

## APPENDIX 3: DESIGNATED SITES IN THE ITDMG AREA

### INTRODUCTION

The Inveraray & Tyndrum DMG area is moderately heavily designated, containing a number of high profile sites of national importance. In total, these sites extend to 4952 ha or 8.2% of the group area. Much of this area is included in the Glen Etive and Glen Fyne SPA for golden eagles which covers 21,770 ha of the Group. The SPA can affect important deer management decisions, particularly with regards to forestry and planting schemes. All sites except one are in favourable or recovering condition.

Designated upland sites within the group include three large or medium sized sites which extend to over 4600 ha, 7.6% of the total ITDMG area. This is significantly less than many DMGs of a similar size. They all carry the SSSI designation, and Ben Lui also carries an SAC designation as well. In addition to these, the Glen Etive and Glen Fyne SPA right at the heart of the DMG overlaps with a number of other sites.

There are four sites classified for their woodland interest or woodland flora in the ITDMG area; three broadleaved woodlands (219 ha) and one native pinewood (129 ha). There is also a National Scenic Area, several areas of ancient woodlands and a Wild Land Area. In addition, part of the DMG lies within the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park area.

The DMG is notable for the amount of ancient and ancient semi-natural woodland within the Group area, some 3586 ha in total, or 5.9% of the total area. Some of this area will be included in the designated sites, above, but this still represents a very significant resource.

Deer management is potentially relevant to many of these. It is important that land managers are aware of designations and that deer management decisions take these into consideration to maintain sites appropriately.

### SITE DESIGNATIONS

Within the ITDMG area there are six different types of designation:

*Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)*

*Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)*

*National Scenic Areas (NSA)*

*Special Protection Areas (SPA)*

*National Park*

#### **Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)**

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) represent the best of Scotland's natural heritage. They are 'special' for their plants, animals or habitats, their rocks or landforms, or a combination of such natural features. Together, they form a network of the best examples of natural features throughout Scotland, and support a wider network across Great Britain and the European Union.

Scottish Natural Heritage chooses sites after detailed survey and evaluation against published scientific criteria. SSSIs can include freshwater, and sea water down to the mean low water mark of spring tides, as well as land. At 31 March 2008, there were 1,456 SSSIs, covering a total area of 1,036,000 hectares or 12.9% of Scotland.

SNH designates SSSIs to protect the best of our natural heritage by making sure that decision-makers, managers of land and their advisors, as well as the planning authorities and other public bodies, are aware of them when considering changes in land-use or other activities which might affect them. The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 provides the legislative framework around which all SSSI sites are administered.

### **Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)**

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are areas designated under the European Directive commonly known as the 'Habitats' Directive. Together with Special Protection Areas, which are designated under the Wild Birds Directive for wild birds and their habitats, SACs form the Natura 2000 network of sites. Most SACs on land or freshwater in Scotland are also underpinned by notification as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). The additional SAC designation is recognition that some or all of the wildlife and habitats are particularly valued in a European context.

### **National Scenic Areas (NSA)**

National Scenic Areas are Scotland's only national landscape designation. They are those areas of land considered of national significance on the basis of their outstanding scenic interest which must be conserved as part of the country's natural heritage. They have been selected for their characteristic features of scenery comprising a mixture of richly diverse landscapes including prominent landforms, coastline, sea and freshwater lochs, rivers, woodlands and moorlands. There are currently 40 NSAs in Scotland, covering a total land area of 1,020,500 ha and a marine area of 357,900 ha.

### **Special Protection Areas (SPA)**

Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are strictly protected sites classified in accordance with Article 4 of the EC Birds Directive, which came into force in April 1979. They are classified for rare and vulnerable birds (as listed on Annex I of the Directive), and for regularly occurring migratory species. In the UK, the first SPAs were identified and classified in the early to mid 1980s. Classification has since progressed and a regularly updated UK SPA Summary Table provides an overview of both the number of classified SPAs and those approved by Government that are currently in the process of being classified (these are known as potential SPAs, or pSPAs).

