

**CITATION****ALNESS RIVER VALLEY  
SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST  
HIGHLAND (Easter Ross and Cromarty)**

Site Code: 51

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: NH 645716

OS 1:50,000 SHEET NO: Landranger Series 21  
1:25,000 SHEET NO: Explorer Series 438

AREA: 28.42 hectares

**NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES****Biological: Woodlands: Upland mixed ash woodland****DESCRIPTION**

Alness River Valley SSSI lies approximately 1km upstream north of Alness and is one of a few remaining fragments of the richer river valley woodlands which were once more common in Easter Ross. The woodland occurs either side of the Alness River mainly on steep sloping ground some of which is unstable.

The SSSI is notified for its upland mixed ash woodland and is dominated by deciduous tree species characteristic of richer soils such as ash, wych elm and oak. Conifers such as Scots pine and juniper, together with aspen and birch, occur on small areas of free draining river gravels and on steeper more acid ground. The river is fringed by a narrow band of alder. Most of the woodland is mature with a closed canopy and a good shrub layer of hazel *Corylus avellana* and bird cherry *Prunus padus* occurs. The age structure is good and ash regeneration is abundant locally.

The diverse ground flora is characteristic of these woodland habitats containing species such as sanicle *Sanicula europaea*, moschatel *Adoxa moschatellina* and wood-sedge *Carex sylvatica*. Furthermore, rock outcrops and steep flushed banks occur by the river with species such as hairy-brome *Bromopsis ramosa* and maidenhair spleenwort *Asplenium trichomanes*. On the flood plain, there are banks of shingle where species such as globeflower *Trollius europaeus* occur.

**NOTIFICATION HISTORY**

First notified under 1949 Act: 1974  
Re-notified under 1981 Act: 10 July 1984 with a 71.65 ha decrease in area.  
Notification reviewed under the 2004 Act: 25 March 2009

**REMARKS**

Measured area of site corrected from 29.35 ha.