



Scottish Natural Heritage
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FINDON MOOR
Site of Special Scientific Interest

SITE MANAGEMENT STATEMENT

Site code: 636

Address: Inverdee House, Baxter Street, Torry, Aberdeen AB11 9QA

Tel: 01224 266500

email: Tayside_Grampian@snh.gov.uk

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

Findon Moor is the only large area of coastal heath in south Aberdeenshire. This once frequent habitat is now very rare along this coast, due to the development of the coast line and changes in agricultural practices. Findon Moor is exceptional in the diversity of habitats present, from the rocky shore to the heath.

About half the site is covered in heathland habitats, the most common of which is dry heath, which covers most of the central and northern part of the SSSI. On the seaward slopes, creeping willow and crowberry become more common as does bracken which is locally dominant in places. Wet heath is found in the wetter hollows amongst the dry heath in the northern part of the site. There are several areas of wetter ground dominated by bog asphodel and there is an acid flush with common spike-rush and a number of sedges and orchids.

Maritime grassland is found above the rocky shore and along the cliff tops, with frequent thrift and common scurvy-grass and locally frequent bloody cranesbill. There are also areas of neglected, species poor, unimproved grassland.

Additional habitats found include an area of gorse, which provides important shelter for birds like whinchat, stonechat and wheatear, and an area of willow. There are also a number of man-made pools, which are gradually being colonised by plants such as lesser spearwort and blinks.

Natural Features of Findon Moor SSSI	Feature Condition (date monitored)
Lowland dry heath	Favourable Maintained (September 2000)
Lowland wet heath	

Monitoring of the site carried out in September 2002. Overall the site was in favourable condition, though some concerns were noted about the ongoing expansion of scrub, possibly at the expense of heath.

Past and present management

The area was formerly subject to grazing by livestock, and, possibly, locally cultivated. Evidence of this can be seen in the presence of small, enclosed fields. The moor also appears to have been subject to burning. Several pools were created by the construction of three stone and turf dams across the natural drainage channel that runs from the south-west to the north-east across the moor to Kay Hole. These may have been constructed to hold fish and are now slowly filling in with marsh plants, creating an interesting habitat. In the recent past the moor was used for the dumping of top soil and tipping of agricultural and building waste but, with the erection of lockable gates, this is now less likely.

Currently the site is largely used for recreational purposes. Many people walk on the site, with a number of those making their way to the coast for sea fishing.

Sewage pipes run through the a small part of the site, with a sewer outfall on the coast, just inside the south-west boundary.

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

We wish to work with the owners 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.

1. To maintain the large area of heathland and the range of habitats across the site from the rocky shore to the heath

Some of the grassland areas dominated by tall coarse grasses may possibly benefit from some grazing by livestock. In addition, scrub appears to be expanding and is having a negative, though not yet significant impact on the site. Financial incentives for grazing at appropriate levels or for selective control of scrub may available under the Scottish Government's Rural Development Programme.

2. In partnership with the site's owners, interpret the importance of the site to visitors

Recreation at the current level is unlikely to cause any significant damage to the site. But, fires, often started as acts of vandalism, could be damaging. A fire in 1994 burnt an area of about 4 ha of gorse and heather.

Date last reviewed: 7 June 2011.