includes the Allt Lorgaidh fan which is important for studies of alluvial fan development and for dating terrace sequences. Debris cones with buried soils are also present in this part of Glen Feshie.

Area B provides an excellent example of a well-preserved river terrace system, comprising outwash terraces, alluvial cut and fill sequences, and fan terraces dating from the late glacial to the late Holocene.

Area C. The wandering channel of the lower River Feshie has some of the highest recorded rates of channel adjustment in Scotland. It also provides good examples of both intra- and extra-channel avulsion (process of channel change). This area is an important source of sediment, with periodic flushing of material through the Feshie gorge and deposition within the Feshie confluence fan.

Area D. The confluence of the River Feshie with the River Spey constitutes a good example of a large, low angled alluvial fan. It has a complex history of rapid expansion and contraction of its active area. The currently active alluvial fan is set within a much larger, abandoned late glacial fan. The confluence is particularly

interesting also on account of the large volumes of sediment evacuated by the Feshie, which provide a temporary base level of the Upper Spey.

The Quaternary interest of the site is an outstanding assemblage of landforms and deposits recording processes and patterns of valley-floor and valley-slope development during the Late glacial and Holocene periods. These are part of the exceptional assemblage of pre-glacial, glacial, glaciofluvial and periglacial features in the Cairngorms which provide a great wealth of information for interpreting landscape evolution and environmental change in the uplands during the Quaternary period.

NOTIFICATION HISTORY
First notified under the 1981 Act: 13 November 1989
Notification reviewed under the 2004 Act: 10 November 2009

REMARKS
Measured area of site corrected from 619 ha.

The distribution of the features of interest changes markedly over time and extends beyond the current site boundary.

Parts of the River Feshie SSSI overlap parts of following SSSIs. Further details of their notified natural features can be found within the relevant citations.

Cairngorms SSSI - Sections A & B
River Spey - Insh Marshes SSSI - Section D

Parts of the River Feshie SSSI overlap parts of three Special Areas of Conservation and two Special Protection Areas, designated for the European habitats, species and birds listed below.

Cairngorms SAC – sections A & B
River Spey SAC – all four sections
Insh Marshes SAC – section D
Cairngorms SPA – sections A & B
River Spey - Insh Marshes SPA – section D.

Habitats: Acid peat-stained lakes and ponds
Acidic scree
Alpine and subalpine heaths
Alder woodland on floodplains
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 acid rocks
Plants in crevices on base-rich rocks
Species-rich grassland with mat-grass in upland areas
Tall herb communities
Very wet mires often identified by an unstable ‘quaking’ surface
Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath

Species:
Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar*
Fresh water pearl mussel *Margaritifera margaritifera*
Green shield-moss *Buxbaumia viridis*
Otter *Lutra lutra*
Sea lamprey *Petromyzon marinus*

Birds:
Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus*
Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*
Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*
Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*
Merlin *Falco columbarius*
Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*
Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*
Scottish crossbill *Loxia scotica*
Spotted crake *Porzana porzana*
Whooper swan *Cygnus cygnus*
Wigeon *Anas penelope*
Wood sandpiper *Tringa glareola*