



Scottish Natural Heritage

## **ALEMOOR WEST LOCH & MEADOW Site of Special Scientific Interest**

### **SITE MANAGEMENT STATEMENT**

**Site code: 32**

**SNH**  
Anderson's Chambers  
Market Street  
Galashiels  
TD1 3AF

**Tel: 01896 756652**  
**Fax: 01896 750427**  
**e-mail: [galashiels@snh.gov.uk](mailto:galashiels@snh.gov.uk)**

### **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**

Alemoor West Loch & Meadow Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located 12 km west of Hawick. The West Loch is the section of Alemoor Reservoir that lies to the southwest of the bridge on the B711 crossing the Reservoir. The meadow, or flood-plain fen, is located around the point where the Ale Water enters the head of the reservoir.

The site is of interest because of the mosaic of habitats present, with one in particular being of special interest – the flood-plain fen. Also of special interest is the diverse range of national rarities present amongst the large number of plant species found at the site. This assemblage of rare plants is better here than at any other location in the area.

In addition to the flood-plain fen, the habitats present at this SSSI include open water, two very small raised mire systems and species-rich grass heaths. The variety of habitats present and their current quality support a wide range of plants, birds, animals and insects, making the site one of the most species diverse in the Scottish Borders.

The whole of the reservoir is a regionally important roosting, feeding and nesting area for a wide range of wildfowl and waders, and as a stop-over for migrant waders on autumn passage. Species of wildfowl recorded at the site include mallard, teal, widgeon, pintail, shoveler, tufted duck, pochard, golden eye, mute swan and whooper swan. Waders recorded include oystercatcher, curlew, lapwing, golden plover, redshank and common sandpiper.

The flood-plain fen feature was found to be in favourable condition when monitored in July 2004, and the assemblage of nationally rare and nationally scarce vascular plants were also found to be in favourable condition in August 2002.

The River Tweed SSSI (1949 Act site) overlaps this SSSI and extends upstream of the reservoir to a point on the Black Burn.

<b>Natural features of Alemoor West Loch &amp; Meadow SSSI</b>	<b>Condition of feature (date monitored)</b>
Flood-plain fen	Favourable, maintained (July 2004)
Vascular plant assemblage	Favourable, maintained (August 2002)

<b>Features of overlapping SSSI that are not notified as natural features of Alemoor West Loch &amp; Meadow SSSI</b>	<b>Condition of feature (date monitored)</b>	<b>Designation</b>
Trophic range river/stream	Unfavourable, no change (September 2004)	Tweed River SSSI

### **Past and present management**

The SSSI forms part of Alemoor Reservoir, which is currently used as a public drinking water supply reservoir by Scottish Water.

SNH worked with Scottish Water from 1999 – 2009 to manage the flood-plain fen by mowing, with removal of the cuttings. This has improved the floristic diversity of the fen, and checked the dominance of more vigorous plants such as meadowsweet, to the benefit of others including meadow crane's-bill and globe flower.

A private syndicate leases the fishing rights on the reservoir, to the east of the bridge on the B711.

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

We wish to work with the owner 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 to monitor the effectiveness of the management.

#### **1. To maintain the condition and extent of the flood-plain fen habitat.**

Ideally, the fen would be grazed to achieve the objective, but the status of the reservoir for the supply of drinking water means this cannot be done. Areas of the fen should be cut / mown annually after the main flowering season, with cuttings removed from the fen. This management is intended to keep rank elements of the flood-plain fen habitat under control, to maintain its habitat interest and species diversity.

#### **2. To maintain the condition and extent of the populations of nationally rare and nationally scarce plants present on the site.**

The five species are all present in the fen area, at different locations, which have been mapped. Vegetation should be cut / mown in and around these areas on a regular basis to prevent the dominance of coarser grasses and herbs and allow the plants of interest to flourish.

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

None noted at present.

Date last reviewed: 9 December 2010