



Scottish Natural Heritage

**FALLS OF DOCHART  
Site of Special Scientific Interest**

**SITE MANAGEMENT STATEMENT**

Site code: 625

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**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.

<b>Natural features of Falls of Dochart SSSI</b>	<b>Condition of feature (and date monitored)</b>
Fluvial Geomorphology of Scotland	Favourable, maintained (February 2007)

The site is also a component of the following designated areas:

- River Tay Special Area of Conservation

There are a number of qualifying features of these overlapping sites that are found in the Falls of Dochart SSSI, although they are not natural features of the SSSI. They are (including the relevant designation):

- Atlantic salmon (River Tay SAC)
- Brook lamprey (River Tay SAC)
- River lamprey (River Tay SAC)
- Sea lamprey (River Tay SAC)
- Otter (River Tay SAC)

Other qualifying features on these overlapping sites are absent or occur rarely on the Falls of Dochart SSSI.

### **Description of the site**

The Falls of Dochart (SSSI) are on the lower reaches of the River Dochart in the village of Killin - adjacent to Loch Tay and within the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park. The Falls are an excellent example of an unusual situation where the process of river erosion and the nature of the underlying rock have caused the river channel to widen rather than narrowing, and have generated a series of small interconnected waterfalls separated by a large central bedrock island.

It is likely that the Falls were formed between about 20,000 and 10,000 years ago.

Falls of Dochart also feature both circular and irregular potholes on the exposed rock surfaces. These have formed due to erosion by river water and the sediment it carries, and indicate that the channel is still a dynamic process, although rates of change are relatively low. The site also shows good examples of large blocks of stone which have been deposited on the bedrock during flood conditions.

The Falls are of recognised scenic beauty and are an important local tourist attraction.

The site was monitored in February 2007 and found to be in favourable condition.

### **Past and present management**

A laide diverts water to the Old Mill at the edge of the site, now the local tourist information centre.

The site is presently used for recreation purposes, with visitors enjoying the view from the main road bridge, and also from close-up (entering the site through the gateways in the wall). The Falls of Dochart are a major tourist attraction in the local area and are well signposted from major routes. At present there is no regulation of river flow and no interference with the natural processes. It is important for the geomorphological interest that this continues.

The principle interest of the site is its assemblage of erosive, river landforms and features set within a bedrock outcrop. Any development affecting the dynamism of the site, such as the modification of flood or normal flows through the site, should be avoided, as should any activities that impact on the integrity of the landforms (e.g. quarrying).

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

We **wish** to work with the owner to protect the site and to maintain and where necessary enhance its features of special interest. SNH aims carry out site survey, monitoring and research as appropriate to increase our knowledge and understanding of the site and its natural features.

#### **1. To prevent deterioration of the site**

If natural processes are interfered with the site will deteriorate. It is important that the site continues to experience and be able to respond to the full natural range of river flows.

**2. To allow the site to evolve naturally**

The Falls of Dochart will evolve naturally in response to natural changes in the water and sediment discharges. In the short term, this could involve flooding, deposition, erosion or drought. Whilst human safety and protection of property and infrastructure are an important priority, the continued operation of natural processes is fundamental to the evolution of the site. Where possible, natural changes such as the collapse of parts of the Falls through undermining and erosion, should be accepted as being part of the natural regime.

**3. To maintain the physical and visual integrity of the landforms**

Although unlikely, no development should be allowed within the Falls of Dochart site so that the important features remain visible and not obscured.

**4. To increase understanding and appreciation of the features of the site**

Given the location of the site within a well visited, highly accessible part of the National Park, some form of local interpretation of the features of interest should be considered.

Date last reviewed: 27 February 2009