



## Purpose



This is a public statement prepared by SNH for owners and occupiers of the SSSI. It outlines the reasons it is designated as an SSSI and provides guidance on how its special natural features should be conserved or enhanced. This Statement does not affect or form part of the statutory notification and does not remove the need to apply for consent for operations requiring consent.

We welcome your views on this statement.

## Description of the site

Aldclune and Invervack Meadows was selected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest for its grassland interest. The site lies between Blair Atholl and Killiecrankie, approximately 8 km north-west of Pitlochry, next to the A9 road, and the River Garry.

The site comprises three riverine areas of unimproved grassland (i.e. an area which will not have received fertilisers or been ploughed or reseeded in many decades) alongside the River Garry, with alluvium flats (mostly sandy material transported and deposited by the river) and old abandoned river channels. Two areas are at Invervack, and one at Aldclune. The areas are mainly colonised by calcicolous grassland (a type of grassland which grows on soils influenced by underlying chalk or limestone), together with some moderately nutrient-rich grassland, some open sand/shingle with only scattered vegetation, and other areas of colonising broom scrub and trees, mainly alder. The SSSI also has a large number of plant species, including fifteen higher plant species which are locally uncommon including kidney vetch, purple milk vetch, petty whin, and field gentian.

**Aldclune** has large areas of tree cover, but it is the grassland between the wooded areas that is of importance. The grassland is notable for supporting a very large number of species (134), many of which are locally uncommon, including kidney vetch, mountain everlasting, giant bellflower and cowslip. It is a largely flat, sandy bank adjacent to the River Garry. It consists of open sand and shingle, with wild thyme, crested hair grass and kidney vetch, a closed grassland area with common bent and false oat grasses, but also with a small area of mixed woodland on a rocky outcrop at the south end of the site.

Most of the **Invervack (east)** area is covered by short, species-rich grassland, except for the south, where the grass is longer and contains more lichen species. The lowest part of this area is separated by a strip of alder. The grassland here is more

characteristic of sand and shingle. At the very western edge of this site, the vegetation becomes more rank and species-poor.

The vegetation of **Invervack (west)** is similar to that of the east meadow. In places it is dense, with a damp, well-developed lichen layer. Elsewhere, particularly on the old river channels, the soil is thin and sandy, and mosses become abundant.

The River Garry forms part of the River Tay Special Area of Conservation..

Invervack (west)



Field Gentian



Natural features of Aldclune and Invervack Meadows SSSI

**Name of natural feature: Lowland calcareous grassland**

#### **Current condition of the natural features**

Site condition monitoring (SCM) results for the grassland in 2001 show that overall they are in poor (unfavourable) condition. Although the Invervack sections were in good condition, monitoring showed the Aldclune section of the SSSI was in poor (unfavourable) condition because of an increasing amount of false oat grass and tree colonisation. This is resulting in a loss of species diversity within the grassland.

#### **Past and present management**

Invervack is grazed by sheep which has been ideal in preventing the vegetation becoming too coarse and rank and preserving the lower growing plants like the purple milk vetch. The sheep come off at the beginning of the summer, allowing the vegetation to flower and seed.

A very low level of sheep grazing occurs periodically in the Aldclune section, however increasing the level and type of grazing would prevent this situation from declining further, and in the long term would improve the grassland condition. An alternative to this would be a long term programme of mowing and removal of cuttings. Grazing will also control tree colonisation which has occurred at Aldclune.

The suspension footbridge at Invervack has now been removed by Perth and Kinross Council as it had been undercut by the river.

**Objectives for Management** (and key factors influencing the condition of natural features)

We wish to work with the land managers to protect the site and to maintain and where necessary enhance its features of special interest. SNH aims to carry out site survey, monitoring and research as appropriate to increase our knowledge and understanding of the site and its natural features and monitor the effectiveness of the management agreement.

**1. Maintain the extent and condition of the grassland habitat by:-**

- (1) Achieving a stocking density, or a mowing regime with removal of cuttings: which removes the annual growth of grasses and herbs; where there is no obvious damage to the vegetation from grazing or trampling; and at which the SSSI is able to support a wide range of species.
- (2) Maintaining or removing areas of tree and scrub which are colonising grassland habitat.

**Other factors affecting the natural features of the site**

There are currently no other factors affecting the natural features of the site.

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Date last reviewed: 26 March 2007