



Scottish Natural Heritage  
Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba

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

## COILLE COIRE CHUILC Site of Special Scientific Interest

### SITE MANAGEMENT STATEMENT

Site code: 377

Address: The Beta Centre, Innovation Park, University of Stirling, Stirling. FK9 4NF  
Tel: 01786 450362 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.

Natural features of Coille Coire Chuilc SSSI	Condition of feature (date monitored)
Native pinewood	Unfavourable, no change (August 2008)
Fly assemblage	Favourable, maintained (July 2003)
Beetle assemblage	Favourable, maintained (August 2003)

Features of overlapping Natura sites that are not notified as SSSI natural features	Condition of feature (date monitored)	Designation (SAC or SPA)
Clear-water lakes or lochs with aquatic vegetation and poor to moderate nutrient levels	Favourable, maintained (September 2004)	SAC
Otter ( <i>Lutra lutra</i> )	Favourable, maintained (April 2004)	SAC
Atlantic salmon ( <i>Salmo salar</i> )	Favourable, maintained (October 2004)	SAC
Brook lamprey ( <i>Lampetra planeri</i> )	Favourable, maintained (November 2007)	SAC
River lamprey ( <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> )	Favourable, maintained (November 2007)	SAC
Sea lamprey ( <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> )	Favourable, maintained (November 2007)	SAC

## Description of the site

Coille Coire Chuilc SSSI is situated to the west of the A82, approximately 2 km south of Tyndrum. The SSSI is an extensive southerly remnant of the ancient Caledonian Pinewood which once covered much of northern Scotland, and of which only 1% now remains. Together, Coille Coire Chuilc SSSI and Glen Falloch Pinewood SSSI are the only two remaining ancient pinewoods in the Stirling district. These woodlands have been isolated from other native pinewoods for so long that they have become genetically distinct. Of the two pinewoods, Coille Coire Chuilc is more extensive with a larger proportion of mature pines.

Coille Coire Chuilc SSSI faces north-east and lies on undulating ground formed by glacial debris. Scots pine is dominant on the drier knolls with heather, cross-leaved heath and blaeberry. Flat hollows and the lower slopes between knolls are covered by plants of acidic mires such as purple moor-grass, bog asphodel and sedge species, and mosses, notably bog-mosses (sphagna). Bog myrtle occurs where there is water movement. Deciduous trees, mainly birch and rowan, occur less frequently and are usually found on steep stream banks.

The SSSI is also notable for the invertebrate populations found at this site. Many different species have been recorded at Coille Coire Chuilc including several nationally scarce and red data book species. Most of them include fly and beetle species, however the scarce Scottish wood ant is also found here within the SSSI. Many of these rare and scarce species are only found in pine woods and are dependant on this habitat type for their survival.

The Forestry Commission Scotland have also designated this site as a Caledonian Forest Reserve.

Site condition monitoring carried out in 2003 found the flies and beetles features of Coille Coire Chuilc SSSI to be in favourable condition. However the native pinewood feature, monitored in 2008, was found to be in unfavourable condition with the site failing the targets for regeneration.

Picture 1. Wood ant nest at Coille Coire Chuilc SSSI.



Picture 2. Showing some woodland regeneration at Coille Coire Chuilc SSSI.



## **Past and present management**

Coille Coire Chuilc SSSI has a long history of grazing by sheep and deer and, as a result, contains few young trees.

The present owner took over responsibility for the area in 1968 and recognising the special nature of the site sought aid to help enable natural regeneration to thrive within the site. At this time commercial plantation forestry took precedence and the site did not receive appropriate agency input.

In 1974 the Nature Conservancy Council (now SNH) entered into a management agreement with the owners of Coille Coire Chuilc to encourage the growth and regeneration of the native pinewood by using fences to exclude sheep and deer. Two deer-fenced exclosures were constructed, the first in 1975 (12 hectares) and the second in 1984 (21.5 hectares). The fence separating the two areas was then removed in 1993 creating a total fenced area of 33.5 hectares. Over the years numerous repairs to the fences were carried out and maintaining them in stock and deer proof condition proved difficult. In 1989 a small area was also planted with pine seedlings but this had limited success.

In 2002 and 2008 the pinewood feature was monitored and found to be in unfavourable condition due to lack of regeneration. Concern over the reasons why regeneration was failing to establish led to the commissioning of a specific monitoring project. In 2005 Scottish Native Woodlands, funded by SNH, began monitoring woodland regeneration across the site. This monitoring was repeated in 2006, 2007 and 2009 with additional survey work carried out in 2007 to assess the condition of the exclosure fencing. In 2009, after the expiry of the initial management agreement, the owners entered into a second one year management agreement with SNH and the old derelict fencing was removed.

The results of the survey work found that the success of regeneration varied across the site. Browsing pressure by stock remains concentrated to the east of Allt Gleann Auchreoch and there is no established regeneration in this area. Stock also browse to the west of Allt Gleann Auchreoch, but far less intensively. The field layer on the west side is much more rank and pine and birch regeneration is gradually becoming established, although this is very patchily distributed and very slow growing.

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

We wish to work with the owner 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.

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. Increase the extent of the pinewood habitat and encourage the restoration of a healthy, species rich and naturally-regenerating pinewood.**

To date, woodland regeneration at Coille Coire Chuilc has generally been poor and it is essential that this is improved to ensure the continuation of the woodland.

The most significant factor thought to be inhibiting regeneration is grazing pressure. Therefore it is essential that stock and wild herbivore levels within the wood are low enough to allow the successful regeneration of native tree species. The growth rates of pine saplings appear to be very slow here but the current grazing levels to the west of Allt Gleann Auchreoch are thought to be just low enough to allow the currently established saplings to get away. To the east of Allt Gleann Auchreoch regeneration cannot be expected without a reduction in sheep browsing pressure to allow some established young pine to develop. Priority should, however, be given to the west section as many of the mature pines in this section are beginning to degenerate and reaching a stage where they will no longer produce viable seed.

Continued monitoring will be necessary to review the site's development and ensure that management is appropriate to bring the site into favourable condition.

### **2. Maintain populations of notable invertebrate species.**

Maintain and enhance both the extent and age structure of the native pinewood so that suitable habitat is safeguarded for invertebrate populations. Leave fallen and standing dead wood wherever it is safe to do so (including dead tree limbs) as it provides important habitat for invertebrates and many of the insect species on this site are dependant on deadwood habitats.

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

A path through the site is the main access route to the nearby Munros, Ben Oss and Beinn Dubhchraig. Heavy usage of this path has caused localised poaching. This looks unsightly but does not appear to affect the regeneration of pine trees.

Although not a significant problem at present, vigilance will be needed to ensure saplings of Sitka spruce from the adjacent plantations do not become established within the SSSI.

Date last reviewed: 4 June 2010