Trees and Woodland Strategy 2019-2039

Draft Habitats Regulations Appraisal

February 2019

Section 1 - Introduction

This document represents the Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) of the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Trees and Woodland Strategy 2019- 2039 (the Strategy).

The Conservation (Natural Habitats, & c.) Regulations 1994 require that certain plans which are likely to have a significant effect on a European site must be subject to an 'Appropriate Assessment' by the plan-making authority. The process for determining whether an appropriate assessment is required, together with the appropriate assessment itself – is known as the Habitats Regulations Appraisal.

European sites are Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the EC Birds Directive to protect wild birds and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the EC Habitats Directive to protect particular habitats and non-bird species.

Article 6(3) of the EC Habitats Directive requires that any plan (or project) which is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European Site, but would be likely to have a significant effect on such a site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to an "Appropriate Assessment" of its implications for the European Site in view of the site's conservation objectives. This procedure is applied in Scotland through The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended), and is known as the "Habitats Regulations Appraisal" of plans. A recent judgement in the EU Court of Justice (C-323/17) has ruled that it is not appropriate, at the screening stage, to take account of measures intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of a plan or project on a European Site. As a consequence, mitigation measures have not been taken into account at the screening stage in this HRA.

HRA is mandatory and where an Appropriate Assessment is required, plan-making bodies may not usually adopt the plan, unless the assessment concludes that the plan would not adversely affect the integrity of the site. Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) must be consulted as part of any appropriate assessment.

SNH guidance 'Habitats Regulations Appraisal of Plans, Guidance for Plan-making Bodies in Scotland' (Version 3, January 2015), provides detailed guidance on the separate stages of carrying out an appraisal, and the considerations that will need to be taken into account. SNH have been informally consulted during the preparation of this HRA and will be formally consulted during the consultation process to ensure that they agree with the conclusions of the HRA.

Section 2 – Trees and Woodland Strategy - Context

The purpose of the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Trees and Woodland Strategy (the Strategy) is to help deliver the outcomes and objectives set out in the National Park Partnership Plan 2018-23 and Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019-2029, by developing opportunities that:

- Create new woodlands – both native woodlands and productive conifer forests;
- Improve woodland biodiversity;
- Enhance the existing contribution of woodlands to the special landscape quality (SLQ) of the National Park; and
- Improve the resilience and sustainability of woodlands, both environmentally and economically.

The Strategy promotes sustainable forestry based on delivering environmental, economic and social benefits now and in the future

The Strategy will detail the considerations for woodland creation and woodland management within the National Park. It will also be used as a decision making tool to help drive the delivery of woodland objectives within the National Park and support effective consultation between all partners on woodland creation and management proposals. It is intended to review this document in ten years' time.

Why a Trees and Woodland Strategy? Rather than referring to a 'Forestry Strategy', we have named this document a 'Trees and Woodland Strategy' in order to recognise the importance of individual trees and tree groups in the landscape and their contribution to natural capital in the context of integrated land management in the National Park. In this document the terms 'woodland' and 'forest' are used interchangeably.

Main Objectives of the National Park Trees and Woodland Strategy

The Strategy sets out a clear, ambitious vision for how trees and woodlands are to be protected, enhanced and used within Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. It is a key document for land managers and regulators to inform and offer direction to forest, woodland and tree proposals over the next twenty years.

The Strategy covers all types of woodland, from small-scale tree planting to landscape and productive forestry. It will help deliver both Scottish Government and National Park priorities relating to climate change, biodiversity and sustainable development.

There are seven strategic objectives:

1. Increasing woodland cover.
2. Improving woodland condition and diversifying woodland management.
3. Protecting and enhancing the National Park's Special Landscape Qualities.
4. Maintaining and enhancing economic sustainability through forestry-related skills and business development.
5. Promoting cooperative woodland management and creation as part of an integrated land management approach.
6. Improving community empowerment and resilience through active engagement in woodland management.

7. Encouraging and promoting public access to woodlands for recreation and improving people's quality of life.

The Strategy highlights five main themes that will help the National Park deliver its strategic objectives. Any forestry proposal should consider these where appropriate.

Habitat enhancements – The Strategy includes guidance on expanding woodland habitat networks, riparian and montane woodland and priority woodland habitats to increase diversity and protect flagship species. The importance of tackling invasive non-native species is also documented, as well as the restructuring of productive conifer (including PAWS restorations), climate change and tree health.

Landscape integration – The Strategy offers direction on how to design forestry proposals that enhance and protect Special Landscape Qualities of the National Park and the enjoyment of these from key views valued by visitors and local communities. In this section, the National Park has been divided into ten areas, looking at the landscape character of each and how this would be taken into account in any forestry proposals.

Integrating woodland with other land uses – Guidance is included for designated sites, open ground habitats, herbivore management, deer fencing and agricultural land management (including how to integrate woodland creation and management with existing agricultural businesses). This could include the establishment of Land Use Partnerships.

Rural economic development – Opportunities for economic expansion within the National Park are highlighted. In particular, there is focus on improving woodland management skills, maintaining and diversifying the production of timber products, haulage and timber transport. As woodland creation and management proposals can affect the local landscape, tourism and visitor services, communities are encouraged to engage with woodland proposals through the consultation process.

Woodlands and people – The National Park's woodlands are used for tourism and outdoor recreation activities. The Trees and Woodland Strategy promotes responsible access and encourages the public use of woodland for recreation and outdoor education.

The Strategy contains strategic maps showing potential areas for woodland expansion. These maps are included as a guide, however, there remains a need for site-specific surveys and stakeholder engagement to be carried out before any woodland creation proposal is submitted to the Forestry Commission Scotland.

The strategic guidance applies to both existing woodland management as well as woodland creation proposals to deliver innovative 21st century forestry proposals appropriate for the first national park in Scotland.

National Park Partnership Plan 2018 – 23: Delivering for Scotland
Our National Park Partnership Plan – which this Strategy will help to deliver – sets out how all those with a role in managing the National Park will work together to help deliver national priorities and achieve benefits for the whole of Scotland.
The Strategy will contribute towards the following national priorities:

Climate Change – Trees and woodlands in the National Park play an important role in mitigating climate change by storing carbon and slowing water flow, which can help reduce flooding and stabilise slopes prone to landslides.

Valuing Nature and Reversing Biodiversity Loss – The long established and ancient woodlands in the National Park are of national importance for their rich biodiversity. Native woodland expansion and enhancement in the National Park can make a significant contribution to meeting Scotland's 2020 Biodiversity Challenge.

Natural Capital – Scotland's National Parks exemplify the connections between nature, our economy and our quality of life. The National Park is a key place to connect the value of land and woodland management with wider community and sustainable socio-economic benefits.

Community Empowerment – Building on the strong foundation and legacy of community capacity building and action planning in the National Park, there is growing potential and opportunity for communities to own or manage assets and deliver projects including community woodland projects.

Sustainable Development and Economic Growth – Forestry provides a great contribution to the local rural economy through jobs, education, skills, community development, social enterprise, tourism and business development.

UK Forestry Standard

The UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) details how sustainable forestry will be undertaken by setting out relevant legislation and good practice which all forestry proposals must comply with. It is the standard against which all woodland proposals are assessed, covering biodiversity, climate change, historic environment, landscape, people (including access), soil and water. The importance of National Parks is recognised within the standard and forestry proposals delivering the objectives set out in this Trees and Woodlands Strategy should be in line with UKFS.
In addition to UKFS, there are voluntary certification schemes underpinned by the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS). Woodland owners and managers are encouraged to consider these schemes as compliancy with UKWAS would further the delivery of the Park's Trees and Woodland Strategy objectives.

Forestry (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017

As National Parks are classified as 'sensitive areas' under the Forestry (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017, all forestry projects (afforestation, deforestation, forest roads and forest quarries) must be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening opinion from Forestry Commission Scotland (Scottish Forestry from April 2019). This process ensures that any significant environmental effects from forestry projects within the National Park are identified and addressed at an early stage.

National Park Aims

Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park was designated in 2002 as Scotland's first National Park under the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000. The National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 sets out the four statutory aims for National Parks in Scotland and all planning decisions must be consistent with these:

- to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area
- to promote sustainable use of the natural resources of the area
- to promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public, and
- to promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities.

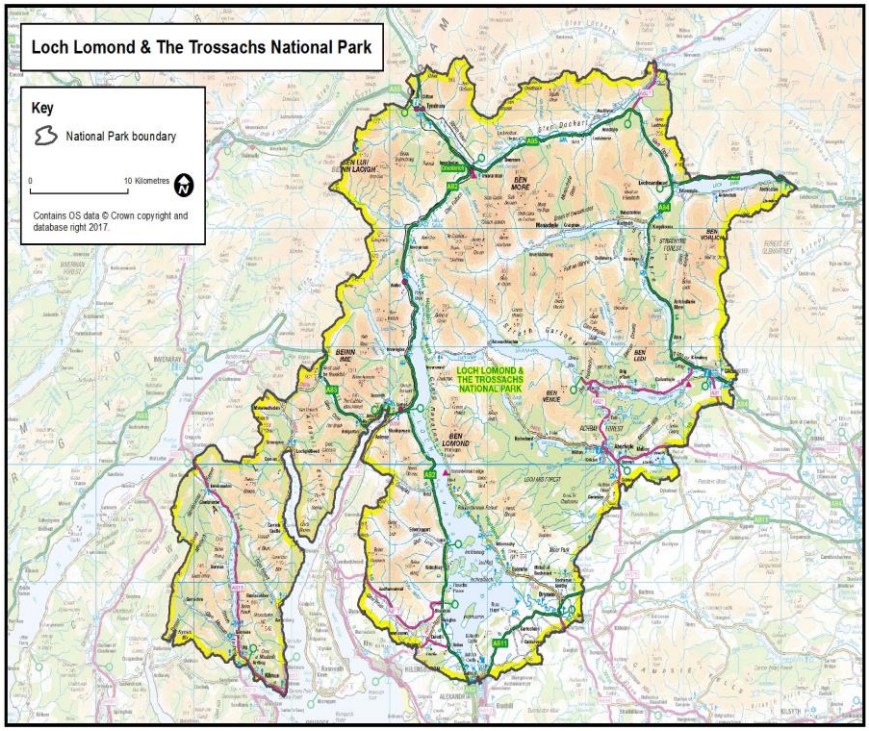
The four aims are to be pursued collectively. However, if a conflict arises between the first aim, (the conservation and enhancement of the natural and cultural heritage), and any of the other aims, greater weight must be given to the first aim (Section 9(6) of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000). This is referred to as the Sandford Principle**.**

Details of the National Park Trees and Woodland Strategy

Name of Responsible Authority:	Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority
Title of Plan:	Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Trees and Woodland Strategy 2019-2039
Requirement for the Plan:	Scottish Forestry Strategy 2019-2029 Forestry Commission Scotland Guidance "The Right Tree in the Right Place: Planning for Forestry & Woodlands" National Park Partnership Plan 2018-2023 Climate Change Action Plan Live Park (Local Development Plan 2017-2021) Scottish Biodiversity Strategy Wild Park 2020, the Biodiversity Action Plan for the National Park
Subject of the Plan:	Tree and woodland planting and management
Period covered by the Plan:	2019 - 2039
Frequency of Updates:	Review every ten years.
Geographic Area covered by the Plan:	Area designated as The Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. See Map 1
Purpose and/or objectives of the Plan:	The strategy will detail the opportunities and constraints for woodland creation and management within the National Park. The document will drive the delivery of woodland objectives and support effective consultation between all partners on woodland creation and management proposals, helping the National Park realise its four statutory aims.
Contact:	Graeme Heenan

	Ecologist Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority National Park Headquarters Carrochan Road Balloch G83 8EG Graeme.Heenan@lochlomond-trossachs.org 01389 722145

Map 1 Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park



Section 3 - Habitats Regulations Appraisal Methodology

European Sites considered

The Strategy covers the geographical extent of the National Park. However, given the proximity of a number of European sites outside the National Park, a number of additional sites outwith the National Park boundary were included in the initial consideration. A list of the European sites that should be considered in the appraisal was identified (**Table 1**). These sites are based on the most up to date designations as of February 2018. GIS maps were used to determine the location of sites outside the boundary of the National Park and their potential to be affected by the Strategy. Relevant factors were considered such as; the type and scale of actions promoted in the Strategy, the qualifying interests of the European sites and their proximity to the National Park boundary.