### **National Park**

Part of the DMG lies within the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park area.

Nicola Colquhoun is the designated contact point for deer management matters.

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## ADMINISTRATION

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) are responsible for the administration of designated sites. Within this area, these sites are managed from their main Forth area and Argyll & Outer Hebrides offices. In the context of this plan, Jimmy Irvine of SNH is the primary point of contact: [James.Irvine@snh.gov.uk](mailto:James.Irvine@snh.gov.uk) Nicki McIntyre is the main point of contact for all matters relating to the River Tay SAC, extending from Tayside in to this area: [Nicki.McIntyre@snh.gov.uk](mailto:Nicki.McIntyre@snh.gov.uk)

## INDIVIDUAL DESIGNATED SITES

Listed here is a summary of the individual designated sites within the area. They are divided into: Large upland Sites; Woodland Sites; and Other Sites. There is also information on non-designated sites of note. The sites are shown on Map 1: ITDMG SSSI & SAC Sites, and Map 2: ITDMG Other Designations below.

### 1. Large Upland Sites

Other than the massive Glen Etive and Glen Fyne SPA site which will be detailed separately, there are three large or medium sized upland sites in the Deer Management Group. Together they extend to over 4600 ha, 7.6% of the total ITDMG area. This is significantly less than many DMGs of a similar size. Three of these carry the SSSI designation, and Ben Lui also carries the SAC designation as well (the NNR was declassified in 2016).

