



**Scottish Natural Heritage**  
**Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba**

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

**GLEN NANT**  
**Site of Special Scientific Interest**

**SITE MANAGEMENT STATEMENT**

**Site code: 717**

**Address: Cameron House, Albany Street, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4AE**

**Tel: 0300 244 9360 Email: [Argyll\\_Stirling@SNH.gov.uk](mailto:Argyll_Stirling@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.

This Statement is available in Gaelic on request.

<b>Natural features of Glen Nant SSSI</b>	<b>Condition of feature (date monitored)</b>	<b>Other relevant designations</b>
Upland oak woodland	Unfavourable no change (October 2000)	SAC
Bryophyte assemblage	Favourable, maintained (November 2008)	
Lichen assemblage	Unfavourable no change (February 2005)	
Cranefly ( <i>Tipula luridorostris</i> )	Favourable, maintained (July 2003)	

<b>Features of overlapping Natura sites that are not notified as SSSI natural features</b>	<b>Condition of feature (date monitored)</b>	<b>Designation (SAC or SPA)</b>
Alder woodland on floodplains	Unfavourable, recovering (October 2001)	SAC
Mixed woodland on base-rich soils associated with rocky slopes	Unfavourable, recovering (October 2001)	SAC
Otter ( <i>Lutra lutra</i> )	Favourable, maintained (June 2004)	SAC

**Description of the site**

Glen Nant Site of Special Scientific Interest extends from south of Taynuilt along the River Nant to its source, Loch Nant. The majority of the site lies to the west of River Nant and the B845 public road. There is however also a narrow strip to the east of this

natural divide which runs the majority of length of the site.

This site is one of a series of eight SSSI in the vicinity of Loch Etive that are of international importance for their native woodland habitats and have been notified as a combined Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

The site represents one of the largest extents of upland oak woodland in the Lorn area. However, the underlying geology results in a variation of soils which, combined with the mixed topography and coppice management of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is reflected in the variation of composition and structure of the canopy. As a result the site supports a patchwork of woodland ranging from ash-hazel woodland on underlying calcareous bedrock to oak and birch woodland on the more acid soils. Other woody species include wych elm, gean and holly with alder and sallows on less steep areas. This diversity of the woodland is reflected in the diverse ground vegetation with fern-dominated communities and heath on the higher slopes of acid oak-birch woodland and an abundance of herbs on the calcareous soils. During the last site condition monitoring (2000) the upland oak woodland feature was considered to be in unfavourable unchanged conservation status. Whilst targets for area, natural processes and structural development, composition and quality indicators were met (where they could be assessed), those for regeneration were not due to insufficient saplings over 1.5 m in height. This is likely to be an indication that deer densities are too high. However, it is also potentially attributable to the fact that substantial areas consist of even aged oak woodland with a closed canopy structure (due to past management for charcoal production) which are not as conducive to the regeneration process when compared with a more natural composition and structure. Site condition monitoring (2001) of the corresponding SAC feature, western acidic oak woodland, concurs with the SSSI monitoring and concluded that the feature was also in unfavourable condition. Targets for woodland layers, browsing levels and successful regeneration were not met.

