



**CRAIGS OF LUNDIE AND ARDGARTH
LOCH
Site of Special Scientific Interest**

West Lodge
Airlie
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SITE MANAGEMENT STATEMENT

Site ref: 447

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

Craigs of Lundie and Ardgarth Loch is situated approximately 6km south east of Coupar Angus. It was selected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest because of its five main habitats: lowland dry heath, valley fen, basin fen, rocky slopes and lowland calcareous grassland. The site's unusually large number of plant species add to its importance.

The site comprises imposing cliffs (with uncommon mosses and lichens) and an extensive area of steeply sloping dry grassland and dwarf-shrub heath. The lowest area of the site has an area of basin mire, partly sub-divided by a rushy ridge. Two distinct basin mires have formed as a result of this partial separation. These support poor and rich fen vegetation: poor fen vegetation is a characteristic plant community of areas where nutrient levels in the water are low, generally developing over slightly acid peat, whereas rich fen contains more calcareous, less acidic water. A small area of flushed grassland surrounds the mire area - here, groundwater rich in minerals from the underlying rock moves through, or over the soil surface. These plant communities are the only examples of their type in what was Dundee District, and contain several species which are very local in their distribution.

The plant communities associated with the cliffs are of restricted occurrence and normally confined to the coast. They contain several vascular plants and mosses which are of very local distribution in Scotland.

Natural features of Craigs of Lundie and Ardgarth Loch SSSI
Name of natural feature
Dwarf shrub heath - Lowland dry heath
Fen, marsh and swamp – Valley fen
Fen, marsh and swamp - Basin fen
Inland rock - Rocky slopes
Calcareous grassland - Lowland calcareous grassland

Current condition of the natural feature

Site condition monitoring (SCM) results for Craigs of Lundie and Ardgarth Loch found the fen, marsh and swamp features to be in favourable condition in 2002. However the grassland and heath features were found to be in unfavourable condition as there is insufficient browsing pressure to encourage species diversity in the grassland, and no diversity of age structure in the heathland (ie. the full range of age classes from seedlings to mature plants). The rocky slopes feature was also found to be in unfavourable condition. Although the main escarpment is intact and the special plants are still present, there is damage at the foot of the cliffs. Here, in some sections, nearly all of the vegetation has eroded, leaving bare soil among the rocky exposures. This is likely to have resulted from a combination of wind and rain and in some areas from people clambering down.

Past and present management

Sheep grazing takes place around the site, but grazing pressure on the site itself is very low. Levels of rabbit grazing have been high in the past. Much of the site, including the heather, has been burned on occasion in the past. There was also an unsuccessful attempt to drain the mire several decades ago. Mire vegetation benefits from low to moderate grazing pressure.

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

1. To maintain the extent and condition of the habitats.

- (1) To keep the levels of grazing such that the notified features diversity and structure are maintained

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 feature.

Other factors affecting the natural features of the site

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