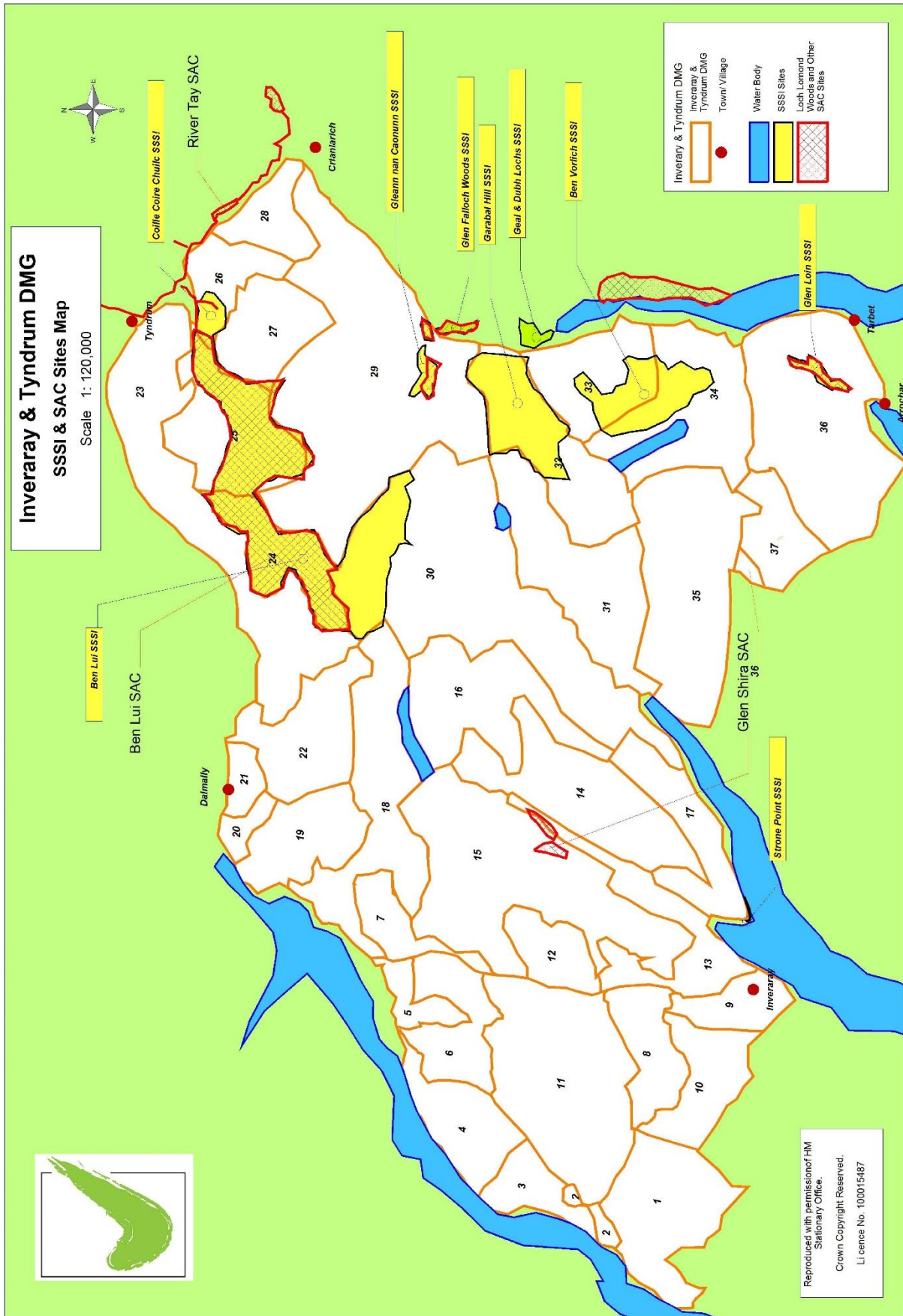
#### **Ben Lui SSSI - Favourable**

**Deer Management Holdings:** SNH Ben Lui, Cononish, Ardkinglas

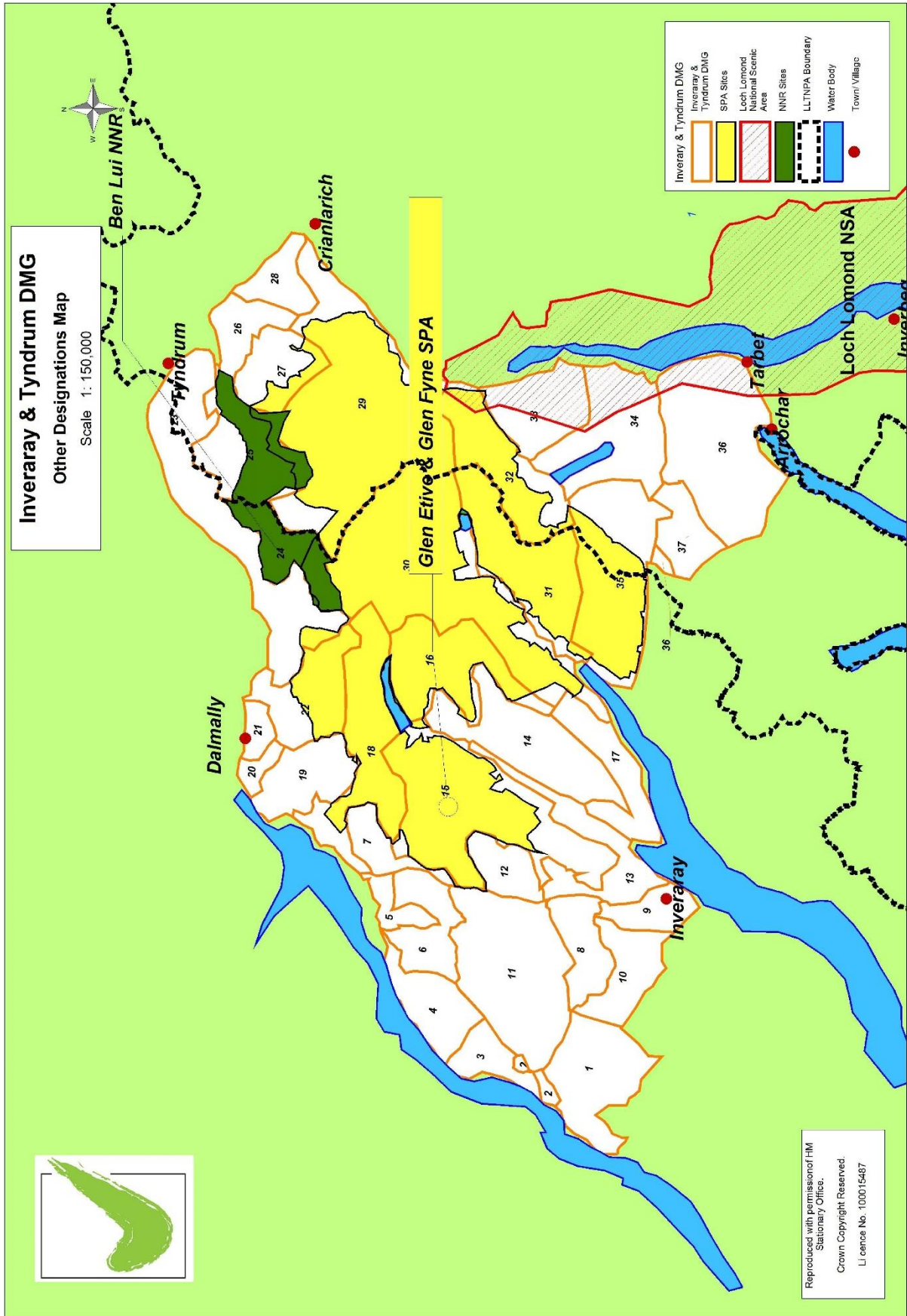
Ben Lui SSSI extends to 2927 ha and is designated for a range of geological and vegetation interests. Of the latter, the upland, invertebrate and vascular plant assemblages are all in favourable condition. Management is in place to continue favourable condition.