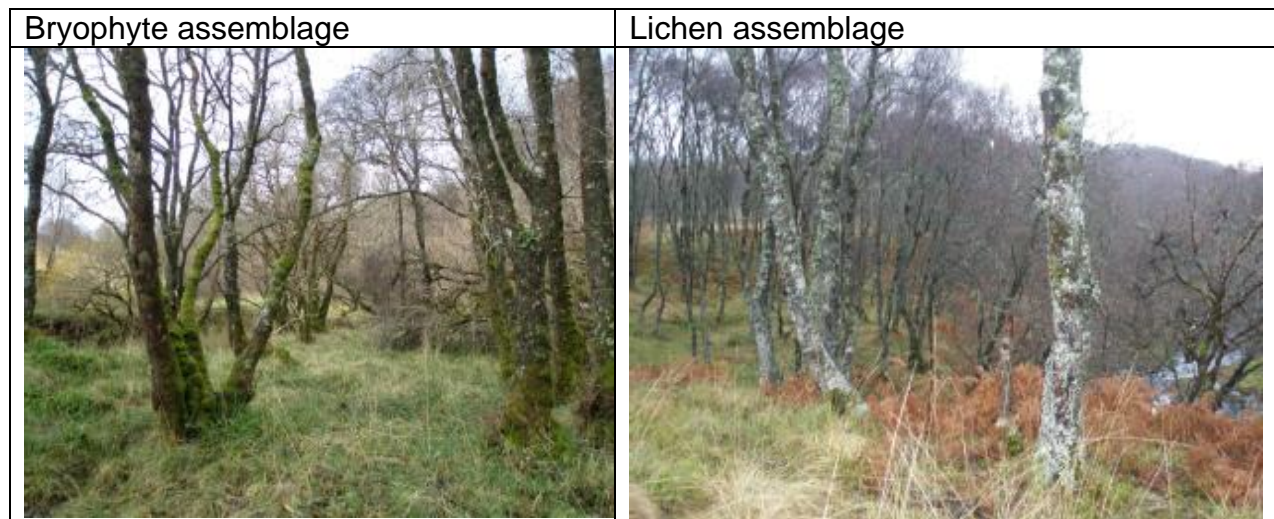
The site has recently been estimated to support at least 240 species of bryophyte (155 mosses, 85 liverworts), more than 25% of the Scottish bryophyte flora. Of this total 11 are nationally scarce species and 35 are oceanic species. It is this exceptional assemblage of oceanic species that is the main bryophyte interest on the site, particularly the excellent epiphytic flora found on hazel. The base-rich nature of some areas gives an added interest both in the extent of communities that are base-demanding and also in providing the basis for the large populations of both *Plagiochila bifaria* and *Plagiochila exigua*. During the last site condition monitoring (2008) the bryophyte assemblage feature was found to be in favourable condition as all the targets were met.

Glen Nant is amongst the most important lichen sites in the Lorn area and has been recorded to have at least 234 species of lichen, including species that require particularly humid and oceanic conditions. The site supports many nationally and internationally significant lichen species, the majority of which are from three notable communities; *Lobarion pulmonariae*, *Graphidion scriptae* and *Parmelietum laevigatae*. Between 1976 and 2006 the sites rich oceanic lichen flora has been recorded to include no less than two vulnerable species, ten near threatened species, nine nationally rare species and 53 nationally scarce species. During the last site condition monitoring (2005) the lichen assemblage feature was found to be in unfavourable condition. The lichen assemblage feature of Glen Nant SSSI was found not to meet all

the targets for exotic regeneration, crustose lichens and all areas failed to meet the targets for appropriate grazing/browsing levels. All areas had high levels of deer browsing which is limiting natural regeneration of broadleaves. This is likely to be a problem for lichen habitats in the long term. The main areas seen with broadleaf regeneration were glades. However, in the long term shading out of glades can also present a problem for light sensitive species of lichen. Glen Nant SSSI includes areas of former sitka spruce plantation so there is potential for exotic regeneration to be widespread. However, of the four areas for which an monitoring of this potential occurrence was completed, sitka spruce regeneration was only found in one. This area was adjacent to an area that had been clear-felled of conifers so this is not surprising. Giving that the upland oak wood feature passed the exotics target, it seems unlikely that exotics will impact upon the lichen assemblage feature in the long term, despite failing the target during last site condition monitoring. The target for at least 50% cover of crustose lichens present in even-aged oak stands, especially on oak trunks at the edge of stands, was not met. Greater than 30% cover of crustose lichens was recorded on well-lit oaks on south facing slopes in the only relevant area. One possible explanation for the low cover of crustose lichens on exposed oaks is that the development of crustose lichens may have been inhibited in the past by the adjacent conifer plantation (now clear felled) to the southwest; therefore the failure of this target does not appear to be a cause for concern in the long-term.

Glen Nant abounds with invertebrate life, one of the most obvious of which is the wood-ant. However, the woodland also supports a population of the slightly less obvious, but nationally rare, arboreal crane fly (*Tipula luridostris*) which is a notified feature of the site. Other invertebrates include an estimated 175 species of butterflies and moths. During the last site condition monitoring (2003) the notified species *Tipula luridostris* was not found. However, due to the rarity of species, several visits would have been required to establish its presence on the site. The site was found to be in favourable condition due to its good habitat and the observation of two nationally scarce fly species; *Tetanocera phyllophora* and *Botanophila maculipes*. The Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) fly species, Northern Yellow Splinter (*Lipsothrix errans*), has also been recorded at the site. It seems likely that the management recommendations for the notified species, *Tipula luridostris*, will also benefit the other species of fly which are known to be present on the site.