There is one Ramsar site within the plan area that overlaps with the Loch Lomond SPA and the Loch Lomond Woods SAC. In line with Scottish Government policy, the wintering Greenland white-fronted goose interest of the Loch Lomond Ramsar site is safeguarded through the assessment of effects on the overlapping Loch Lomond SPA in this HRA. Impacts on the wider biodiversity interests of the Ramsar site are considered as part of the assessment of effects on the notified interests of the Endrick Mouth and Islands SSSI in the Strategy.

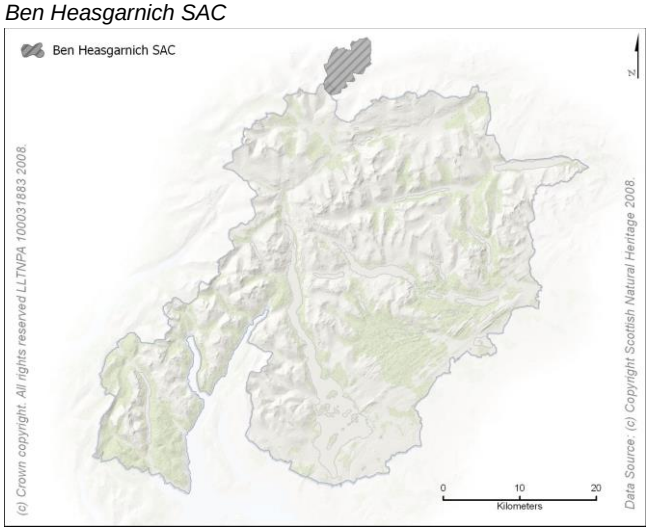
Table 1: European Sites selected as being potentially affected and reasons for their selection

European Site	**Reason for selection**
Ben Heasgarnich SAC	Inside and outside the Strategy area
Loch Lomond Woods SAC	Inside the Strategy area
Endrick Water SAC	Inside and outside the Strategy area
Trossachs Woods SAC	Inside the Strategy area
Ben Lui SAC	Inside the Strategy area
Meall na Samnha SAC	Inside and outside the Strategy area
River Tay SAC	Inside and outside the Strategy area
River Teith SAC	Inside and outside the Strategy area
Loch Lomond SPA	Inside the Strategy area
Glen Etive and Glen Fyne SPA	Inside and outside the Strategy area
Flanders Mosses SAC	Peatland with hydrological link to land within the Strategy area
Ben Lawers SAC	Outside the Strategy area but near to the boundary at Killin
Inner Clyde SPA	Estuary downstream of the Strategy area
Firth of Tay & Eden Estuary SPA	Estuary downstream of the Strategy area

European Site	Reason for selection
Firth of Tay & Eden Estuary SAC	Estuary downstream of the Strategy area
Firth of Forth SPA	Estuary downstream of the Strategy area
Forth Islands SPA	Estuary downstream of the Strategy area

Information on European Sites

Ben Heasgarnich SAC

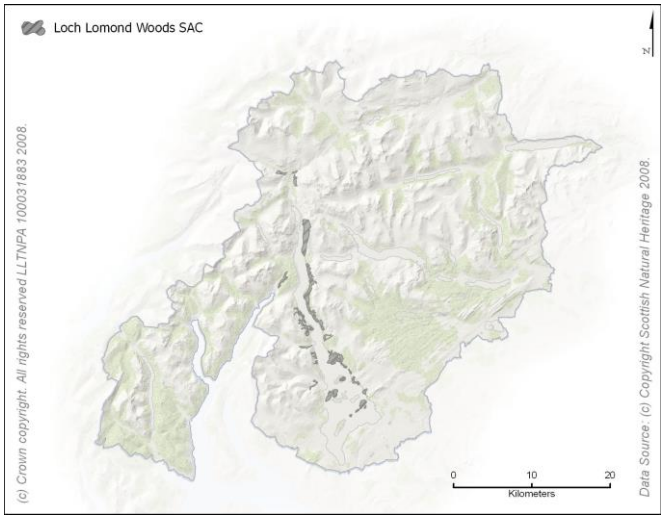


Name of European Site: Ben Heasgarnich
Site Type: Special Area of Conservation
Qualifying Interests: • Base-rich fens (Alkaline fens) • Alpine and subalpine calcareous grasslands • High-altitude plant communities associated with areas of water seepage* (Alpine pioneer formations of the Caricion bicoloris-atrofuscae*) • Plants in crevices on base-rich rocks (Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation) • Tall herb communities (Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains) and of the montane to alpine levels • Montane acid grasslands (Siliceous alpine and boreal grasslands) • Plants in crevices on acid rocks (Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation) • Species-rich grassland with mat-grass in upland areas (Species-rich Nardus grassland, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas in continental Europe)*) • Mountain willow scrub (Sub-Arctic Salix spp. Scrub)
Conservation Objectives: To avoid deterioration of the qualifying **habitats** (listed above) thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and To ensure for the qualifying habitats that the following are maintained in the long term:

- Extent of the habitat on site
- Distribution of the habitat within site
- Structure and function of the habitat
- Processes supporting the habitat
- Distribution of typical species of the habitat
- Viability of typical species as components of the habitat
- No significant disturbance of typical species of the habitat

** Indicates priority habitat*

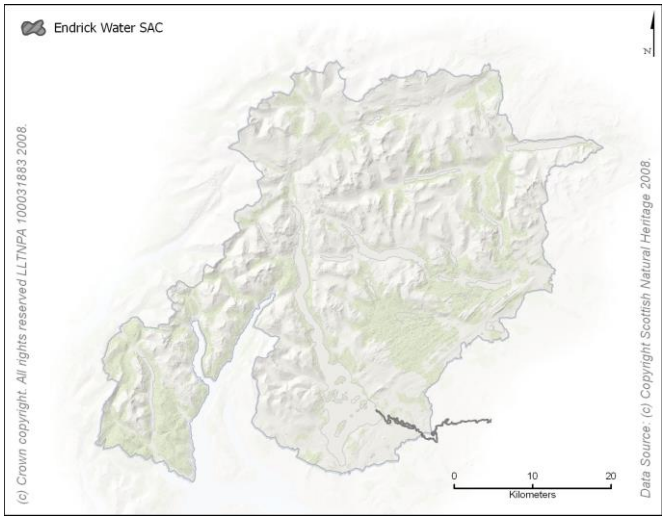
Loch Lomond Woods SAC



Name of European Site: Loch Lomond Woods
Site Type: Special Area of Conservation
Qualifying Interest(s): • Western acidic oak woodland (Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles) • Otter (Lutra lutra)
Conservation Objectives:
To avoid deterioration of the qualifying **habitat** (listed above) thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and To ensure for the qualifying habitat that the following are maintained in the long term: • Extent of the habitat on site • Distribution of the habitat within site • Structure and function of the habitat • Processes supporting the habitat • Distribution of typical species of the habitat • Viability of typical species as components of the habitat • No significant disturbance of typical species of the habitat
To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying **species** (listed above) or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term: • Population of the species as a viable component of the site • Distribution of the species within site • Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species • Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species • No significant disturbance of the species

The site overlaps with Loch Lomond Special Protection Area

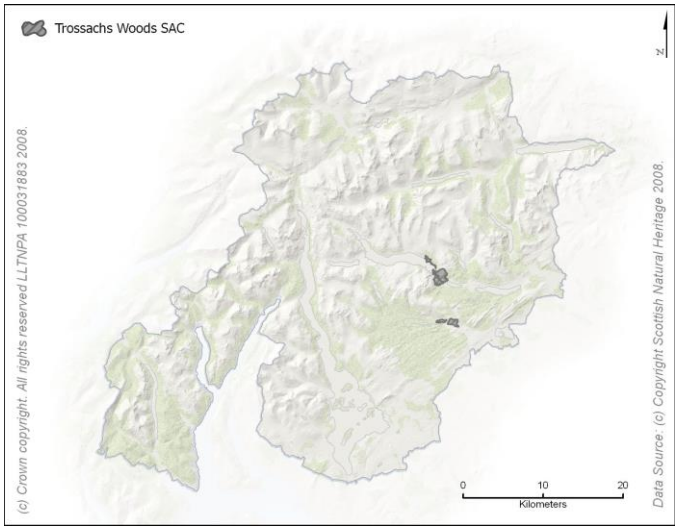
Endrick Water SAC



Name of European Site: Endrick Water
Site Type: Special Area of Conservation
Qualifying Interest(s): • River lamprey (Lampetra fluviatilis) • Brook lamprey (Lampetra planeri) • Atlantic salmon (Salmo salar)
Conservation Objectives:
To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed above) or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term: • Population of the species, including range of genetic types for salmon, as a viable component of the site • Distribution of the species within site • Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species • Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species • No significant disturbance of the species

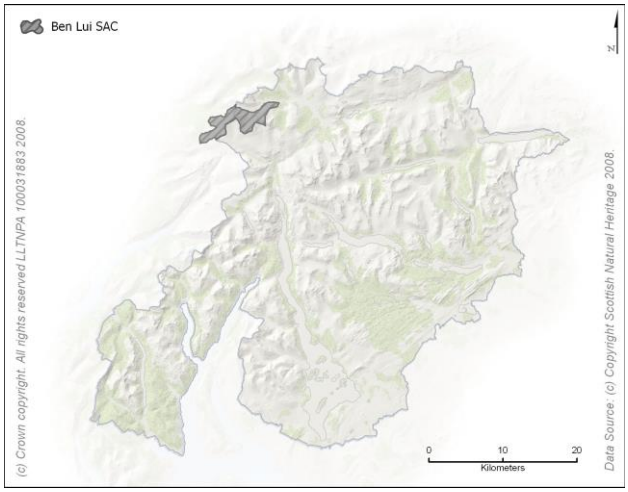
The site overlaps with Loch Lomond Special Protection Area

Trossachs Woods SAC



Name of European Site: Trossachs Woods
Site Type: Special Area of Conservation
Qualifying Interest(s): • Western acidic oak woodland (Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles)
Conservation Objectives:
To avoid deterioration of the qualifying habitat (listed above) thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and To ensure for the qualifying habitat that the following are maintained in the long term: • Extent of the habitat on site • Distribution of the habitat within site • Structure and function of the habitat • Processes supporting the habitat • Distribution of typical species of the habitat • Viability of typical species as components of the habitat • No significant disturbance of typical species of the habitat

