

## CITATION

**TULACH HILL**  
**SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST**  
Perth and Kinross

Site Code: 1568

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: NN 860640

O.S. 1:50,000 SHEET NO: Landranger Series 43  
1:25,000 SHEET NO: Explorer Series 386

AREA : 1666.83 ha

### NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES:

**Biological: Upland habitats: Upland assemblage**  
**Upland habitats: Limestone pavement**  
**Vascular plants: Vascular plant assemblage**

### DESCRIPTION:

Tulach Hill SSSI lies to the south of Blair Atholl, where it encompasses most of the hill ground extending approximately 9 kilometres west from the Pass of Killiecrankie. The site includes the summits of Meall na h-Imrich to the west and Craig Fonvuick to the east, as well as Tulach Hill itself, where it rises to an altitude of 470m. Its northerly slopes descend into the valley of the River Garry while the southerly aspects of the SSSI overlook Glen Fincastle and down to the valley of the River Tummel.

The site is one of a series of Dalradian limestone sites in highland Perthshire and is notified for a suite of upland habitats. The underlying limestone gives rise to a range of important plant communities including alkaline or calcareous fens, subalpine calcareous grassland, dry and wet heath and birch/oak woodland, as well as limestone pavement. These communities are species-rich with an assemblage of rare plants.

The calcareous fens consist of extensive small sedge mires (the largest in east Perth & Kinross) with a lesser development of bottle sedge *Carex rostrata* mires and stony flushes typified by common yellow-sedge *Carex demissa* and yellow saxifrage *Saxifraga aizoides* mire. A number of rare plant species occur, including brown bog-rush *Schoenus ferrugineus*, a species only found in the UK in a small area in Perthshire and marsh helleborine *Epipactis palustris*, a very rare species in Scotland. Some montane species occur such as three-flowered rush *Juncus triglumis* and sheathed sedge *Carex vaginata*.

The calcareous grasslands are important in Scotland not so much for their extent but because they are among the few examples of drier swards of the grassland developed on limestone with species such as crested hair-grass *Koeleria cristata*, meadow oat-grass *Helictotrichon pratense*, rock rose *Helianthemum nummularium*, quaking grass *Briza media* and fairy flax *Linum catharticum*. In places bearberry *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* occurs in these grasslands giving rise to a rare variant community known only from highland Perthshire.

The limestone pavement on Tulach Hill consists of small patches of pavement where soil accumulation has occurred to the point where the clints (the raised areas of limestone) are mostly set in a matrix of grassland. The flora of the pavement includes some uncommon species such as hairy rock-cress *Arabis hirsuta*, green spleenwort *Asplenium viride*, and rue-leaved saxifrage *Saxifraga tridactylites*, a species rare in Scotland.

Sub-montane heath is the dominant plant community on the site as a whole. The heath consists mainly of heather-blaeberry heath but there is also a scattered but well-developed representation of heather-bearberry heath, a type largely restricted to the eastern Highlands and species-rich heath with rarer species such as intermediate wintergreen *Pyrola media*. Wet heath is moderately extensive on the site, consisting of a deer grass – cross leaved heath community.

The site also has extensive upland herb-rich birch woodland which is the largest expanse of such woodland on an upland SSSI in Perthshire. The cliffs at Craig Fonvuick are a location for the nationally rare sticky catchfly *Lychnis viscaria* at its most northerly locality in the UK.

## **NOTIFICATION HISTORY**

First notified under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949: 1972

Re-notified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981: 31 March 1983 and 12 June 1985 (boundary amended with an increase of 21ha)

Reviewed under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004: 11 March 2011

## **REMARKS:**

Measured area of site corrected (from 1704 ha).

Most of Tulach Hill SSSI is designated as part of Tulach Hill and Glen Fender Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC) for the European habitats and species listed below:

Habitats: Base-rich fens

Dry heaths

Limestone pavements

Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone

Species: Round-mouthed whorl snail *Vertigo genesii*

Geyer's whorl snail *Vertigo geyeri*