Feature	Summary Condition	Last Visit Date	Pressure
Invertebrate assemblage	Favourable Maintained	2009	Over-grazing
Upland assemblage	Favourable Maintained	2005	Grazing – appropriate
Vascular plant assemblage	Favourable	2010	Over-grazing

[http://gateway.snh.gov.uk/sitelink/siteinfo.jsp?pa\\_code=188](http://gateway.snh.gov.uk/sitelink/siteinfo.jsp?pa_code=188)



Map 1: ITDMG SSSI & SAC Sites



**Map 2: ITDMG Other Designations**



**Ben Lui SAC – 7 Recovering; 4 Favourable**

**Deer Management Holdings:** SNH Ben Lui, Cononish

Within the SSSI area a slightly smaller area is designated as the Ben Lui SAC, extending to 2059 ha. There are 11 SAC qualifying features designated. Four features are deemed in Favourable condition, and seven are recovering with management in place to improve all feature conditions. Herbivore impacts (either grazing or trampling) are the main concerns. Further Site Condition Monitoring (SCM) work is planned to be carried out.

Feature	Summary Condition	Last Visit Date	Pressure
Acidic scree	Favourable	2005	None
Alpine and subalpine calcareous grasslands	Recovering	2005	Over-grazing
Base-rich fens	Recovering	2005	Trampling
High-altitude plant communities associated with areas of water seepage	Recovering	2005	Over-grazing
Montane acid grasslands	Recovering	2005	Over-grazing
Mountain willow scrub	Recovering	2005	Over-grazing
Plants in crevices on acid rocks	Favourable	2005	None
Plants in crevices on base-rich rocks	Favourable	2005	None
Species-rich grassland with mat-grass in upland areas	Recovering	2005	Under-grazing
Tall herb communities	Favourable	2005	None
Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath	Recovering	2005	Over-grazing

[http://gateway.snh.gov.uk/sitelink/siteinfo.jsp?pa\\_code=8203](http://gateway.snh.gov.uk/sitelink/siteinfo.jsp?pa_code=8203)

**Ben Vorlich SSSI – 2 Favourable; 1 Recovering**

**Deer Management Holdings:** Stuckendroin, Inveruglas

Ben Vorlich SSSI extends to 766 ha, and is designated for tall herbs, subalpine wet heath and alpine flushes. As of 2013 all habitats are deemed to be in favourable condition as a result of past changes to management. Discussions are ongoing between land managers and SNH/LLTNPA regarding management of herbivores (deer and sheep) to ensure future condition.