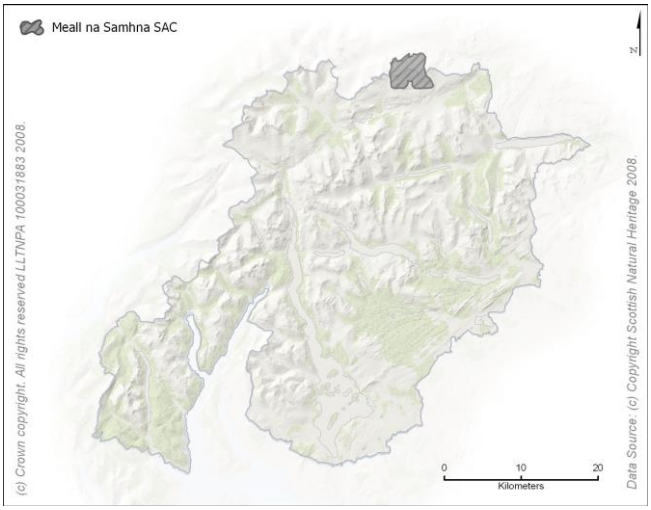
Ben Lui SAC



Name of European Site: Ben Lui
Site Type: Special Area of Conservation
Qualifying Interest(s): • Base-rich fens (Alkaline fens) • Alpine and subalpine calcareous grasslands • High-altitude plant communities associated with areas of water seepage* (Alpine pioneer formations of the Caricion bicoloris-atrofuscae*) • Plants in crevices on base-rich rocks (Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation) • Tall herb communities (Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels) • Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath (Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix) • Montane acid grasslands (Siliceous alpine and boreal grasslands) • Plants in crevices on acid rocks (Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation) • Acidic scree (Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (Androsacetalia alpinae and Galeopsietalia ladani)) • Species-rich grassland with mat-grass in upland areas (Species-rich Nardus grassland, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas in continental Europe)*) • Mountain willow scrub (Sub-Arctic Salix spp. Scrub)
Conservation Objectives: To avoid deterioration of the qualifying habitats (listed above) thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and to ensure for the qualifying habitats that the following are maintained in the long term: • Extent of the habitat on site • Distribution of the habitat within site • Structure and function of the habitat • Processes supporting the habitat • Distribution of typical species of the habitat • Viability of typical species as components of the habitat • No significant disturbance of typical species of the habitat

** Indicates priority habitat*

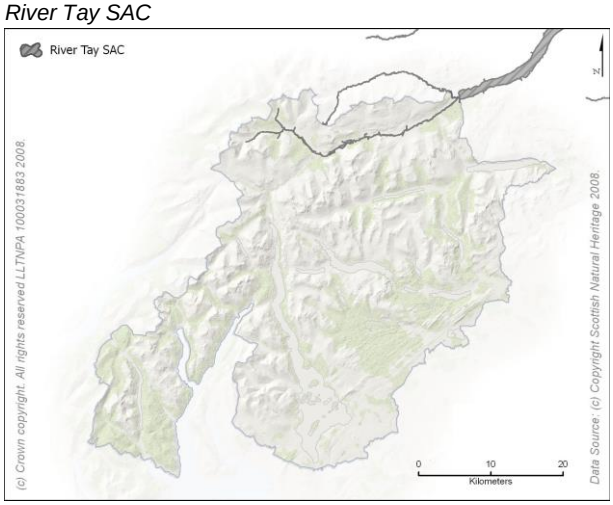
Meall na Samnha SAC



Name of European Site: Meall na Samnha
Site Type: Special Area of Conservation
Qualifying Interest(s): **Habitats:** • Alpine and subalpine calcareous grasslands • Plants in crevices on base-rich rocks (Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation) • Tall herb communities (Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels) • Montane acid grasslands (Siliceous alpine and boreal grasslands) • Species-rich grassland with mat-grass in upland areas (Species-rich Nardus grassland, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas and submountain areas in continental Europe** • Mountain willow scrub (Sub-Arctic Salix spp. Scrub)
Conservation Objectives: To avoid deterioration of the qualifying habitats (listed above) thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and To ensure for the qualifying habitats that the following are maintained in the long term: • Extent of the habitat on site • Distribution of the habitat within site • Structure and function of the habitat • Processes supporting the habitat • Distribution of typical species of the habitat • Viability of typical species as components of the habitat • No significant disturbance of typical species of the habitat

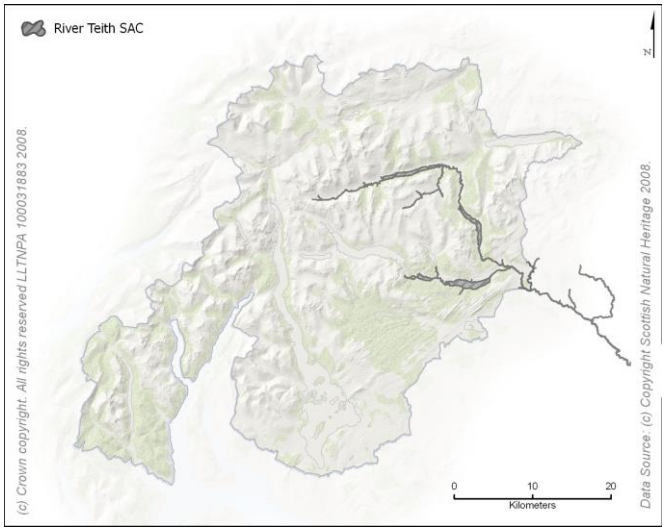
** Indicates priority habitat*

River Tay SAC



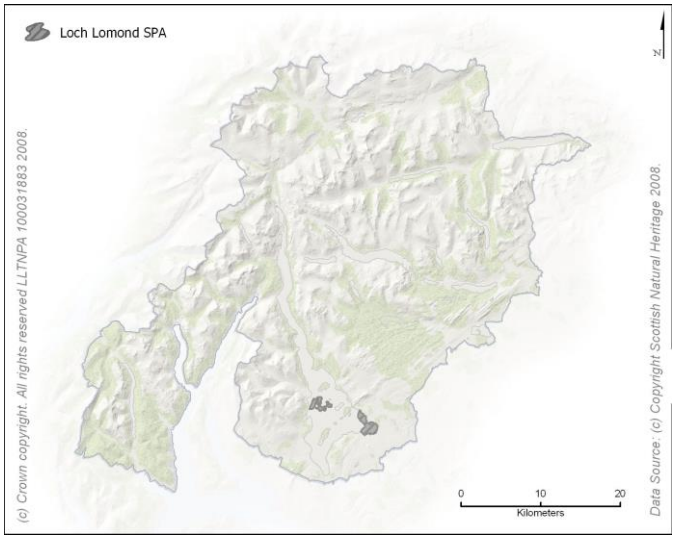
Name of European Site: River Tay
Site Type: Special Area of Conservation
Qualifying Interest(s): • River lamprey (Lampetra fluviatilis) • Brook lamprey (Lampetra planeri) • Sea lamprey (Petromyzon marinus) • Atlantic salmon (Salmo salar) • Otter (Lutra lutra) • Clear-water lakes or lochs with aquatic vegetation and poor to moderate nutrient levels (Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the *Littorelletea uniflorae* and/or of the *Isoëto-Nanojuncetea)*
Conservation Objectives:
Habitat - To avoid deterioration of the qualifying habitat (listed above) thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and to ensure for the qualifying habitat that the following are maintained in the long term: • Extent of the habitat on site • Distribution of the habitat within site • Structure and function of the habitat • Processes supporting the habitat • Distribution of typical species of the habitat • Viability of typical species as components of the habitat • No significant disturbance of typical species of the habitat
Species - To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed above) or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and to ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term: • Population of the species, including range of genetic types for salmon, as a viable component of the site • Distribution of the species within site • Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species • Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species • No significant disturbance of the species

River Teith SAC



Name of European Site: River Teith
Site Type: Special Area of Conservation
Qualifying Interest(s): • River lamprey (Lampetra fluviatilis) • Brook lamprey (Lampetra planeri) • Sea lamprey (Petromyzon marinus) • Atlantic salmon (Salmo salar)
Conservation Objectives: To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed above) or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term: • Population of the species, including range of genetic types for salmon, as a viable component of the site • Distribution of the species within site • Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species • Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species • No significant disturbance of the species

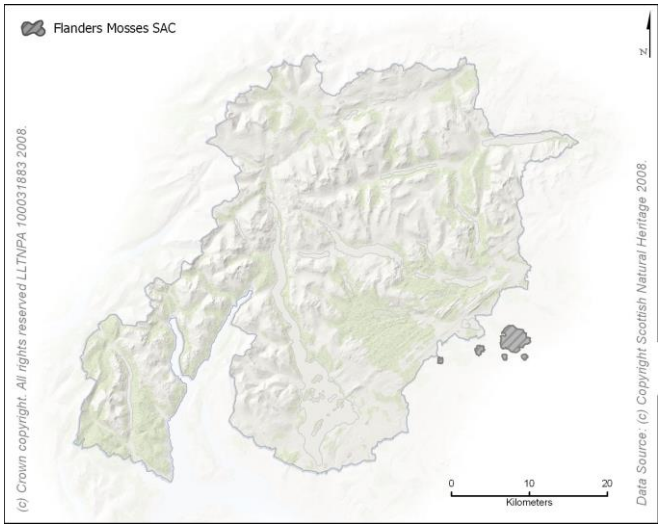
Loch Lomond SPA



Name of European Site: Loch Lomond
Site Type: Special Protection Area
Qualifying Interest(s): • Capercaillie (Tetrao urogallus) • Greenland white-fronted goose (Anser albifrons flavirostris)
Conservation Objectives:
To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed above) or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term: • Population of the species as a viable component of the site • Distribution of the species within site • Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species • Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species • No significant disturbance of the species

This site overlaps with Endrick Water Special Area of Conservation and Loch Lomond Woods Special Area of Conservation.

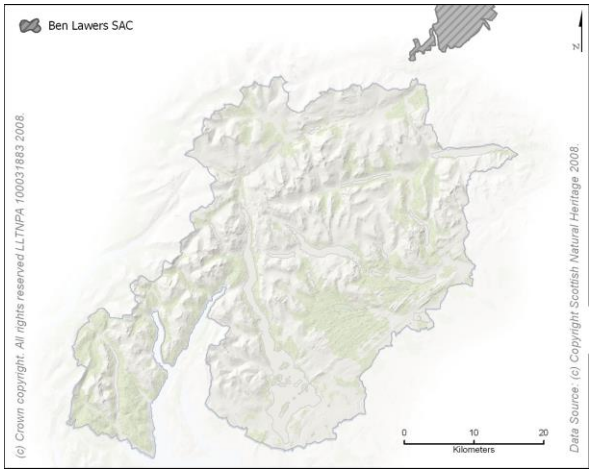
Flanders Mosses SAC



Name of European Site: Flanders Mosses
Site Type: Special Area of Conservation
Qualifying Interest(s): • Active raised bogs • Degraded raised bog (Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration)
Conservation Objectives:
To avoid deterioration of the qualifying habitats (listed below) thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and To ensure for the qualifying habitats that the following are maintained in the long term: • Extent of the habitat on site • Distribution of the habitat within site • Structure and function of the habitat • Processes supporting the habitat • Distribution of typical species of the habitat • Viability of typical species as components of the habitat • No significant disturbance of typical species of the habitat
Qualifying Habitats: • Active raised bogs* • Degraded raised bogs

** Indicates priority habitat*

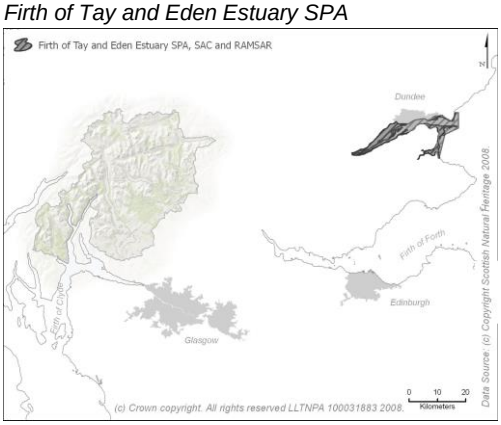
Ben Lawers SAC



Name of European Site: Ben Lawers
Site Type: Special Area of Conservation
Qualifying Interest(s): • Base-rich fens (Alkaline fens) • Alpine and subalpine heaths (Alpine and Boreal heaths) • Alpine and subalpine calcareous grasslands • High-altitude plant communities associated with areas of water seepage*(Alpine pioneer formations of the Caricion bicoloris-atrofuscae*) • Blanket bog * • Plants in crevices on base-rich rocks (Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic plants) • European Dry heaths • Tall herb communities (Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels) • Clear-water lakes or lochs with aquatic vegetation and poor to moderate nutrient levels (Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the Littorelletea uniflorae and/or of the Isoëto-Nanojuncetea) • Montane acid grasslands (Siliceous alpine and boreal grasslands) • Plants in crevices on acid rocks (Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation) • Species-rich grassland with mat-grass in upland areas* (Species-rich Nardus grassland, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas in continental Europe)*) • Mountain willow scrub (Sub-Arctic Salix spp. Scrub)
Conservation Objectives:
To avoid deterioration of the qualifying habitats (listed above) thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and to ensure for the qualifying habitats that the following are maintained in the long term: • Extent of the habitat on site • Distribution of the habitat within site • Structure and function of the habitat • Processes supporting the habitat • Distribution of typical species of the habitat • Viability of typical species as components of the habitat • No significant disturbance of typical species of the habitat

