

CITATION

TAYVALLICH JUNIPER AND FEN SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST Argyll and Bute

Site code: 1524

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: NR 725858

OS 1:50,000 SHEET NO: Landranger Series 55
1:25,000 SHEET NO: Explorer Series 358

AREA: 410.67 hectares

NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES

Biological	: Woodlands	: Upland oak woodland
	: Woodlands	: Juniper scrub
	: Fens	: Valley fen
	: Dragonflies	: Dragonfly assemblage

DESCRIPTION

Tayvallich Juniper and Fen Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) lies adjacent to the village of Tayvallich on the Tayvallich peninsula, approximately 13 km west of Lochgilphead. The underlying geology of the site, dominated by Dalradian limestone schists, phylites and quartzites, form steep north-east to south-west orientated ridges and valleys which support a rich mosaic of habitat types. Of particular conservation importance are the species-rich fen communities, juniper heath and fragments of native ancient oak woodland. The SSSI is also one of the best sites in Scotland for its assemblage of dragonfly species.

Along the steep drier slopes of the ridges ancient oak woodland occurs. Mature oak trees dominate the canopy, while birch and hazel are frequent in the understory with rowan and holly occurring occasionally. Due to their proximity to the Atlantic Ocean the woodlands provide appropriate conditions for several rare oceanic bryophytes including *Epipterygium tozeri* and *Cephaloziella turneri* at the northern limit of their range as well as the endemic *Fissidens celticus*. An important feature of the Tayvallich woodlands are the juniper *Juniperus communis* scrub communities which grow across the peninsula from the west coast to the adjacent Linne Mhuirich SSSI, primarily on the dry south-east facing ridges. The growth form and extent of the juniper scrub on this site is highly unusual in Argyll.

The diversity of the fen communities is influenced by the inflow water chemistry. The base-rich areas support rich dioecious sedge – common butterwort *Carex dioica* – *Pinguicula vulgaris* mires, while near the sea the rich fens are characterised by the presence of black bog rush *Schoenus nigricans*. Star sedge – bog moss *Carex echinata* – *Sphagnum recurvum/ auriculatum* communities are typical of the poor fens in the less nutrient-flushed areas. Where base-rich water collects in the valley basins bottle sedge-moss *Carex rostrata* – *Calliergon cuspidatum* areas have developed. In some sites these grade into a rich type of *Phragmites* swamp or into an open water vegetation system with stoneworts *Charophytes*, least bur-reed *Sparganium minimum* and floating rafts of bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata* with marsh cinquefoil *Potentilla palustris*.

The valley mires and lochans are also important for their damselfly and dragonfly populations. Eleven species are known to breed within the SSSI including the unusual keeled skimmer *Orthetrum coerulescens*.

NOTIFICATION HISTORY

Notified under the 1981 Act: 27 May 1992

Notification reviewed under the 2004 Act: 2 July 2010

REMARKS

Measured area of site corrected (from 419.5 ha)

Tayvallich Juniper and Fen SSSI overlaps part of West Tayvallich Peninsula SSSI, which is notified for Dalradian geology.

Tayvallich Juniper and Fen SSSI is also adjacent to Linne Mhuirich SSSI.

Tayvallich Juniper and Fen SSSI is part of the Tayvallich Juniper and Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC), which is designated for the European habitats and species listed below.

Habitats : Juniper on heaths or calcareous grasslands
Species : Marsh fritillary butterfly (*Euphydryas aurinia*)
: Otter (*Lutra lutra*)