

## CITATION

**DUDDINGSTON LOCH**  
**SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST**  
City of Edinburgh

Site code: 547

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: NT 281724

OS 1:50,000 SHEET NO: Landranger Series 66  
1:25,000 SHEET NO: Explorer Series 350

AREA: 25.2 hectares

## NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES

**Geological : Igneous petrology : Carboniferous - Permian Igneous**  
**Biological : Freshwater habitats : Eutrophic loch**  
**Biological : Fens : Transition open fen**

## DESCRIPTION

Duddingston Loch Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located 3km from the centre of Edinburgh, at the southern edge of Holyrood Park. It is a small lowland eutrophic loch, with characteristic aquatic and fringing marshland vegetation. Extensive *Phragmites* reed beds are present around the loch. Developing willow scrub and a small area of mixed deciduous woodland complete the transition from freshwater to woodland. The rock exposure at Windy Gowl is part of the Arthur's Seat volcano complex geological site.

The loch is the only remaining example of a natural freshwater loch in the City of Edinburgh area. The plant communities found here are representative of eutrophic loch and fen habitats, and the *Phragmites* reed bed is the largest in the area. A clear transition of habitats from freshwater, through fen, to woodland is present.

The rock exposure at Windy Gowl makes visible a variety of the volcanic rock types found within Arthur's Seat and is one of the best and most studied ancient volcanoes in the world. Much of Edinburgh, including the Holyrood area, is formed from sedimentary rocks laid down in the Lower Carboniferous geological period, over 340 million years ago. The volcanic activity which formed Arthur's Seat and other parts in Edinburgh occurred later. During the last ice age, this whole area was then eroded. As the ice pushed through the soft sediments around the resistant volcanic rocks, it excavated a basin which is now occupied by Duddingston Loch.

A number of uncommon plants occur within the site, including several that are rare in a Scottish context, including nodding bur marigold *Bidens cernua*, greater spearwort *Ranunculus lingua*, fennel *Foeniculum vulgare*, lesser water plantain *Baldellia ranunculoides*, and fool's water-cress *Apium nodiflorum*. Several of the aquatic and marsh plants are uncommon in the area due to the shortage of suitable habitat.

Although not qualifying as a notified feature for this site, the number of breeding and wintering wildfowl present on the loch is of importance within the Lothian area. The loch supports a number of breeding waterbirds, such as heron, great crested grebe, mute swan, tufted duck, mallard and coot, while birds such as the sedge warbler breed in the reed bed and associated scrub. In winter, populations of mallard, pochard, tufted duck, teal and shoveler are present.

### **NOTIFICATION HISTORY**

First notified under the 1949 Act: 1953, 1972 as part of Holyrood Park SSSI;  
Re-notified under the 1981 Act: 22 August 1985 as Duddingston Loch SSSI.  
Notification reviewed under the 2004 Act: 26 November 2010

### **REMARKS**

Measured area of site corrected (from 25.6 ha).

Adjacent to Arthur's Seat Volcano SSSI.