

CITATION

**BIRKS OF ABERFELDY
SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST**
Perth and Kinross

Site code: 208

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: NN 852477

OS 1:50,000 SHEET NO: Landranger Series 52
1:25,000 SHEET NO: Explorer Series 379

AREA: 45.18 ha

NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES

Biological: Woodlands: Upland mixed ash woodland
Non-vascular plants: Lichen assemblage

DESCRIPTION

Birks of Aberfeldy is located immediately to the south of the town of Aberfeldy in Highland Perthshire. It is important for its upland mixed ash woodland on schist and its lichen flora.

The site is an area of ancient mixed woodland in the gorge of the Moness Burn, with birch at higher levels. Ash and rowan woodland is present along burn-sides, and in the deep rocky gorge of the Moness Burn which is incised through schists and gneisses of Dalradian age. The most widespread woodland type on the site on drier less fertile soils is birch and oak with some beech. Diversity is provided by pockets of alder and ash woodland in wet hollows and burn-sides.

The ground flora is species rich and contains a large number of higher plants of restricted distribution in Perth and Kinross. The bryophytes are also of interest including a number of species indicative of base rich soils. The ground flora of the gorge section is dominated by dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis* and other herbs with creeping soft-grass *Holcus mollis* on drier areas. Amongst the uncommon species are the nationally scarce small cow-wheat *Melampyrum sylvaticum* and lesser hairy brome *Bromus benekenii*. Other uncommon plants include moschatel *Adoxa moschatellina* (an ancient woodland indicator), giant fescue *Festuca gigantea*, wood fescue *Festuca altissima* and mountain melick *Melica nutans*.

The Birks of Aberfeldy has a rich lichen flora including a long list of ancient woodland indicator species. The site contains 22 nationally scarce species including several oceanic and sub-oceanic species. This contrasts with several boreal or continental species which are also present. Notable species include old woodland indicators such as *Bacidia circumspecta* and *B. subincompta*

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: 15 December 1983

Notification reviewed under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004:
17 November 2010

REMARKS

Measured area of site corrected (from 47.1 ha).

Part of Birks of Aberfeldy SSSI overlaps part of the River Tay Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which is designated for the European habitats and species listed below:

Species: Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar*
Brook lamprey *Lampetra planeri*
River lamprey *Lampetra fluviatilis*
Sea lamprey *Petromyzon marinus*
Otter *Lutra lutra*

Habitats: Clear-water lakes or lochs with aquatic vegetation and poor to moderate nutrient levels