Feature	Summary Condition	Last Visit Date	Pressure
Alpine flush	Recovering	2013	Over-grazing
Subalpine wet heath	Favourable	2013	Over-grazing
Tall herb ledge	Favourable	2013	None

[http://gateway.snh.gov.uk/sitelink/siteinfo.jsp?pa\\_code=193](http://gateway.snh.gov.uk/sitelink/siteinfo.jsp?pa_code=193)

**Garabal Hill SSSI - Favourable**

**Deer Management Holdings:** Garabal

Garabal Hill SSSI extends to 907 ha, and is designated for its Caledonian Igneous rock. This is deemed to be in Favourable condition. There is no relevance to deer. Agreed management is in place through a Long Term Forest Plan which ensures appropriate consideration of impacts of forestry operations to the feature.

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**Glen Etive and Glen Fyne SPA - Favourable**

Finally, the massive **Glen Etive and Glen Fyne SPA** lies partly within this DMG area, covering 21,770 ha of the Group area. It overlaps partly with Ben Lui and includes Garabal Hill completely. The site is designated because of the breeding golden eagles present. The whole SPA extends to over 81,000 ha in total with the greater area lying to the north around Glen Etive. Deer carcasses will be one element in the diet of golden eagles. The SPA was designated for Golden Eagle feature in 2010. Site Condition Monitoring carried out in 2015 deemed the SPA was in favourable condition. Sensitive management is ongoing within ITDMG area to ensure breeding success of Golden Eagle.

[http://gateway.snh.gov.uk/sitelink/siteinfo.jsp?pa\\_code=10113](http://gateway.snh.gov.uk/sitelink/siteinfo.jsp?pa_code=10113)

## **2. Woodland Sites**

There are four sites classified for their woodland interest or woodland flora in the ITDMG area; three broadleaved woodlands and one native pinewood. Note that while the condition of these sites will relate mainly to past or current grazing pressure, other issues such as invasive rhododendrons or non-native tree species will also affect the condition monitoring results of such sites.

### **(a) Broadleaved Woodland Sites**

**Loch Lomond Woods SAC** - includes Glen Falloch Woods SSSI & Glen Loin SSSI

The Loch Lomond Woods SAC is designated for Western Acidic Oak Woodland and Otter. This designation covers multiple woodlands up and down the catchment of Loch Lomond. Currently the woodland feature is in unfavourable condition when taken as a whole, however discussions and practical management are ongoing across all individual sites to ensure favourable condition is achieved. Within ITDMG both Glenfalloch Woods and Glen Loin have appropriate management in place to work towards achieving favourable condition.

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**Glen Falloch Woods SSSI – Recovering**

Glen Falloch Woods SSSI extends to 89 ha, with approximately half of it lying within the group

area. It is designated for upland oak woodland. This SSSI is an area of ancient deciduous woodland which has the largest and least disturbed remnants of ancient broadleaf woodland, it has a wide variety of woodland types contained within it. It is of significant importance to SNH. Within the ITDMG area it is mostly an oakwood of an even age. At the last site assessment in 2002 SNH defined the whole SSSI as in unfavourable declining condition and cited the impact of overgrazing by deer. Since then the woodland has been fenced off to exclude deer and reduce the pressure on regeneration. In addition, various discussions have been held with SNH regarding returning the site to favourable or at least improving condition. SNH are however content that the state of the woodland is one which is suitable given the even age and nature of the woodland. The landowners continue to interact with SNH and LLTNP on the best courses of sustainable management for this woodland.