**Indicates priority habitat*

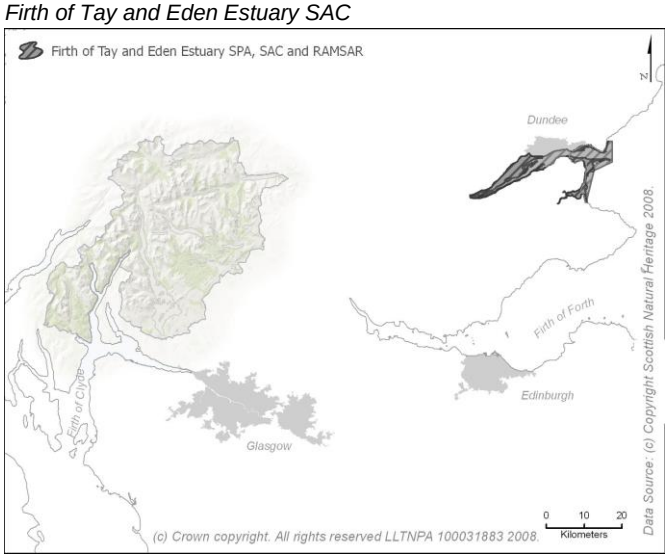
Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary SPA



Name of European Site: Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary
Site Type: Special Protection Area
Site description: Qualifying interest(s): • Bar-tailed godwit (Limosa lapponica) (internationally important wintering population) • Redshank (Tringa totanus) (internationally important wintering population) • Little tern (Sterna albifrons) (Nationally important breeding populations) • Marsh harrier (Circus aeruginosus) (Nationally important breeding populations) Supporting in winter over 20,000 waterfowl including: • Black-tailed godwit (Limosa limosa islandica)* • Common scoter (Melanitta nigra)* • Cormorant (Phalacrocorax carbo)* • Dunlin (Calidris alpina alpina)* • Eider (Somateria mollissima)* • Goldeneye (Bucephala clangula)* • Goosander (Mergus merganser)* • Grey plover (Pluvialis squatarola)* • Greylag goose (Anser anser) • Long-tailed duck (Clangula hyemalis)* • Oystercatcher (Haematopus ostralegus)* • Pink-footed goose (Anser brachyrhynchus • Red-breasted merganser (Mergus serrator)* • Sanderling (Calidris alba)* • Shelduck (Tadorna tadorna) • Velvet scoter (Melanitta fusca)* • Waterfowl Assemblage
Conservation Objectives:
Habitats - To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed above) or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and to ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term: • Population of the species as a viable component of the site • Distribution of the species within site • Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species • Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species • No significant disturbance of the species

**Indicates assemblage qualifier only*

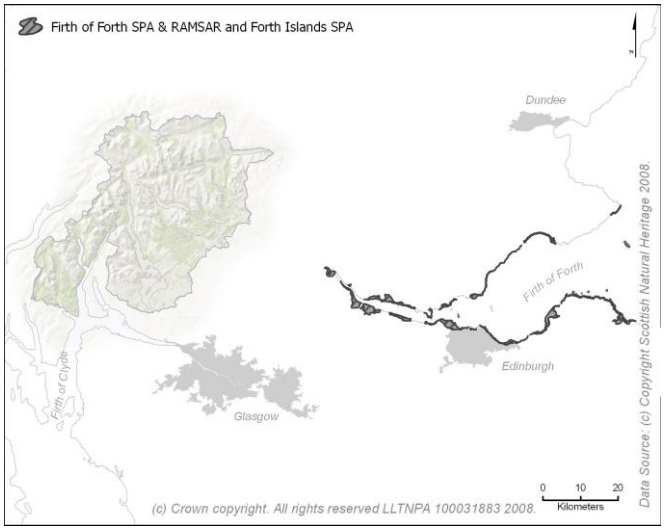
Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary SAC



Name of European Site: Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary
Site Type: Special Area of Conservation
Qualifying Interest(s): Habitats • Estuaries • Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide • Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time Species • Common seal (Phoca vitulina)
Conservation Objectives:
Habitats - To avoid deterioration of the qualifying habitats (listed above) thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and to ensure for the qualifying habitats that the following are maintained in the long term: • Extent of the habitat on site • Distribution of the habitat within site • Structure and function of the habitat • Processes supporting the habitat • Distribution of typical species of the habitat • Viability of typical species as components of the habitat • No significant disturbance of typical species of the habitat
Species - To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed above) or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and to ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term: • Population of the species as a viable component of the site • Distribution of the species within site • Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species • Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species • No significant disturbance of the species

The site overlaps with Firth of Tay & Eden Estuary Special Protection Area.

Firth of Forth SPA

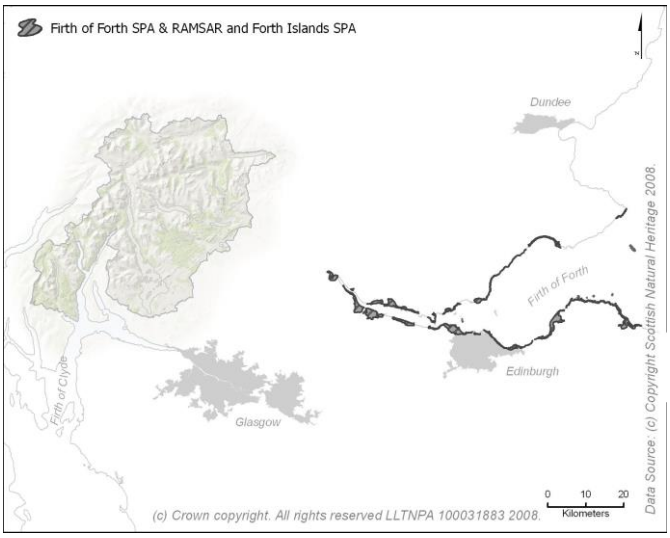


Name of European Site: Firth of Forth (SPA)
Site Type: Special Protection Area
Site description: Qualifying interest(s): • Bar-tailed godwit (Limosa lapponica) (European Importance) • Golden plover (Pluvialis apricaria) (European Importance) • Red-throated diver (Gavia stellar) (European Importance) • Slavonian grebe (Podiceps au) (European Importance) • Knot (Calidris canutus) (Wintering populations) • Pink-footed goose (Anser brachyrhynchus) (Wintering populations) • Redshank (Tringa totanus) (Wintering populations) • Shelduck (Tadorna tador) (Wintering populations) • Turnstone (Arenaria interpres) (Wintering populations) • Sandwich tern (Sterna sandvicensis) (Post-breeding (passage) population) Wintering waterfowl assemblage including 15 migratory species: • Common scoter (Melanitta nigra)* • Cormorant (Phalacrocorax carbo)* • Curlew (Numenius arquata)* • Dunlin (Calidris alpina alpina)* • Eider (Somateria mollissima)* • Goldeneye (Bucephala clangula)* • Great crested grebe (Podiceps cristatus)* • Grey plover (Pluvialis squatarola)* • Lapwing (Vanellus vanellus)* • Long-tailed duck (Clangula hyemalis)* • Mallard (Anas platyrhnchos)* • Oystercatcher (Haematopus o • Red-breasted merganser (Mergus serrator)* • Ringed plover (Charadrius hiaticula) * • Scaup (Aythya marila) * • Velvet scoter (Melanitta fusca)* • Wigeon (Anas penelope)*

Conservation Objectives:
To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed above) or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term: • Population of the species as a viable component of the site • Distribution of the species within site • Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species • Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species • No significant disturbance of the species

*****_indicates assemblage qualifier only_

Forth Islands SPA

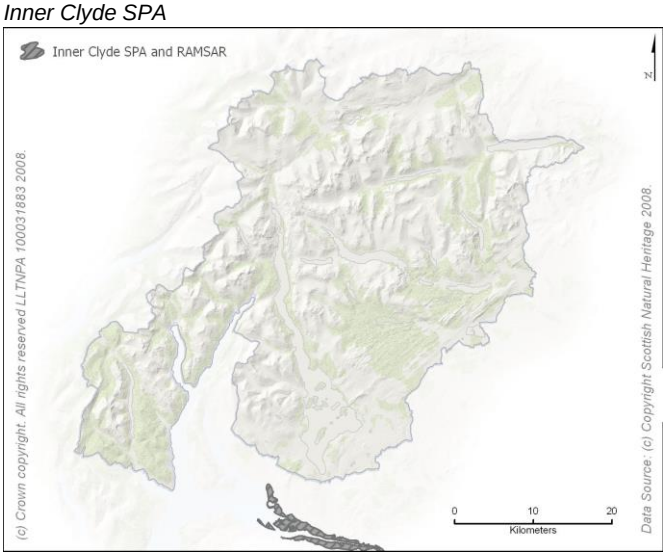


Name of European Site: Forth Islands (SPA)
Site Type: Special Protection Areas
Site Description: Forth Islands SPA consists of a series of islands supporting the main seabird colonies in the Firth of Forth. The seaward extension extends approximately 2 km into the marine environment to include the seabed, water column and surface. Qualifying Interest(s) • Arctic tern (Sterna paradisaea) • Common tern (Sterna hirundo) • Cormorant (Phalacrocorax carbo)* • Gannet (Morus bassanus) • Guillemot (Uria aalge)* • Herring gull (Larus argentatus)* • Kittiwake (Rissa tridactyla)* • Lesser black-backed gull (Larus fuscus) • Puffin (Fratercula arctica) • Razorbill (Alca torda)* (nationally important populations) • Roseate tern (Sterna dougallii) • Sandwich tern (Sterna sandvicensis) • Shag (Phalacrocorax aristotelis) • Seabird assemblage
Conservation Objectives:
To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed above) or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term: • Population of the species as a viable component of the site • Distribution of the species within site • Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species • Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species • No significant disturbance of the species

** indicates assemblage qualifier only The site overlaps with Isle of May Special Area of Conservation.*

Deleted: .

Inner Clyde SPA



Name of European Site: Inner Clyde
Site Type: Special Protection Area
Site Description: The Inner Clyde SPA contains extensive intertidal flats which support large numbers of wintering waterfowl. Qualifying Interest: • Redshank (Tringa totanus) (wintering population)
Conservation Objectives: To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed above) or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term: • Population of the species as a viable component of the site • Distribution of the species within site • Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species • Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species • No significant disturbance of the species

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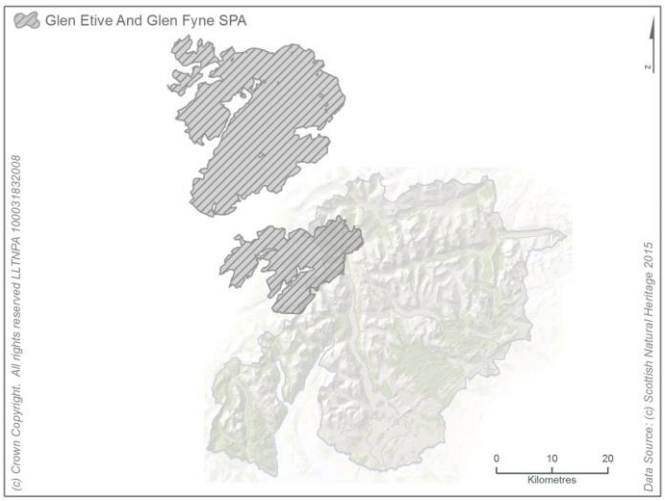
Glen Etive and Glen Fyne SPA



Name of European Site: Glen Etive and Glen Fyne
Site Type: Special Protection Area
Site Description: Glen Etive and Glen Fyne Special Protection Area (SPA) is a large, predominantly upland site that rises from sea level to over 1100 m and encompasses a diverse range of habitats including heather moorland, rough grassland, blanket bog, native woodland, montane heaths and exposed rock and scree. There are also numerous freshwater lochs and river systems. Qualifying Interest: • Supports a population golden eagle Aquila chrysaetos.
Conservation Objectives
To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed above) or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term: • Population of the species as a viable component of the site • Distribution of the species within site • Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species • Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats • supporting the species • No significant disturbance of the species

This site overlaps with the following Special Areas of Conservation (SAC): Ben Lui, Glen Coe, Glen Creran Woods, Loch Etive Woods, Loch Lomond Woods, Rannoch Moor, River Tay and Glen Shira & also overlaps with Rannoch Lochs Special Protection Area (SPA).

