

CITATION

BANKHEAD MOSS, BEITH SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST North Ayrshire

Site code: 1660

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: NS 347 506

OS 1:50,000 SHEET NO: Landranger Series 63
1:25,000 SHEET NO: Explorer Series 341

AREA: 32.5 hectares

NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES

Biological: Bogs: Raised bog

DESCRIPTION

Bankhead Moss, lying three kilometres south of Beith, is one of the best examples of active raised bog in North Ayrshire. A large expanse of the bog remains intact and is remarkably free of disturbance caused by drainage, grazing or burning. It demonstrates a wide range of typical mire features.

The bog originally formed around a waterlogged depression in the undulating plateau above the north-facing slope of the Garnock Valley. The south eastern section of the dome remains intact and is characterised by a pattern of very low ridges and shallow hollows, and supports several species of bog-mosses, the most prevalent of which are *Sphagnum papillosum* and *S. magellanicum*. Subtle variations in the microtopography, which are mirrored by local variations in the water table, control the distribution of additional *Sphagnum* species including *S. tenellum* and *S. cuspidatum*. *Sphagnum recurvum* and bog asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum* are restricted to areas where the movement of surface water causes local nutrient enrichment. Above this bryophyte layer the vegetation is dominated by heather and cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix*. Cranberry and round-leaved sundew *Drosera rotundifolia* also occur.

The north western section of the main dome has been subject to disturbance in the distant past, but has since recovered to support *Sphagnum papillosum*, *S. recurvum*, cross-leaved heath and hare's-tail cottongrass *Eriophorum vaginatum*. Parts of this section exhibit a quaking surface and bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata* is present.

Around the margins of the bog the water table is slightly lower. The vegetation is very similar to that seen in the centre of the dome except the heather is more robust and the *Sphagnum* cover is slightly reduced.

A zone of secondary lagg vegetation, which is dominated by *Sphagnum cuspidatum* and *S. recurvum* to the north, and soft rush *Juncus effuses* to the south, surrounds the dome.

NOTIFICATION HISTORY

First notified under the 1981 Act: 16 July 1996

Notification reviewed under the 2004 Act: 11 February 2008

REMARKS

Measured area of site corrected (from 32 ha).

Bankhead Moss SSSI is designated as Bankhead Moss Special Area of Conservation (SAC) for the European habitat listed below.

Habitat: Active raised bog