

CITATION**STAR MOSS
SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST**

FIFE

Site Code: 1480

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: NO 308041

O.S. 1:50,000 SHEET NO: Landranger Series 59

O.S. 1:25,000 SHEET NO: Explorer 370

AREA: 61.31 hectares

NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES

Biological:	Broad-leaved, mixed and yew woodland	Birch woodland
Biological:	Fen, marsh and swamp	Transition grassland
Biological:	Neutral grassland	Lowland neutral grassland

DESCRIPTION:

Star Moss occupies a shallow depression 2 km north of Markinch in the Kirkcaldy district of Fife. It is a wooded raised bog which has been extensively cut for peat. The Moss is of importance as the largest area of naturally vegetated peat in central Fife with a wide diversity of habitats, principally birch woodland, fen and grassland.

The centre of Star Moss is occupied by wet birch woodland (downy birch *Betula pubescens* and silver birch *B. pendula*) with a carpet of sphagnum mosses and soft rush *Juncus effusus* swamp around a small pool. Woodland understorey species include narrow buckler-fern *Dryopteris carthusiana*, common cotton-grass *Eriophorum angustifolium*, white sedge *Carex curta*, and marsh violet *Viola palustris*. The north and south of the Moss has drier birch woodland present. Locally abundant species representative of the woodland understorey here include chickweed wintergreen *Trientalis europaea*, patches of raspberry *Rubus idaeus*, heath bedstraw *Galium saxatile*, sheep's sorrel *Rumex acetosella*, sweet vernal grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum* and scattered narrow buckler-fern.

The eastern and western edges of the Moss are more open, supporting neutral grassland and fen with stands of willow carr. Star Moss is known as a "poor fen" type. The driest fringes comprise rank neutral grassland grading into poor fen vegetation in places. Sedge-rich grassland occurs to the south east of the site.

NOTIFICATION HISTORY:

First notified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981: on 14 December 1990

Notification reviewed under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004: 21 May 2007

REMARKS:

Measured area of site corrected (from 61.7 hectares).