European sites scoped out

Six European sites outside the National Park boundary were scoped out of the HRA as there will be "No Likely Significant Effect" on these sites as a consequence of the Strategy. This conclusion included consideration of the *Preferred* and *Potential* areas for native woodland creation identified on Map 4 of the Strategy (the key spatial element of the Strategy). Further details of the sites and the reasons they have been scoped out of the assessment can be found in **Table 2** below.

Table 2: European Sites Scoped Out of the Appraisal

European Site	**Reason for Scoping Out** [(1)]
Ben Lawers SAC	The SAC lies around 2.5km north of the National Park boundary. Given the separation distance between the National Park and the SAC, any woodland creation/management promoted by the Strategy will not give rise to a likely significant effect on the qualifying interests of the SAC (e.g. through seed dispersal).
Flanders Mosses SAC	Although part of the SAC lies adjacent to the National Park boundary, there is no possibility of downstream effects on the SAC as the active and degraded raised bog qualifying interests of the site are ombrotrophic (rain-fed). The nearest Preferred/Potential area for native woodland creation (identified on Map 4) is around 130m away from the SAC boundary. Given the separation distance between the Preferred/Potential areas and the SAC, any native woodland expansion in these areas will not give rise to a likely significant effect on the qualifying interests of the SAC (e.g. through seed dispersal). As a consequence, there is no connectivity between the preferred/potential areas for native woodland expansion promoted by the Strategy and the qualifying interest of the SAC.
Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary SPA	The estuary is too far downstream of the National Park to be affected by any changes in water quality as a result of woodland creation/management promoted by the Strategy. In addition, the River Tay SAC lies upstream of this site and any potential impacts on water quality are assessed through consideration of the River Tay SAC in this HRA.
Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary SAC	The estuary is too far downstream of the National Park to be affected by any changes in water quality as a result of woodland creation/management promoted by the Strategy. In addition, the River Tay SAC lies upstream of this site and any potential impacts on water quality are assessed through consideration of the River Tay SAC in this HRA.
Firth of Forth SPA	The estuary is too far downstream of the National Park to be affected by any changes in water quality as a result of woodland creation/management promoted by the Strategy. In addition, the River Teith SAC lies upstream of this site and any potential impacts on water quality are assessed through consideration of the River Teith SAC in this HRA.

Forth Islands SPA	The islands are too far downstream of the National Park and with too strong a maritime influence to be affected by any changes in water quality as a result of woodland creation/management promoted by the Strategy. In addition, the River Teith SAC lies upstream of this site and any potential impacts on water quality are assessed through consideration of the River Teith SAC in this HRA.
Inner Clyde SPA	The estuary is too far downstream of the National Park to be affected by any changes in water quality as a result of woodland creation/management promoted by the Strategy.

Section 4 - Screening the National Park Trees and Woodland Strategy

Having gathered information on the European sites potentially affected by the National Park Trees and Woodland Strategy as set out in Table 1, the screening process, as set out in the SNH guidance, has been followed:

Table 3: SNH Guidance - Screening Steps

Step 1	Screening out general policy statements
Step 2	Screening out projects referred to in, but not proposed by the Plan - These could be projects that are to be delivered as part of national infrastructure and promoted by national government and where the plan will play no part in its delivery or are subject to consent directly from Scottish Ministers.
Step 3	Screening out aspects of the Plan that could have no likely significant effect on a site alone a) Because they are intended to protect the natural environment b) This will not themselves lead to development or other change because they relate to design or other qualitative criteria c) Which make provision for change but could have no conceivable effect on a European site, e.g. because there is no link or path way or any effects would be positive or would not otherwise undermine the conservation objectives of the site; d) Which make a provision for change but which could have no significant effect (and hence a minor residual effect) on a European site because any potential effects would be insignificant, being so restricted or remote from the site that they would not undermine the conservation objectives for the site. e) For which the effects on any particular European Site cannot be identified because the proposal is too general, for example, it is not known where or when or how the proposal will be implemented or where effects may occur or where sites if any may be effected.

Step 1-3: The screening process of the draft Strategy has therefore included a record of outcomes/actions that are not likely to have a significant effect on a European Site. The detailed matrix of the screening process is included in Appendix A.

*Table 4: **Summary** of key elements of Strategy not likely to have a significant effect (alone) on a European Site*

Aspects of the Plan which would not be likely to have a significant effect on a European site alone	Relevant parts of the Plan
General Policy Statements *(Step1)*	• Strategy Vision
Projects **referred to in but not proposed by the plan** – i.e. excluded from appraisal because they are not proposals generated by this Plan *(Step 2)*	
Policies which **protect the natural environment,** including biodiversity or conserving or enhancing the natural, built/historic or cultural environment. *Step 3(a)*	• Strategic Objective 2 - *Improving Woodland Condition and Diversifying Woodland Management* • Strategic Objective 3 - *Protecting and Enhancing the Landscape*
Policies which **will not lead to development or other change** because they relate to design or other qualitative criteria. *Step3(b)*	
Which make provision for change but could have no conceivable effect on a European Site because there is no link or path way or any effects would be positive or would not otherwise undermine the conservation objectives of the site. *Step 3(c)*	
Which make a provision for change but which could have no significant effect (and hence a *minor residual effect*) on a European Site because any potential effects would be insignificant, being so restricted or remote from the site that they would not undermine the conservation objectives for the site (See Table 7 for 'In-combination effects) (paragraphs 4.34 – 4.41 of the SNH Guidance) re in combination effects with other aspects of the same plan or in combination with other plans or projects. *Step 3(d).*	

For which the effects on any particular European Site cannot be identified because the proposal is too general, for example, it is not known where or when or how the proposal will be implemented or where effects may occur or where sites if any may be effected. *Step 3(e).*	• Strategic Objective 1 - *Increasing Woodland Cover* • Strategic Objective 4 - *Maintaining and Enhancing Economic Sustainability Through Skills and Business Development* • Strategic Objective 5 - *Promoting Cooperative Woodland Management and Creation as Part of an Integrated Land Management Approach* • Strategic Objective 6 - *Improved Community Empowerment and Resilience From Active Engagement in Woodland Management* • Strategic Objective 7 - *Encourage and Promote Public Access for Recreation and Improving People's Quality of Life*

Elements of the Strategy that may have a significant effect

The above **Table 4** screens out a number of the key elements of the Strategy that will not individually have a likely significant effect on a European site. Only one key element of the Strategy, the *Opportunity mapping for native woodland creation* (Map 4), cannot be screened out – see **Table 5** below for further details.

Table 5: Summary of where the likelihood of a significant effect on a European site cannot be ruled out

Element of draft Strategy	Description	European Sites that may be affected and reason for potential effect
Map 4 - Opportunity mapping for native woodland creation	Spatial analysis (see Appendix 1 of the Strategy) has been undertaken to identity Preferred, Potential and Sensitive areas where native woodland creation would deliver the Strategy's objectives. The analysis is based on Forestry Commission Scotland data sets, native woodland integrated habitat networks, climate suitability for tree growth and Plantlife's climate suitability for bryophyte habitat. Native woodland creation in these areas could include establishment at productive densities.	Preferred and Potential areas for native woodland creation are identified on Map 4 of the Strategy and this includes areas within and adjacent to the following European sites: • Loch Lomond Woods SAC • Trossachs Woods SAC • Ben Lui SAC • Meall na Samnha SAC • River Tay SAC • Loch Lomond SPA • Glen Etive and Glen Fyne SPA • **Endrick Water SAC** • **River Teith SAC**

		As a consequence, there is clear connectivity between the Preferred/Potential areas for native woodland creation promoted in the Strategy and the qualifying interests of these European sites. Depending the nature of the qualifying interests and the manner in which the native woodland creation is carried out, native woodland creation in these areas can have both positive and negative impacts (e.g. from encroachment of woodland into; non-woodland qualifying interest habitats or feeding/roosting habitats for geese and through the introduction of inappropriate species and pathogens via planting stock). As a result, an Appropriate Assessment of the impact of this element of the Strategy on European sites is required.

Further details of the screening of the *Opportunity mapping for native woodland creation* (Map 4) for likely significant effects on European sites is presented in **Appendix B.** This includes information on those sites were no likely significant effect was predicted (sites highlighted in **bold** in **Table 5** above).

Consideration of likely significant effects in combination
In-combination with other relevant Plans or Projects

The 'in combination effects' of the Strategy with other plans and projects has also been assessed. In line with SNH guidance, elements of the Strategy that have individually been screened out because they will have no effect on a European site or because that element is too general in nature, do not require an in-combination assessment. This is also the case for those elements of the Strategy that have been screened out because they are general policy statements. As a consequence, those elements of the Strategy screened out in **Table 4** did not form part of the in-combination assessment.
Table 6 below identifies the other plans and projects which have been considered.

Table 6: Other Relevant Plans and Projects considered for 'in combination' effects

Other Relevant Plans / Projects	
Key National Plans / Projects	
National Planning Framework	HRA undertaken. It guides the Local Development Plan. No policies or proposals identified that would have 'in combination' effects with proposals within the Strategy.
River Basin Management Plans	HRA undertaken. Will improve river SACs. No de minimis/minor residual effects identified.

UK Biodiversity Action Plan	Guides habitat and species management, benefitting European sites.
Local Development Plans	
Argyll and Bute; Stirling; West Dunbartonshire ; Perth and Kinross	HRA was undertaken. The majority of policies and proposals identified would have no 'in combination' effects.
National Park Documents	
Local Development Plan 'LIVE Park'	HRA was undertaken. The policies and proposals identified would have no 'in combination' effects.
Biodiversity Action Plan 'Wild Park'	HRA not undertaken. Wild Park is a delivery mechanism for the conservation objectives and policies identified in the 2012-2017 and 2018-2023 National Park Partnership Plans. Both plans have been subject to HRA and no likelihood of significant effects on any European sites was identified.
Your Park 'Camping Development Strategy'	HRA not undertaken as a strategic plan, projects not detailed enough.
Core Paths Plan	HRA not undertaken. It protects a network of paths throughout the Park. No effect on any European sites.
Outdoor Recreation Plan	HRA not undertaken as policies were too general and projects were not detailed enough.
National Park Partnership Plan 2018-2023	HRA undertaken and no part of the plan was likely to have a significant effect on any European site 'alone' or 'in-combination'.
Transport Scotland projects not started	
A82 Improvements: - Tarbet to Inverarnan Upgrade	This project will be assessed under the Habitats Regulations in terms of its impacts on any European site such as Loch Lomond Woods SAC. The route and design details are still to be finalised and therefore it cannot be considered in terms of potential in-combination effects.

The other relevant plans and projects listed above in **Table 6** have been considered for 'in combination' effects and there are no likely significant in combination effects.

Conclusion to screening

Only the Opportunity mapping for native woodland creation (Map 4) has been identified as having a likely significant effect on European sites and must be subject to Appropriate

Assessment. No likely significant effects are predicted from the remainder of the Strategy 'alone' or 'in combination'.

