

CITATION

LOCH HALLAN SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST WESTERN ISLES

Site code: 988

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: NF738224

OS 1:50,000 SHEET NO: Landranger Series 31
1:25,000 SHEET NO: Explorer Series 453

AREA: 377.40 ha

NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES

Biological

Coastlands: Machair
Freshwater habitats: Machair Loch
Wetlands: Open water transition fen
Basin fen
Birds: Breeding bird assemblage

DESCRIPTION

Loch Hallan SSSI is situated on the west side of South Uist, to the north and west of Daliburgh. The combination of coastal machair plain, machair lochs, reed beds, fens and marshes around and including Loch Hallan represent one of the finest machair wetlands in Scotland. The site provides important feeding, nesting and overwintering habitats for an assemblage of birds, particularly waders and wildfowl.

Loch Hallan itself is a shallow nutrient rich machair loch where slow water movement has allowed the formation of the most extensive reed beds in the Uists. Rare and diverse assemblages of plants are found in association with the reed beds including Holy Grass *Anthoxanthum nitens* and Cowbane *Circuta virosa*, which is at its northern limit in the British Isles. Other lochs which comprise the basin fen feature include Loch na Liana Moire to the north of Loch Hallan. This loch has an unusually diverse flora, with at least 10 species of pondweed recorded, some of which are rare or nationally scarce.

The site is an important area for breeding waders and wildfowl, particularly for redshank, dunlin, lapwing and oystercatcher. Over 20 bird species regularly breed at the site.

NOTIFICATION HISTORY

First notified under the 1949 Act: 1975

Re-notified under the 1981 Act: 4 February 1988

Notification reviewed under the 2004 Act: 31 March 2011

REMARKS

Measured area of site corrected (from 364.1 ha)

Loch Hallan SSSI is designated as part of South Uist Machair and Lochs Special Area of Conservation (SAC) for the European habitats and species listed below and as part of South Uist Machair and Lochs Special Protection Area (SPA) for the birds listed below:

Habitats: Annual vegetation of drift lines
Calcium-rich nutrient-poor lakes, lochs and pools
Clear-water lakes or lochs with aquatic vegetation and poor to moderate nutrient levels
Dune grassland
Humid dune slacks
Lagoons
Machair
Naturally nutrient-rich lakes or lochs which are often dominated by pondweed
Nutrient-poor shallow water with aquatic vegetation on sandy plains
Shifting dunes with marram

Species: Otter
Slender naiad

Birds: Corncrake, breeding
Dunlin, breeding
Little tern, breeding
Oystercatcher, breeding
Redshank, breeding
Ringed plover, breeding & non-breeding
Sanderling, non-breeding