

CITATION

BEN MORE – STOB BINNEIN
SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST
Stirling

Site code: 190

PLANNING AUTHORITY: Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: NN 412222

OS 1:50,000 SHEET NO: Landranger Series 50, 51, 56, 57
1:25,000 SHEET NO: Explorer Series 364/365

AREA: 3880.11 hectares

NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES

Biological : Upland habitats : Tall herb ledge
: Alpine heath
: Alpine moss heath and associated vegetation
: Vascular plants : Vascular plant assemblage
: Non-vascular plants : Lichen assemblage

DESCRIPTION

Ben More - Stob Binnein Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is a hill massif within, but at the southern edge of, the Breadalbane range of hills. The site lies at the western end of Loch Doine in Balquhidder glen, 11 km west of the village of Balquhidder, and within the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park. There are 8 summits rising above 800 metres, the highest being Ben More (1174 m), Stob Binnein (1165 m), Cruach Ardrain (1045 m) and Beinn Tulaichean (945 m). Together they form the most southerly hills in the highlands exceeding 1070m and possess many notable montane features such as well-developed solifluction terraces. The underlying rocks and soils are predominantly nutrient-poor but there are limited outcrops of nutrient-rich mica-schists supporting the range of associated species-rich flora for which the Breadalbane Hills are internationally important. Ungrazed ledges support tall herb communities in which an exceptionally large number of alpine species occur.

This is one of a series of high altitude sites with outstanding base-rich outcrops and associated plant communities and species developed on Dalradian schists in the Breadalbane Hills, and this site supports an unusually large range of montane habitats and species. Many of the communities are unusual so far south in the Scottish Highlands and indicate the severe montane climate of the massif.

The tall herb community is found mainly at the south western side of the massif, in the vicinity of Creag Artair and Stob Invercarraig. This community comprises luxuriant herb-rich vegetation on more lightly grazed basic cliffs and hillsides and is characterised by species such as great wood-rush *Luzula sylvatica* and water avens *Geum rivale* as well as species such as lady's mantle *Alchemilla glabra* and wild thyme *Thymus polytrichus*.

The alpine heath vegetation is largely restricted to areas on the western slopes of Stob Coire an Lochain. This type of heath is an important part of the natural altitudinal sequence of vegetation in the British uplands, replacing heather *Calluna* where snow lies moderately late

in spring. It is dominated by blaeberry *Vaccinium myrtillus* and wavy hair-grass *Deschampsia flexuosa*, with other grasses such as sheep's-fescue *Festuca ovina*, common bent *Agrostis capillaris* and sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum* also occurring.

The alpine moss heath and associated vegetation communities are generally to be found across the site on the summits and ridges that are most exposed, and at the heads of corries and steep slopes where snow tends to accumulate in winter. They are dominated by mat-grass *Nardus stricta* and stiff sedge *Carex bigelowii*, with woolly hair-moss *Racomitrium lanuginosum* also occurring in some areas. These near-natural climax vegetation communities represent some of the best examples of their type in the Stirling Council area.

The site supports an outstanding assemblage of upland vascular plants, many of them nationally scarce. Species present include russet sedge *Carex saxatilis*, rock whitlowgrass *Draba norvegica*, two-flowered rush *Juncus biglumis*, alpine mouse-ear *Cerastium alpinum* and sibbaldia *Sibbaldia procumbens*.

The lichen assemblage on Ben More Stob Binnein is also considered to be of national importance, particularly for the range of species associated with the nutrient-rich rock outcrops. These rocks are known to support a number of rare and scarce species, including *Pannaria hookeri*, *Koerberiella wimmeriana*, *Miriquidica complanata* and *Tylothallia biformigera*.

NOTIFICATION HISTORY

First notified under the 1949 Act: 1972 as Stob Binnein & Ben More SSSI.

Re-notified under the 1981 Act: 5 March 1987 with a 1249 ha net increase in area.

Notification reviewed under the 2004 Act: 21 January 2011

REMARKS

Measured area of site corrected (from 3886.4 ha)