

## Access and conservation at Coille Coire Chuilc – the management mindset

### Description



Sign on a pine – what would you do?

I had intended to include two more photos in my recent post on Coire Coire Chuilc ([see here](#)) to illustrate just how daft some managers who claim to be conservationists are when it comes to managing access.

While walking through Coille Coire Chuilc, having ignored the exhortation from the Auchreoch Estate’s Pines and Wildlife Research Team to “remain on established paths”, we spotted this sign from about 50m away. Being inquisitive people, we diverted from our route to have a closer look.



We would never have stumbled across the camera if it had not been for the sign. Being off the beaten track the chances of anyone else finding it accidentally must be extremely low.

Most people have no interest or desire in interfering with wildlife cameras. If, however, as a conservation manager you were still concerned that some people might interfere with a camera in a location like this, the worst thing you could possibly do is draw attention to its presence. But that is exactly what the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Countryside Trust (LLTCT), set up by the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority (LLTNPA) and still effectively controlled by them, has done.



How many people would have ever spotted this camera if it was not for the sign on the other side?  
Note the fantastic fungi on the dead pine two behind

In trying to understand the management mindset, it is worth considering how this sign relates to the new Auchreoch sign which warns people wildlife cameras are in operation:



Any film footage or audio that could identify a person counts as personal data and can only be processed in certain ways. This includes images of people caught on wildlife cameras. Even if people see warnings signs like this, however, most will never know if they have been accidentally photographed and most won't care unless they are engaged in a criminal activity. What matters is how any images are stored and used and that if, for example, a camera accidentally catches a couple having sex in the great outdoors those images are not broadcast all over the internet!

Warning people that cameras are in operation, therefore, does nothing to address the data protection issues. What should matter is that any images of people accidentally caught on camera are routinely destroyed. A simple task! Instead, the bureaucratic logic of the LLTNPA, which agreed the Auchreoch sign and controls the LLTCT, has decided what matters is WARNING people. Having WARNED people wildlife camera are located throughout the area, its a small step to WARN people about the location of individual cameras. And then, because this increases the likelihood of people interfering with those cameras, its another small step to requesting people keep to established paths to keep them well away from the warning signs that would lead them to the cameras.

None of this management furthers the cause of either access rights or conservation. The time of the LLTNPA's access team, which agreed the main sign at Auchreoch, and of the staff at the Countryside Trust could be far better spent. How about uploading the images caught by the cameras to the internet (with human images edited out) and advertising the link for this so visitors could enjoy and learn about the wildlife found in Coille Coire Chuilc? That would incidentally help demonstrate that the LLTNPA, LLTCT and Auchreoch Estate are in fact complying with data protection laws without the need for any warning signs.

## Category

1. Loch Lomond and Trossachs

**Tags**

1. access rights
2. conservation
3. LLTNPA
4. outdoor recreation
5. paths

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