[http://gateway.snh.gov.uk/sitelink/siteinfo.jsp?pa\\_code=707](http://gateway.snh.gov.uk/sitelink/siteinfo.jsp?pa_code=707)

### **Glen Loin SSSI – Recovering**

**Deer Management Holdings:** FE Cobbler

The Glen Loin SSSI extends to 65 ha. It is designated for Upland Oak Woodland as well as Upland mixed Ash Woodland. The latter is deemed to be in Favourable/Declining condition due to native and non-native invasive species and overgrazing (as at 14/5/2015). The former is in Unfavourable/No Change condition due to non-native invasive species (rhododendron and sycamore) and overgrazing from deer (as at 6/10/2001). Appropriate management is in place to work towards achieving favourable condition.

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### **Glen Shira SAC – Recovering**

**Deer Management Holdings:** Argyll Estates

The Glen Shira SAC extends to 65 ha. It is designated for Western acidic oak woodland, and as of 2008 is deemed to be in Unfavourable/Recovering condition due to ongoing management. Grazing by herbivores (sheep & mainly deer) is the main impacts affecting favourable condition.

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### **(b) Native Pinewoods**

### **Coille Coire Chuilc SSSI – 2 Favourable; 1 Unfavourable**

**Deer Management Holdings:** Strathfillan

There is one native pinewood in the ITDMG area. Coille Coire Chuilc is one of the most southerly pinewoods in Scotland. The Coille Coire Chuilc SSSI extends to 129 ha. It is designated for Fly and Beetle assemblages, and for the native pinewood habitat. Currently (SCM carried out in 2008) the Native Pinewood feature is deemed to be in 'Unfavourable No Change' condition due to deer impacts. Both the Beetle and Fly Assemblage are in favourable



condition. Discussions are ongoing between the occupier/deer manager regarding increased deer management activity. There has however been very significant regeneration within the pinewood in recent years, albeit primarily with birch.

Update Nov 2017: there is ongoing discussion between SNH, LLTNP and land managers regarding this SSSI. Individual members are engaging in the process and there has been some positive discussion on further collaboration between neighbours, however this would benefit from further work from ITDMG on focus areas/required culls.

[http://gateway.snh.gov.uk/sitelink/siteinfo.jsp?pa\\_code=377](http://gateway.snh.gov.uk/sitelink/siteinfo.jsp?pa_code=377)

### 3. Other Sites

#### **Strone Point SSSI - Favourable**

**Deer Management Holdings:** Dunderave

Strone Point SSSI extends to 4 ha and is designated in relation to its structural and metamorphic geology. Lying right on the boundary of the ITDMG this designated site is in favourable condition and is not impacted upon by deer.

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#### **The River Tay SAC - Favourable**

**Deer Management Holdings:** Strathfillan, Cononish

The River Tay SAC extends through the Rivers Fillan and Cononish, covering all water that is accessible to migratory fish. As of 2015 all features are in favourable condition. The SAC extends to over 9000 ha throughout the Tay system, and is potentially the most all-encompassing and powerful designation within the area.

It is designated for the following species: Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar*, Brook lamprey *Lampetra planeri*, Otter *Lutra lutra*, River lamprey *Lampetra fluviatilis*, Sea lamprey *Petromyzon marinus*.

In addition, the followed habitats are also a qualifying feature: *Clear-water lakes or lochs with aquatic vegetation and poor to moderate nutrient levels.*

[http://gateway.snh.gov.uk/sitelink/siteinfo.jsp?pa\\_code=8366](http://gateway.snh.gov.uk/sitelink/siteinfo.jsp?pa_code=8366)

#### **Loch Lomond National Scenic Area**

**Deer Management Holdings:** Garabal, Stuckendroin, Inveruglas, FE Cobbler, Glenfalloch.

This site extends to over 28,000 ha, covering the main Loch Lomond area and surrounding shorelines and hinterland. The NSA lies on the eastern edge of the ITDMG area.

