CITATION

LOCH ACHNACLOICH
SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST
HIGHLAND

Site code: 955

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: NH 665735

OS 1:50,000 SHEET NO: Landranger Series 21
1:25,000 SHEET NO: Explorer Series 438

AREA: 20.09 hectares

NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES

Biological: Freshwater habitats: Eutrophic Lochs
Biological: Fens: Open water transition fen (includes swamp)

DESCRIPTION

Loch Achnacloich is situated 4km north of Alness and is one of only three nutrient-rich lochs in East Ross. It is surrounded by agricultural land with extensive forestry plantations in the catchment. Alder trees occur around the loch but it is only on the southern shore that mixed deciduous woodland of alder, ash, bird cherry, birch and oak, is fully developed. This site is notified for its loch and transition fen natural features.

The loch is small, nutrient-rich and contains a luxuriant growth of aquatic plants particularly in the more sheltered southern and western side. The aquatic plants include the long-stalked pondweed *Potamogeton praelongus* and the nationally scarce least yellow water lily *Nuphar pumila*. Fringing vegetation is profuse with a diverse range of species. Extensive common reed *Phragmites australis* beds give way to one of only two greater tussock sedge *Carex paniculata* swamps in East Ross.

The sedge swamp grades into willow carr on the western shore, behind which is a species-rich meadow. Here herbs such as ragged robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi* and meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria* are abundant and several species of orchid, and sedge are noteworthy. A major feature of the site is the transition from species-rich wet meadow to open water, via swamp and floating fen.

NOTIFICATION HISTORY

First Notified under the 1949 Act: 1978
Re-notified under the 1981 Act: 10 July 1984
Notification reviewed under the 2004 Act: 21 August 2008

REMARKS

Measured area corrected from 20.1 ha.

Loch Achnacloich SSSI is also Loch Achnacloich Special Area of Conservation designated for the European habitat listed below:

Habitats: Naturally nutrient-rich lakes or lochs which are often dominated by pondweed