The site supports many mammals typical of Argyll, red squirrels are occasionally seen and otters frequently use the River Nant for foraging. Otter, a notified feature of the SAC, were found to be in favourable condition during the last site condition monitoring (2004).



### Past and present management

During the 18th and 19th centuries the woodland was coppiced for the production of bark for the tanning industry and charcoal for iron smelting at the Lorne Furnace at Taynuilt. As a result, much of the woodland canopy is oak-dominated, uniform and close-grown. However, some areas were more difficult to manage, and the 'hanging' woods along the river gorge are less modified and have a canopy of ash, wych elm, hazel and bird cherry.

Following the demise of the Taynuilt blast-furnace in the 1880s, silvicultural practices ceased. Glen Nant was divided between smaller holdings and was managed for the grazing of both cattle and sheep. Stock densities were at a level whereby woodland regeneration was held in check and anecdotal reports suggest that the site was heavily grazed throughout.

Since the 1970s there has been a drift towards varying forms of silviculture and conservation management. Although stock has been removed from much of the woodland, deer are present in sufficient numbers to suppress natural regeneration unless enclosure fences are erected. The Forestry Commission inter-planted large areas of ancient woodland on the western side of the lower glen, and planted adjacent hill ground with commercial conifers, mainly Sitka spruce. This area is now a Caledonian Forest Reserve and remedial work has largely been completed to eliminate these exotic conifers on ground within and adjacent to the SSSI. The woodland has also been opened to the public with the construction of a nature trail. A small felling coup was created and enclosure fence erected, and this acts as a demonstration of coppice management at one of the focal points on the nature trail. Following the felling of oak woodland on the eastern side of the lower glen in the 1970s, negotiations led to the declaration of this area as the Glen Nant National Nature Reserve (NNR) in 1979 and the erection of regeneration enclosures. Woodland Grant Schemes have been implemented on other sections of the site and relatively little ground is still grazed by livestock. In 2003 the NNR was extended to include the FCS woodland on the western side of the lower glen.

In 1971 the Loch Nant Hydro-electric scheme came into operation the consequence of which was a reduction in water flow in the River Nant. This may have had some affect on assemblages of mosses, liverworts and lichens, however, as these features of the site remain in excellent condition the effects are likely to have been more significant in

the upper glen which is more open in character.

Argyll and Bute Council carry out periodic felling, lopping and pruning of road-side trees and the Hydro-Electric plc carry out management along the power-lines, however, these activities are not deemed to be detrimental to the special scientific interest of the site.

Public access is encouraged in the NNR, with this brings the need for ongoing monitoring and maintenance of access routes and interpretive material.

**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 to monitor the effectiveness of the 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).

**1. Maintain and enhance the extent and distribution of upland oak woodland habitat**

- 1.1 Maintain appropriate browsing levels to ensure long term continuity of native species through natural regeneration
- 1.2 Maintain woodland glades as important components of a fully functioning woodland eco-system
- 1.3 Remove non-native trees and shrubs from the site and prevent the further establishment of these non-native species
- 1.4 Where appropriate encourage the regeneration of a healthy understory to improve age structure and diversity
- 1.5 Consider the possibility of promoting veteran trees in areas of even age, closed canopy stands
- 1.6 Revert any remaining areas of conifer within or adjacent to the site to native woodland through the natural regeneration process

**2. Maintain and enhance the diversity and distribution of the bryophyte assemblage**

- 2.1 Maintain deadwood habitat
- 2.2 Remove non-native trees and shrubs from the site and prevent the further establishment of these non-native species

**3. Maintain and enhance the diversity and distribution of the lichen assemblage**

- 3.1 Maintain appropriate browsing levels to ensure long term continuity of native species through natural regeneration to provide suitable lichen habitats for future colonisation
- 3.2 Maintain woodland glades/edge habitats
- 3.3 Maintain deadwood habitat
- 3.4 Remove non-native trees and shrubs from the site

**4. Maintain and enhance conditions suitable for fly species (*Tipula luridorostris*)**

- 4.1 Maintain woodland glades/edge habitats
- 4.2 Maintain good water quality
- 4.3 Maintain current natural water flow rates in watercourses

Date last reviewed: 09 December 2010