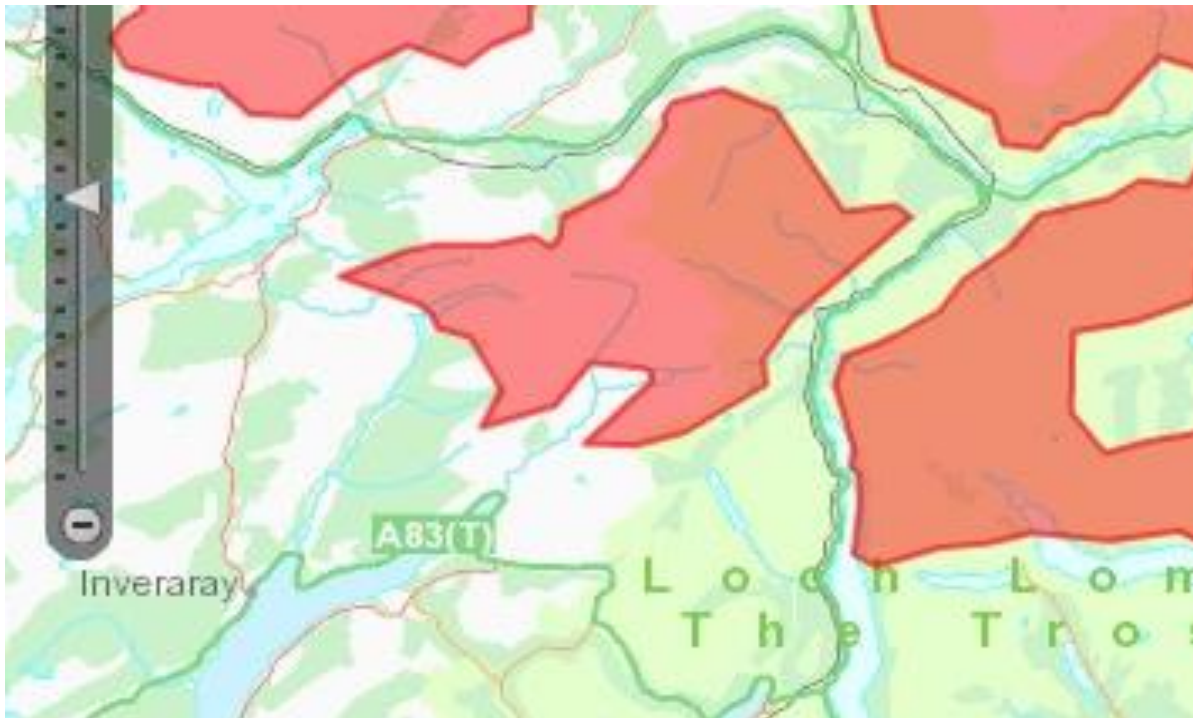
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#### 4. Non-Designated Sites of Note

These include nationally important sites which do not have statutory designations.

##### **Ben Lui Wild Land Area**

As of 2014, forty-two areas across Scotland were identified as being the most extensive areas of high wildness with the intention of assist with Scottish Planning Policy. Ben Lui Wild Land Area is one of these. Further information can be found at [www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/looking-after-landscapes/landscape-policy-and-guidance/wild-land](http://www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/looking-after-landscapes/landscape-policy-and-guidance/wild-land).

