

CITATION

CRAIGELLACHIE SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST HIGHLAND (Badenoch and Strathspey)

Site code: 428

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: NH 882113

OS 1:50,000 SHEET NO: Landranger Series 36
1:25,000 SHEET NO: Explorer Series 403

AREA: 379.85 hectares

NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES

Biological: Woodlands: Upland birch woodland
Biological: Invertebrates: Moth assemblage

DESCRIPTION

Craigellachie is a large birchwood located on the western edge of Aviemore. It lies on the lower east facing slopes of the Monadhliath mountains. The site is notified for the upland birch woodland which is one of the largest in Strathspey, and for its invertebrate interest, specifically moths.

The woodlands consist mainly of silver birch *Betula pendula*, with a scattering of other native species including aspen *Populus tremula*, hazel *Corylus avellana*, sessile oak *Quercus petraea*, wych elm *Ulmus glabra*, bird cherry *Prunus padus* and juniper *Juniperus communis*. The site is enriched by an intricate mixture of woodland with other habitats – these include a loch and a reservoir, cliffs, scree, small mires, heath and woodland glades. The water draining from the hill above is slightly base rich, resulting in a varied flora. This includes flushes with common spike-rush *Eleocharis palustris*, carnation sedge *Carex panicea*, and flea sedge *C. pulicaris*, while the woodland has serrated wintergreen *Orthilia secunda*, round-leaved wintergreen *Pyrola rotundifolia*, creeping lady's-tresses *Goodyera repens* and chickweed wintergreen *Trientalis europaea*. Woodland glades contain species rich grassland with alpine bistort *Persicaria vivipara*, wood crane's-bill *Geranium sylvaticum*, wild strawberry *Fragaria vesca* and common rock-rose *Helianthemum nummularium*.

Craigellachie supports a rich diversity of northern moths which include the nationally scarce Kentish glory *Endromis versicolora*. Other local northern species include the Rannoch sprawler *Brachionycha (Astroscopus) nubeculosa*, angle-striped sawfly *Energia paleacea*, scarce prominent *Odontesia carmelita*, great brocade *Eurois occulta* and cousin German *Protolampra sobrina*. Birch is the larval food plant for most of these moth species with the great brocade dependant also on bog myrtle *Myrica gale* and willow *Salix* species. Other species include netted mountain moth *Macaria carbonaria*, which is found on the heath above the woodland, and feeds on bearberry *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*.

NOTIFICATION HISTORY

First notified under the 1949 Act: 1961

Re-notified under the 1981 Act: 27 March 1987 with extension incorporating Craigellachie National Nature Reserve (NNR)

Notification reviewed under the 2004 Act: 17 November 2009

REMARKS

Measured area of the site corrected from 384.4 ha.