



**Scottish Natural Heritage**

All of nature for all of Scotland

**LOCH CON**  
**Site of Special Scientific Interest**

**SITE MANAGEMENT STATEMENT**

Site code: 973

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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.

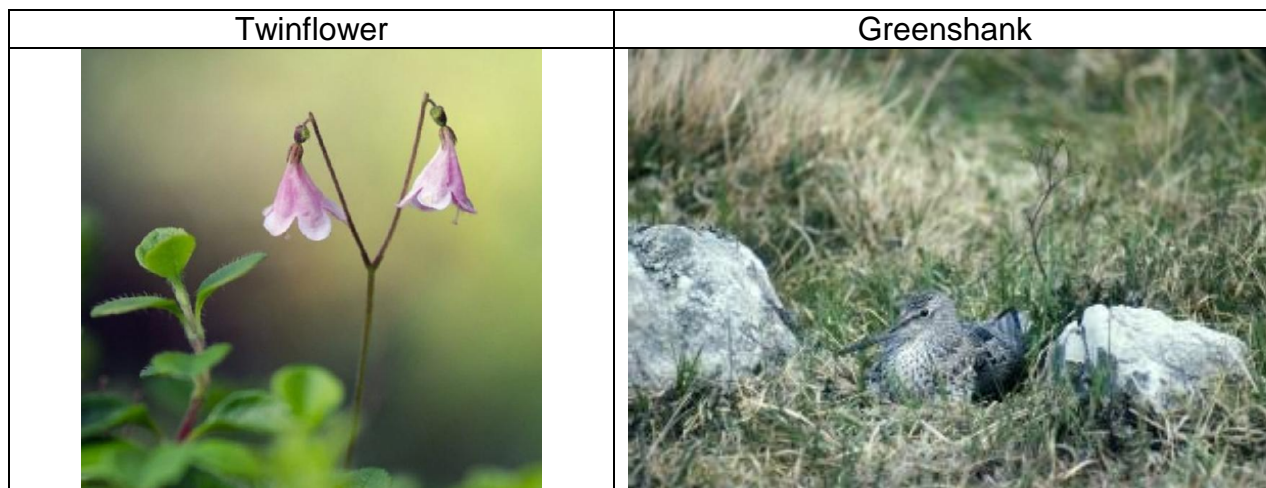
We welcome your views on this statement.

**Description of the site**

Loch Con is situated 24 km north-west of Pitlochry and 9 km north of Loch Rannoch. It is less than 3 km from the southern boundary of the Cairngorms National Park. Loch Con is of special scientific interest for its botanical interest, and for its range and rarity of breeding bird species.

Loch Con is an oligotrophic (nutrient-poor) upland hill loch, and is set within an area of moorland. The islands show the development of natural vegetation in the absence of grazing and disturbance. These are also of interest on account of the rare plant species present, including twinflower and interrupted clubmoss. The boggy area at the western end of the site shows a good range of vegetation types and includes the rare dwarf birch. The stony loch shores also have some areas influenced by the lime-rich spring water, with uncommon plants including hair sedge, alpine rush and Scottish asphodel. Long-stalked pondweed has recently been discovered in the loch. This species is often associated with deep lime-rich water and it is possible that there is some calcareous ground water entering the loch at depth.

The variety of habitats, especially the islands, and the secluded nature of the site are important factors in allowing birds to breed successfully, especially rarer species. The wide range of birds breeding on or around the loch include tufted duck, teal, greenshank and good numbers of common sandpiper.



### Current condition of the natural features

The site was surveyed for breeding birds and was found to be in a favourable maintained condition in 2002.

The site condition assessment for the vascular plant assemblage has not been completed yet. An attempt to survey the site was made in 2004 and the site was visited in 2010. It is thought likely that the feature will be in favourable condition.

Natural features of SSSI	Feature condition (date monitored)
Breeding bird assemblage	Favourable maintained (June 2002)
Vascular plant assemblage	Survey not yet completed

### Past and present management

Sheep grazing takes place over the whole SSSI apart from the islands. Continued grazing of most of the SSSI is desirable to maintain the sedge rich areas, but the islands should remain ungrazed to maintain their botanical interest. It would be desirable to encourage the regeneration of the plant interest on the promontory on the north side of the loch and remove the planted spruce from one of the islands. Means by which this can be achieved are being explored.

Fishing from boats and the shore occurs. There is a boat house at the western end of the main loch.

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

- To maintain Loch Con SSSI as favourable habitat for its breeding bird species and its rare plants and vegetation.

This will be dependant upon maintaining a low level of disturbance and no grazing on the islands. Current land management is broadly compatible with maintaining the conservation interest of the site.

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. We aim 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 management.

#### **Other factors affecting the natural features of the site**

- As a management practice crow trapping could disturb breeding bird species because of daily visits. The breeding success of sensitive bird species especially greenshank are the main concern.
- Recreational use of Loch Con by the public appears to have increased from the very low levels present twenty years ago. A bothy exists at the east end of the site and people have been observed walking around the loch shore. This could disturb sensitive breeding bird species during the spring and early summer period.

**Date last reviewed:** 21 March 2011