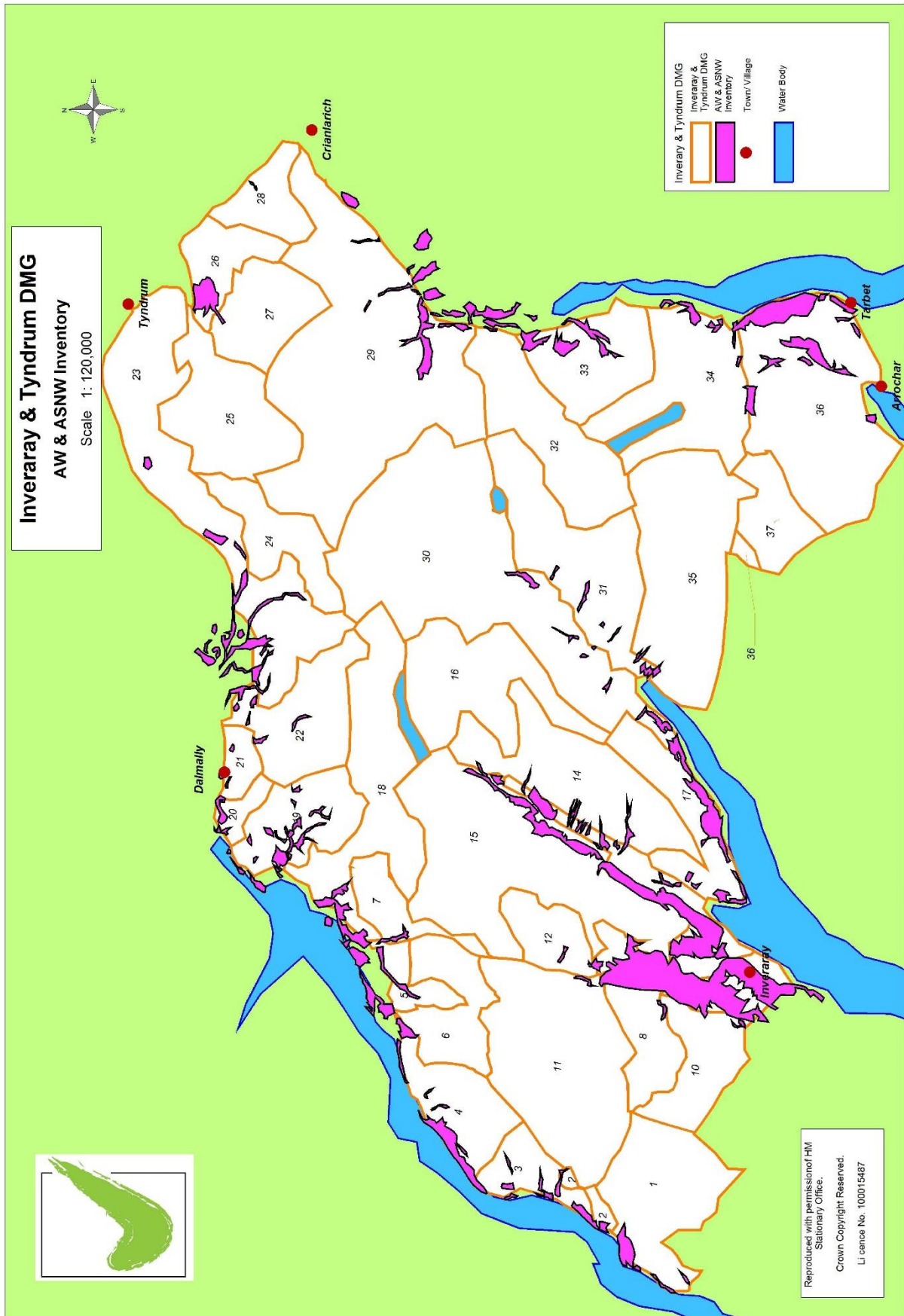


**Map 3: Ben Lui Wild Land Area (red area in the centre of the map only)**

##### **Ancient Woodlands**

The DMG is notable for the amount of ancient and ancient semi-natural woodland within the Group area, some 3586 ha in total, or 5.9% of the total area. Some of this area will be included in the designated sites, above, but this still represents a very significant resource, mainly distributed around Inveraray and Arrochar, along the north-west boundary of the group and down the Loch Lomond and Glen Falloch side of the group (see Map 4: ITDMG Map of Ancient Woodlands below).

A significant proportion of these sites, possibly 30% or more, are under planted with conifers and can be regarded as PAWS (Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites). Of the remainder, most will be open to the hill and deer populations. It appears that much of this area is of a relatively young age profile, but a significant area is also fairly well fragmented, with trees at low density and relatively little if any regeneration. There are however a significant number of native woodland schemes within the area, and a number of new native woodland plantings.



**Map 4: ITDMG Map of Ancient Woodlands**