Section 5 – Appropriate Assessment

The screening process summarised in Section 4 identified that the *Opportunity mapping for native woodland creation* (Map 4 of the Strategy) will have a likely significant effect on a number of European sites as detailed in **Table 5** and **Appendix B**. As a consequence, this element of the Strategy must be subject to Appropriate Assessment. This section sets out the Appropriate Assessment of the *Opportunity mapping for native woodland creation.*

The Appropriate Assessment is an assessment of the implications of the Strategy for the qualifying interests of the European sites where a likely significant effect has been identified in view of their 'conservation objectives'. The conservation objectives are therefore critical to and the focus of the assessment. As highlighted above, no potential in-combination effects are predicted from the remainder of the Strategy or other relevant plans and projects.

The Strategy can only be adopted if it can be ascertained, through the Appropriate Assessment, that the Strategy will not adversely affect the integrity of any European site. In accordance with the Scottish Government's Circular on the Habitats and Birds Directives, 'integrity of a site' is defined as: *"the coherence of its ecological structure and function, across its whole area, which enables it to sustain the habitat, complex of habitats and/or the levels of population of the species for which it was classified".*

Appropriate Assessment of the *Opportunity mapping for native woodland creation* (Map 4 of the Strategy)

The following **Table 7** lists all the European sites where it was not possible to rule out the risk of significant effects as a consequence of the *Opportunity mapping for native woodland creation* promoted in Map 4 of the Strategy (as detailed in **Appendix B**). This section analyses the implications for each qualifying interest in light of its conservation objectives then states the mitigation measures to be applied or taken into account and the conclusions.

It is important to note that the *Opportunity mapping for native woodland creation* is intended as a guide for land managers and Forestry Scotland Woodland Officers to highlight areas most suitable for new native woodland – it is not intended to, nor will it, replace the existing assessment process e.g. Forestry (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 and the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (Habitats Regulations. As National Parks are classified as 'sensitive areas' under the Forestry (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017, all forestry projects (e.g. afforestation, deforestation, forest roads and forest quarries) must be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening opinion from Scottish Forestry. This process ensures that any significant environmental effects from forestry projects within the National Park are identified and addressed at an early stage.

The Strategy is not, therefore, the primary decision-making framework and will not, in practice, generate any likely significant effects in its own right.

In addition, the Strategy includes a clear caveat in section 5.3.1 that *"All proposals for woodland creation or management within, or likely to have a significant effect on, the qualifying interests of a European Designated site will be required to be subject to Habitats Regulations Appraisal. Early consultation with Scottish Natural Heritage is recommended in these circumstances".*

Table 7: Appropriate Assessment of Opportunity mapping for native woodland creation (Map 4 of the Strategy)

Site name	Qualifying Interest	Proximity of 'Preferred' and 'Potential' areas for native woodland expansion to European site	Potential effects on qualifying interests for native woodland expansion activities	Potential effects	Mitigation requirements for proposals
Loch Lomond Woods SAC	Western acidic oak woodland (Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles) Otter (Lutra lutra) Brook lamprey *(Lampetra planeri)* Atlantic salmon *(Salmo salar)*	There are Preferred and Potential areas for native woodland expansion within the boundary of the SAC.	<u>Western acidic oak woodland</u> The conservation status of the qualifying habitat is considered to be closely linked to and dependent on the following factors: • Extent of qualifying habitat • Structure and function of the habitat Listed below are the most likely impacts resulting from native woodland expansion activities that could affect the qualifying interests: • Habitat loss • Degradation of	*Expansion through natural regeneration* <u>Western acidic oak woodland</u> Expanding native woodland within/adjacent to the SAC through natural regeneration will be beneficial for the western acidic oak qualifying interest of the site. This approach will ensure that any native woodland expansion will be made up of species of appropriate provenance and avoid the risk of introducing pathogens via planting stock. **No likely significant effect**	*Expansion through planting* • Planting within or adjacent to the Loch Lomond Woods SAC will only be considered where it can be demonstrated that this is consistent with the Conservation Objectives of the site and appropriate planting stock can be obtained. • Any proposals for native woodland planting within/adjacent to Loch Lomond Woods SAC must also be supported by an otter survey and species

			connectivity through inappropriate planting <u>Otter</u> The conservation status of the otter qualifying interest is considered to be closely linked to and dependent on the following factors: • Extent of foraging areas/ suitable resting sites • Disturbance levels at resting sites Listed below are the most likely impacts resulting from native woodland expansion activities that can affect the otter qualifying interest: • Hydrological impacts. This includes impacts within the downstream catchment/s, if woodland creation alters the water quality or affects surface water flow (quantity). • Disturbance levels to resting sites from	<u>Otter</u> Native woodland expansion through natural regeneration will enhance the habitat available to otters by providing improved cover and additional opportunities for holts. **No likely significant effect** *Expansion through planting* <u>Western acidic oak woodland</u> Whilst expanding native woodland within/adjacent to the SAC by planting could be beneficial for the western acidic oak qualifying interest of the site, there is a risk of introducing inappropriate species and pathogens via planting stock. **Likely significant effect – Mitigation required** <u>Otter</u> Whilst native woodland expansion will enhance the habitat available to	protection plan. **Provided these mitigation measures are implemented, there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the site.**

			forestry operations	otters by providing improved cover and additional opportunities for holts, there is a small risk of disturbance to otters shelters through any planting activity within/adjacent to the SAC. Compliance with the UK Forestry Standard (Forests and Water) and Controlled Activities Regulations General Binding Rules (20, 21) will ensure that there are no negative impacts on water quality from planting proposals within or adjacent to the site. **Likely significant effect – Mitigation required**	
Trossachs Woods SAC	Western acidic oak woodland (Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles)	Preferred and Potential areas identified within the boundary of the SAC.	The conservation status of the qualifying habitat is considered to be closely linked to and dependent on the following factors: • Extent of qualifying habitat • Structure and function of the	*Expansion through natural regeneration* Expanding native woodland within/adjacent to the SAC through natural regeneration will be beneficial for the western acidic oak qualifying interest of the	*Expansion through planting* • Planting within or adjacent to the Trossachs Woods SAC will only be considered where it can be demonstrated that this is consistent

			habitat Listed below are the most likely impacts resulting from native woodland expansion activities that could affect the qualifying interests: • Habitat loss • Degradation of connectivity through inappropriate planting	site. This approach will ensure that any native woodland expansion will be made up of species of appropriate provenance and avoid the risk of introducing pathogens via planting stock. **No likely significant effect** *Expansion through planting* Whilst expanding native woodland within/adjacent to the SAC by planting could be beneficial for the western acidic oak qualifying interest of the site, there is a risk of introducing inappropriate species and pathogens via planting stock. **Likely significant effect – Mitigation required**	with the Conservation Objectives of the site and appropriate planting stock can be obtained. **Provided these mitigation measures are implemented, there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the site.**
Ben Lui SAC	Base-rich fens (Alkaline fens) Alpine and subalpine calcareous grasslands High-altitude plant	There are Preferred areas identified directly adjacent to the SAC boundary and Potential areas identified within	The conservation status of the qualifying habitats is considered to be closely linked to and dependent on the	Whilst some native woodland expansion within the SAC could be beneficial for the qualifying interests and	• Any proposals for native woodland expansion within/adjacent to Ben Lui SAC must

	communities associated with areas of water seepage* (Alpine pioneer formations of the Caricion bicoloris-atrofuscae*)	the boundary.	following factors: • Extent of qualifying habitat • Structure and function of the habitat Listed below are the most likely impacts resulting from native woodland expansion activities that could affect the qualifying interests: • Habitat loss • Woodland encroachment (growth of trees as a result of seed dispersal)	wider biodiversity aims, it could also result in the loss of qualifying habitat through woodland encroachment into qualifying habitats. **Likely significant effect – Mitigation required**	be supported by an NVC survey to demonstrate that the qualifying habitats will not be directly affected by the proposals and include management measures to ensure that woodland does not encroach onto sensitive qualifying habitats. **Provided these mitigation measures are implemented, there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the site.**
	Plants in crevices on base-rich rocks (Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation)				
	Tall herb communities (Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels)				
	Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath (Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix)				
	Montane acid grasslands (Siliceous alpine and boreal grasslands)				
	Plants in crevices on acid rocks (Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation)				
	Acidic scree (Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels - Androsacetalia alpinae and Galeopsietalia ladani)				

	Species-rich grassland with mat-grass in upland areas (Species-rich Nardus grassland, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas in continental Europe)*)				
	Mountain willow scrub (Sub-Arctic Salix spp. Scrub)				
Meall na Samnha SAC	Alpine and subalpine calcareous grasslands	There are no Preferred areas identified within SAC and the closest Preferred area lies around 120m away from the boundary. Potential areas are identified within the SAC boundary.	The conservation status of the qualifying habitats is considered to be closely linked to and dependent on the following factors: • Extent of qualifying habitat • Structure and function of the habitat Listed below are the most likely impacts resulting from native woodland expansion activities that could affect the qualifying interests: • Habitat loss Woodland encroachment (growth of trees as a result of seed dispersal	Whilst some native woodland expansion within the SAC could be beneficial for the qualifying interests and wider biodiversity aims, it could also result in the loss of qualifying habitat through woodland encroachment into qualifying habitats. **Likely significant effect – Mitigation required**	• Any proposals for native woodland expansion within/adjacent to Meall na Samnha SAC must be supported by an NVC survey to demonstrate that the qualifying habitats will not be directly affected by the proposals and include management measures to ensure that woodland does not encroach onto sensitive qualifying habitats. **Provided these mitigation measures are implemented, there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the site.**
	Plants in crevices on base-rich rocks (Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation)				
	Tall herb communities (Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels)				
	Montane acid grasslands (Siliceous alpine and boreal grasslands)				
	Species-rich grassland with mat-grass in upland areas (Species-rich Nardus grassland, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas and submountain areas in continental Europe**				
	Mountain willow scrub				

	(Sub-Arctic Salix spp. Scrub)				
River Tay SAC	River lamprey *(Lampetra fluviatilis)*	Preferred and Potential areas identified within SAC. Further Preferred and Potential areas are identified within the wider catchment of the SAC.	The conservation status of the qualifying features is considered to be closely linked to and dependent on the following factors: • Water quality/quantity • Extent of foraging areas/ suitable resting sites (otter) • Extent of habitat (i.e. suitability for spawning) • Disturbance levels at locations with suitable resting sites (otter) Listed below are the most likely impacts resulting from native woodland expansion activities that can affect the qualifying interest: • Hydrological impacts. This includes impacts within the downstream catchment/s, if woodland creation alters the water quality or affects	<u>Salmon & lamprey</u> Native woodland expansion along riparian corridors can have a range of benefits, including reducing diffuse pollution and flood risk, moderating water temperature, and supporting fish populations. Compliance with the UK Forestry Standard (Forests and Water) and Controlled Activities Regulations General Binding Rules (20, 21) will ensure that there are no negative impacts on the water quality of the SAC from planting proposals within or adjacent to the site. **No likely significant effect** <u>Otter</u> Native woodland expansion along riparian corridors will enhance the habitat available to otters by providing improved	<u>Otter</u> • Any proposals for native woodland planting within/adjacent to the River Tay SAC must be supported by an otter survey and species protection plan. **Provided these mitigation measures are implemented, there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the site.**
	Brook lamprey *(Lampetra planeri)*				
	Sea lamprey *(Petromyzon marinus)*				
	Atlantic salmon *(Salmo salar)*				
	Otter *(Lutra lutra)*				
	Clear-water lakes or lochs with aquatic				

	vegetation and poor to moderate nutrient levels (Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the *Littorelletea uniflorae* and/or of the *Isoëto-Nanojuncetea)* Brook lamprey *(Lampetra planeri)* Sea lamprey *(Petromyzon marinus)* Atlantic salmon *(Salmo salar)*		surface water flow (quantity). • Disturbance levels to resting sites (otter) from forestry operations.	cover and additional opportunities for holts. However, there is a small risk of disturbance to otters shelters through planting activity within/adjacent to the SAC. Compliance with the UK Forestry Standard (Forests and Water) and Controlled Activities Regulations General Binding Rules (20, 21) will ensure that there are no negative impacts on the water quality of the SAC from planting proposals within or adjacent to the site. **Likely significant effect – Mitigation required**	
Loch Lomond SPA	Capercaillie *(Tetrao urogallus)*, breeding Greenland white-fronted goose *(Anser albifrons flavirostris),* non-breeding	The mainland section of the SPA has been classified as sensitive on the opportunities map along with the important feeding fields for the Greenland white-fronted geese outwith the SPA including a 400m buffer around these fields.	The conservation status of the qualifying features is considered to be closely linked to and dependent on the following factors: • Extent of foraging areas • Disturbance levels at feeding and roosting sites	<u>Greenland white-fronted goose</u> Greenland white-fronted geese roost on the mainland section of the SPA and primarily feed on agricultural fields outwith the SPA boundary. They are particularly susceptible to disturbance and	<u>Capercaillie</u> • Any native woodland expansion activities on the four Luss islands must be undertaken outwith the capercaillie breeding season to avoid disturbance during this sensitive

