



Scottish Natural Heritage
Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba

All of nature for all of Scotland
Nàdar air fad airson Alba air fad

ELGOL COAST
Site of Special Scientific Interest

Bridge Road
Portree
Isle of Skye
IV51 9ER

SITE MANAGEMENT STATEMENT

Site code: 606

Tel: (01478) 613329
Fax: (01478) 613470

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.

This statement is available in Gaelic on request.

Natural features of Elgol Coast SSSI	Condition of feature (and date monitored)
Bathonian	Partially destroyed (remainder favourable) (July 2006)
Callovian	Favourable, maintained (July 2006)
Oxfordian	Favourable, maintained (July 2006)
Mesozoic Mammalia	Favourable, maintained (July 2006)

Features of overlapping Natura sites that are not notified as SSSI natural features	Condition of feature (and date monitored)	SPA or SAC
Golden eagle <i>Aquila chrysaetos</i> (breeding population)	Favourable, maintained (August 2006)	Cuillins SPA

Description of the site

The Elgol Coast Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) lies on the west coast of the Elgol Peninsula on the Isle of Skye and runs from Elgol in the south to Camas Fhionnairigh, over 4km to the north. It is a long, narrow site which encompasses the foreshore and coastal cliffs and supports several geological features. The site is of notable geological value for its sequences of rock layers and its fossils. These interests are found in the coastal and inland cliffs and on intertidal platforms.

Elgol coast encompasses rocks of the Jurassic Period, in particular those of the Bathonian, Callovian and Oxfordian stages of that Period. The Jurassic landscape was very different from that seen today and the area that now corresponds to Skye was then covered by a shallow tropical sea in which sediments were deposited under a variety of estuarine, delta and lagoon conditions. The resultant sandstones and siltstones help provide detailed information on the geography, environment and ecology of the area at that time.

Loch Scavaig has yielded a partial skeleton of a shrew-like creature called *Borealestes serendipitus* and is of international interest as it is the most northerly site in Europe to produce a Mesozoic mammal fossil. Mammal sites from this era are very rare and have only been found in a few localities worldwide.

The SSSI's geological features are important for research and education, with researchers often taking samples. Drill holes caused by the removal of samples of rock and evidence of the extraction of blocks can be found in some locations. Because removal of the Bathonian rock is extensive and results from unconsented activity, this feature is considered to be partially destroyed. The remainder is favourable. The other rock types are in a favourable condition.

Past and present management

The steep coastal cliffs are inaccessible to stock and in a largely natural state. The area of heath and moorland above the cliffs is mostly common grazing land and is grazed mainly by sheep. Sections along the cliff top, close to the Elgol crofts are fenced.

A 999 year Management Agreement with John Muir Trust involves identifying desirable conservation objectives for Elgol to be reviewed every 5 years from 1995.

Occasional muirburning is carried out in a controlled manner.

The area is well-used by walkers and there is a well trodden path from Elgol to Camasunary.

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

We wish to work with the owners and occupiers 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 monitor the effectiveness of its management.

The EU Habitats and Birds Directives oblige Government to avoid, in SACs and SPAs, the deterioration of natural habitats and the habitats of species, as well as disturbance of the species for which the areas have been designated, where such disturbance could be significant in relation to the objectives of these Directives. The objectives below have been assessed against these requirements. All authorities proposing to carry out or permit to be carried out operations likely to have a significant effect on the European interests of this SSSI must assess those operations against the relevant Natura conservation objectives (which are listed on our website through the SNHi - SiteLink facility).

To maintain the favourable condition of the geological features by:

- retaining the existing good access to the rock exposures;
- maintaining the visibility of the exposures;
- encouraging fossil collectors to adhere to the Scottish Fossil Code.

Date last reviewed: 15 December 2010