			Listed below are most likely impacts resulting from native woodland expansion activities that can affect the qualifying interest: • Habitat loss – where foraging grounds are lost (e.g. loss of arable land), • Disturbance to roosting or foraging sites from forestry operations	require large open areas with clear sight lines for foraging and roosting. Native woodland expansion within/adjacent to feeding/roosting areas could impact on sightlines and reduce the suitability of feeding/roosting sites. To avoid impacts on the feeding/roosting sites used by the geese, the following areas were classified as sensitive on the *Opportunity mapping for native woodland creation* (Map 4): • The mainland section of the SPA • The important feeding fields outwith the SPA boundary plus a 400m buffer around these fields. This will ensure that there is no impact on the suitability of feeding/roosting sites as a result of the	period (March to August inclusive). • If the construction of new deer or stock fencing on the four Luss islands is essential for native woodland expansion, any fencing must be designed in accordance with current best practice guidance - https://www.forestry.gov.uk/PDF/FCTN019.pdf/$FILE/FCTN019.pdf **Provided these mitigation measures are implemented, there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the site.**

				Strategy. **No likely significant effect** <u>Capercaillie</u> Capercaillie historically bred on the four Luss islands and they require mature woodland with a well-developed understory and low levels of disturbance, especially during their breeding season in the spring and summer months. There have only been occasional sightings of capercaillie in recent years and the SPA no longer supports a viable population. Native woodland expansion is likely to be beneficial to capercaillie but any works carried out on the Luss islands during the spring and summer months could result in disturbance during the breeding season. There is also a risk of capercaillie colliding with any deer or stock	

				fencing required for native woodland expansion in these areas. **Likely significant effect – Mitigation required**	
Glen Etive and Glen Fyne SPA	Golden eagle *(Aquila chrysaetos)*, breeding	The *Golden eagle range report*[1] has been used to refine the opportunities map to direct native woodland expansion proposals to areas that would protect/enhance the existing prey resource for golden eagle.	The conservation status of the qualifying interest is considered to be closely linked to and dependent on the following factors: • Extent of foraging areas; • Disturbance at feeding and breeding sites. Listed below are the most likely impacts resulting from native woodland expansion activities that can affect the qualifying interests: • Habitat loss (including reduction prey abundance and availability); • Forestry operations	Whilst appropriately designed/targeted native woodland expansion proposals can enhance the prey resource for golden eagle, poorly designed proposals can reduce the abundance and availability of prey. To address this issue, the *Golden eagle range report* has been used to refine the opportunities map to direct native woodland expansion proposals to areas that would protect/enhance the existing prey resource for golden eagle. Planting or associated activities carried out during the breeding season could result in	• SNH must be consulted on any proposals for native woodland expansion within/adjacent to the SPA to confirm the level of supporting information required for any proposal. • All operational activities within 1km of any nest site must be timed to avoid the most sensitive period between 1st February and 31st August (inclusive). All access routes must not pass within 1km of any nest site between February and

[1] Austin, S., Fielding, A. H. and Haworth, P. F. 2015. G/IS/D Golden eagle range report – Natural Heritage Zone 14 "Argyll West and Islands". Scottish Natural Heritage Commissioned Report No. 834

			disturbance.	the disturbance of breeding golden eagle. **Likely significant effect – Mitigation required**	August. • All woodland proposals within the SPA must include a minimum 20% internal glades **Provided these mitigation measures are implemented, there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the site.**

Section 5 - Conclusions

The Appropriate Assessment of the *Opportunity mapping for native woodland creation* identifies the implications of this element of the Strategy for European sites and details mitigation measures that must be implemented to ensure that there is no adverse effect on the integrity of any European sites. As these mitigation measures have been incorporated into the draft Strategy (Appendix 5) along with a requirement for all proposals affecting European sites to be subject to HRA, it can be safely concluded that the Strategy will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site.

Appendix A: Detailed Matrix of the Key Elements of the Strategy and Reasons For Screening Out

Key Element of Strategy		1)	2)	3a)	3b)	3c)	3d)	3e)
		1) General policy statements	2) Projects not generated by this plan	3a) Intended to protect the natural	3b) Will not themselves lead to development or	3c) Make provision for change but could have	3d) Make provision for change but would have	3e) Effects on European site cannot
Vision								
Strategy Vision	***Strategy Vision*** • Our vision is for the trees, woodlands and forests of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park to flourish and to expand where appropriate, providing us and future generations with sustainable natural capital.	**X**						
Strategic Objectives								
Strategic Objective 1 Increasing Woodland Cover	***Increasing Woodland Cover*** • The Trees and Woodland Strategy promotes woodland creation that provides multiple benefits for the National Park, especially where it delivers on the conservation objectives outlined in this document.							**X**

Key Element of Strategy		1)	2)	3a)	3b)	3c)	3d)	3e)
Strategic Objective 2 Improving Woodland Condition and Diversifying Woodland Management	***Improving Woodland Condition and Diversifying Woodland Management*** • The Trees and Woodland Strategy will identify issues and solutions to enhance woodland management, with a focus on priority woodland habitats and flagship species found within the National Park (as defined in the National Park Partnership Plan 2018 – 2023). The Strategy will encourage increased woodland diversity in species and age structure to deliver more resilient woodlands.			**X**				
Strategic Objective 3 Protecting and Enhancing the Landscape	***Protecting and Enhancing the Landscape*** • The Trees and Woodland Strategy will identify how different types of woodland and tree planting could be located to bring landscape enhancement while not detracting from the Special Landscape Qualities of the National Park. The Strategy will provide a toolkit to assist with woodland landscape assessment and design.			**X**				
Strategic Objective 4 Maintaining and Enhancing Economic Sustainability Through Skills and Business Development	***Maintaining and Enhancing Economic Sustainability Through Skills and Business Development*** • The Trees and Woodland Strategy will promote sustainable woodland management of both productive conifer and broadleaf woodlands and integrated land management techniques where appropriate, identifying new economic markets and seeking solutions to issues preventing harvesting/timber haulage of existing conifer forests.							**X**

Key Element of Strategy		1)	2)	3a)	3b)	3c)	3d)	3e)
Strategic Objective 5 Promoting Cooperative Woodland Management and Creation as Part of an Integrated Land Management Approach	***Promoting Cooperative Woodland Management and Creation as Part of an Integrated Land Management Approach*** • The Trees and Woodland Strategy will encourage and support land managers/owners and local communities to identify the best ways to co-ordinate and manage a balanced approach to woodland management and creation as part of integrated land management to support a healthy environment along with a sustainable rural economy. This support could be achieved by the formation of Land Use Partnerships.							**X**
Strategic Objective 6 Improved Community Empowerment and Resilience From Active Engagement in Woodland Management	***Improved Community Empowerment and Resilience From Active Engagement in Woodland Management*** • The Trees and Woodland Strategy will encourage better engagement between local communities and woodland owners or managers to explore opportunities for greater involvement in the use and management of woods, as well as greater understanding of the opportunities and constraints associated with woodland management and creation.							**X**
Strategic Objective 7 Encourage and Promote Public Access for Recreation and Improving People's Quality of Life	***Encourage and Promote Public Access for Recreation and Improving People's Quality of Life*** • The Trees and Woodland Strategy will encourage and promote responsible access as detailed in Land Reform legislation and related guidance, while encouraging and supporting the diversification of the public use of woodland, including for recreation and education opportunities.							**X**

Appendix B: Assessment of potential effects on European sites as a result of the Opportunity mapping for native woodland creation (Map 4 of the Strategy)

Site name	Qualifying Interest	Proximity of 'Preferred' and 'Potential' areas for native woodland expansion to European site	Potential effects on qualifying interests for native woodland expansion activities	Potential effects
Ben Heasgarnich SAC	Base-rich fens (Alkaline fens)	No Preferred or Potential areas are identified within or adjacent to SAC. The nearest preferred area lies around 0.7km away from the SAC and the nearest potential area lies around 1.2km away.	The conservation status of the qualifying habitats is considered to be closely linked to and dependent on the following factors: • Extent of qualifying habitat • Structure and function of the habitat Listed below are the most likely impacts resulting from native woodland expansion activities that could affect the qualifying interests: • Habitat loss • Woodland encroachment (growth of trees as a result of seed dispersal)	There will be no direct impacts on the qualifying interests of the SAC as no Preferred/Potential areas for native woodland expansion are identified within the SAC. Given the separation distance between the Preferred/Potential areas and the SAC, any native woodland expansion in these areas will not give rise to a likely significant effect on the qualifying interests of the SAC (e.g. through seed dispersal). **No likely significant effect** **This site can be excluded from further stages of the HRA process.**
	Alpine and subalpine calcareous grasslands			
	High-altitude plant communities associated with areas of water seepage (Alpine pioneer formations of the Caricion bicoloris-atrofuscae)			
	Plants in crevices on base-rich rocks (Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation)			
	Tall herb communities (Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains) and of the montane to alpine levels			
	Montane acid grasslands (Siliceous alpine and boreal grasslands)			
	Plants in crevices on acid rocks (Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation)			
	Species-rich grassland with mat-grass in upland areas (Species-rich Nardus			

	grassland, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas in continental Europe) Mountain willow scrub (Sub-Arctic Salix spp. Scrub)			
Loch Lomond Woods SAC	Western acidic oak woodland (Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles) Otter (Lutra lutra)	There are Preferred and Potential areas for native woodland expansion within the boundary of the SAC.	<u>Western acidic oak woodland</u> The conservation status of the qualifying habitat is considered to be closely linked to and dependent on the following factors: • Extent of qualifying habitat • Structure and function of the habitat Listed below are the most likely impacts resulting from native woodland expansion activities that could affect the qualifying interests: • Habitat loss • Degradation of connectivity through inappropriate planting <u>Otter</u> The conservation status of the otter qualifying interest is considered to be closely linked to and dependent on the following factors: • Extent of foraging areas/	*Expansion through natural regeneration* <u>Western acidic oak woodland</u> Expanding native woodland within/adjacent to the SAC through natural regeneration will be beneficial for the western acidic oak qualifying interest of the site. This approach will ensure that any native woodland expansion will be made up of species of appropriate provenance and avoid the risk of introducing pathogens via planting stock. **No likely significant effect** <u>Otter</u> Native woodland expansion through natural regeneration will enhance the habitat available to otters by providing improved cover and additional opportunities for holts. **No likely significant effect**

			suitable resting sites • Disturbance levels at resting sites Listed below are the most likely impacts resulting from native woodland expansion activities that can affect the otter qualifying interest: • Hydrological impacts. This includes impacts within the downstream catchment/s, if woodland creation alters the water quality or affects surface water flow (quantity). • Disturbance levels to resting sites from forestry operations	*Expansion through planting* <u>Western acidic oak woodland</u> Whilst expanding native woodland within/adjacent to the SAC by planting could be beneficial for the western acidic oak qualifying interest of the site, there is a risk of introducing inappropriate species and pathogens via planting stock. **Likely significant effect – Appropriate Assessment required** <u>Otter</u> Whilst native woodland expansion will enhance the habitat available to otters by providing improved cover and additional opportunities for holts, there is a small risk of disturbance to otters shelters through any planting activity within/adjacent to the SAC. Compliance with the UK Forestry Standard (Forests and Water) and Controlled Activities Regulations General Binding Rules (20, 21) will ensure that there are no negative impacts on water quality from planting proposals within or adjacent to the site.

				Likely significant effect – Appropriate Assessment required
Endrick Water SAC	River lamprey *(Lampetra fluviatilis)* Brook lamprey *(Lampetra planeri)* Atlantic salmon *(Salmo salar)*	There are Preferred areas identified directly adjacent to the SAC and Potential areas within the SAC. Further Preferred and Potential areas are identified within the wider catchment of the SAC.	The conservation status of the qualifying features is considered to be closely linked to and dependent on the following factors: • Water quality/quantity • Extent of habitat (i.e. suitability for spawning) Listed below are the most likely impacts resulting from native woodland expansion activities that can affect the qualifying interest: • Hydrological impacts. This includes impacts within the downstream catchment/s, if woodland creation alters the water quality or affects surface water flow (quantity).	Native woodland expansion along riparian corridors can have a range of benefits, including reducing diffuse pollution and flood risk, moderating water temperature, and supporting fish populations. Compliance with the UK Forestry Standard (Forests and Water) and Controlled Activities Regulations General Binding Rules (20, 21) will ensure that there are no negative impacts on the water quality of the SAC from planting proposals within or adjacent to the site. **No likely significant effect** **This site can be excluded from further stages of the HRA process.**
Trossachs Woods SAC	Western acidic oak woodland (Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles)	Preferred and Potential areas identified within the boundary of the SAC	The conservation status of the qualifying habitat is considered to be closely linked to and dependent on the following factors: • Extent of qualifying	*Expansion through natural regeneration* Expanding native woodland within/adjacent to the SAC through natural regeneration will be beneficial for the

			habitat • Structure and function of the habitat Listed below are the most likely impacts resulting from native woodland expansion activities that could affect the qualifying interests: • Habitat loss • Degradation of connectivity through inappropriate planting	western acidic oak qualifying interest of the site. This approach will ensure that any native woodland expansion will be made up of species of appropriate provenance and avoid the risk of introducing pathogens via planting stock. **No likely significant effect** *Expansion through planting* Whilst expanding native woodland within/adjacent to the SAC by planting could be beneficial for the western acidic oak qualifying interest of the site, there is a risk of introducing inappropriate species and pathogens via planting stock. **Likely significant effect – Appropriate Assessment required**
Ben Lui SAC	Base-rich fens (Alkaline fens) Alpine and subalpine calcareous grasslands High-altitude plant communities associated with areas of water seepage* (Alpine pioneer formations of the Caricion bicoloris-	There are Preferred areas identified directly adjacent to the SAC boundary and Potential areas identified within the boundary.	The conservation status of the qualifying habitats is considered to be closely linked to and dependent on the following factors: • Extent of qualifying	Whilst some native woodland expansion within the SAC could be beneficial for the qualifying interests and wider biodiversity aims, it could also result in the loss of qualifying habitat through woodland encroachment into

	atrofuscae*)		habitat • Structure and function of the habitat Listed below are the most likely impacts resulting from native woodland expansion activities that could affect the qualifying interests: • Habitat loss • Woodland encroachment (growth of trees as a result of seed dispersal)	qualifying habitats. **Likely significant effect – Appropriate Assessment required**
	Plants in crevices on base-rich rocks (Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation)			
	Tall herb communities (Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels)			
	Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath (Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix)			
	Montane acid grasslands (Siliceous alpine and boreal grasslands)			
	Plants in crevices on acid rocks (Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation)			
	Acidic scree (Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (Androsacetalia alpinae and Galeopsietalia ladani))			
	Species-rich grassland with mat-grass in upland areas (Species-rich Nardus grassland, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas in continental Europe)*)			
	Mountain willow scrub (Sub-Arctic Salix spp. Scrub)			
Meall na Samnha SAC	Alpine and subalpine calcareous grasslands	There are no Preferred areas identified within SAC and the closest Preferred area lies around 120m away from the	The conservation status of the qualifying habitats is considered to be closely linked to	Whilst some native woodland expansion within the SAC could be beneficial for the qualifying interests and wider
	Plants in crevices on base-rich rocks (Calcareous rocky			

	slopes with chasmophytic vegetation) Tall herb communities (Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels) Montane acid grasslands (Siliceous alpine and boreal grasslands) Species-rich grassland with mat-grass in upland areas (Species-rich Nardus grassland, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas and submountain areas in continental Europe** Mountain willow scrub (Sub-Arctic Salix spp. Scrub)	boundary. Potential areas are identified within the SAC boundary.	and dependent on the following factors: • Extent of qualifying habitat • Structure and function of the habitat Listed below are the most likely impacts resulting from native woodland expansion activities that could affect the qualifying interests: • Habitat loss • Woodland encroachment (growth of trees as a result of seed dispersal)	biodiversity aims, it could also result in the loss of qualifying habitat through woodland encroachment into qualifying habitats. **Likely significant effect – Appropriate Assessment required**
River Tay SAC	River lamprey *(Lampetra fluviatilis)* Brook lamprey *(Lampetra planeri)* Sea lamprey *(Petromyzon marinus)* Atlantic salmon *(Salmo salar)* Otter *(Lutra lutra)* Clear-water lakes or lochs with aquatic vegetation and poor to moderate nutrient levels (Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the *Littorelletea uniflorae* and/or of the *Isoëto-Nanojuncetea)*	Preferred and Potential areas identified within SAC. Further Preferred and Potential areas are identified within the wider catchment of the SAC.	The conservation status of the qualifying features is considered to be closely linked to and dependent on the following factors: • Water quality/quantity • Extent of foraging areas/ suitable resting sites (otter) • Extent of habitat (i.e. suitability for spawning) • Disturbance levels at locations with suitable resting sites (otter) Listed below are the most likely impacts resulting	<u>Salmon & lamprey</u> Native woodland expansion along riparian corridors can have a range of benefits, including reducing diffuse pollution and flood risk, moderating water temperature, and supporting fish populations. Compliance with the UK Forestry Standard (Forests and Water) and Controlled Activities Regulations General Binding Rules (20, 21) will ensure that there are no negative impacts on the water quality of the SAC from planting proposals within or

			from native woodland expansion activities that can affect the qualifying interest: • Hydrological impacts. This includes impacts within the downstream catchment/s, if woodland creation alters the water quality or affects surface water flow (quantity). • Disturbance levels to resting sites (otter) from forestry operations	adjacent to the site. **No likely significant effect** <u>Otter</u> Native woodland expansion along riparian corridors will enhance the habitat available to otters by providing improved cover and additional opportunities for holts. However, there is a small risk of disturbance to otters shelters through planting activity within/adjacent to the SAC. Compliance with the UK Forestry Standard (Forests and Water) and Controlled Activities Regulations General Binding Rules (20, 21) will ensure that there are no negative impacts on the water quality of the SAC from planting proposals within or adjacent to the site. **Likely significant effect – Appropriate Assessment required**
River Teith SAC	River lamprey *(Lampetra fluviatilis)* Brook lamprey *(Lampetra planeri)*	Preferred and Potential areas identified within the SAC	The conservation status of the qualifying features is considered to be closely linked to and dependent on the following factors:	Native woodland expansion along riparian corridors can have a range of benefits, including reducing diffuse pollution and flood risk, moderating water

	Sea lamprey *(Petromyzon marinus)* Atlantic salmon *(Salmo salar)*		• Water quality/quantity • Extent of habitat (i.e. suitability for spawning) Listed below are the most likely impacts resulting from native woodland expansion activities that can affect the qualifying interest: • Hydrological impacts. This includes impacts within the downstream catchment/s, if woodland creation alters the water quality or affects surface water flow (quantity).	temperature, and supporting fish populations. Compliance with the UK Forestry Standard (Forests and Water) and Controlled Activities Regulations General Binding Rules (20, 21) will ensure that there are no negative impacts on the water quality of the SAC through planting proposals within or adjacent to the site. **No likely significant effect** **This site can be excluded from further stages of the HRA process.**
Loch Lomond SPA	Capercaillie *(Tetrao urogallus)*, breeding Greenland white-fronted goose *(Anser albifrons flavirostris),* non-breeding	The mainland section of the SPA has been classified as 'Sensitive' on the opportunities map along with the important feeding fields for the Greenland white-fronted geese outwith the SPA including a 400m buffer around these fields.	The conservation status of the qualifying features is considered to be closely linked to and dependent on the following factors: • Extent of foraging areas • Disturbance levels at feeding and roosting sites Listed below are most likely impacts resulting from native woodland expansion activities that can affect the qualifying interest: • Habitat loss – where	<u>Greenland white-fronted goose</u> Greenland white-fronted geese roost on the mainland section of the SPA and primarily feed on agricultural fields outwith the SPA boundary. They are particularly susceptible to disturbance and require large open areas with clear sight lines for foraging and roosting. Native woodland expansion within/adjacent to feeding/roosting areas could impact on sightlines and

			foraging grounds are lost (e.g. loss of arable land), • Disturbance to roosting or foraging sites from forestry operations	reduce the suitability of feeding/roosting sites. To avoid impacts on the feeding/roosting sites used by the geese, the following areas were classified as sensitive on the *Opportunity mapping for native woodland creation* (Map 4): • The mainland section of the SPA • The important feeding fields outwith the SPA boundary plus a 400m buffer around these fields. This will ensure that there is no impact on the suitability of feeding/roosting sites as a result of the Strategy. **No likely significant effect** <u>Capercaillie</u> Capercaillie historically bred on the four Luss islands and they require mature woodland with a well-developed understory and low levels of disturbance, especially during their breeding season in the spring and summer months. There have only been

				occasional sightings of capercaillie in recent years and the SPA no longer supports a viable population. Native woodland expansion is likely to be beneficial to capercaillie but any works carried out on the Luss islands during the spring and summer months could result in disturbance during the breeding season. There is also a risk of capercaillie colliding with any deer or stock fencing required for native woodland expansion in these areas. **Likely significant effect – Appropriate Assessment required**
Glen Etive and Glen Fyne SPA	Golden eagle *(Aquila chrysaetos)*, breeding	The *Golden eagle range report*[2] has been used to refine the opportunities map to direct native woodland expansion proposals to areas that would protect/enhance the existing prey resource for golden eagle.	The conservation status of the qualifying interest is considered to be closely linked to and dependent on the following factors: • Extent of foraging areas; • Disturbance at feeding and breeding sites.	Whilst appropriately designed/targeted native woodland expansion proposals can enhance the prey resource for golden eagle, poorly designed proposals can reduce the abundance and availability of prey. To address this issue, the *Golden eagle range*

[2] Austin, S., Fielding, A. H. and Haworth, P. F. 2015. G/IS/D Golden eagle range report – Natural Heritage Zone 14 "Argyll West and Islands". Scottish Natural Heritage Commissioned Report No. 834

			Listed below are the most likely impacts resulting from native woodland expansion activities that can affect the qualifying interests: • Habitat loss (including reduction prey abundance and availability); • Forestry operations disturbance.	*report* has been used to refine the opportunities map to direct native woodland expansion proposals to areas that would protect/enhance the existing prey resource for golden eagle. Planting or associated activities carried out during the breeding season could result in the disturbance of breeding golden eagle. **Likely significant effect – Appropriate Assessment required**