

CITATION**MONAR FOREST
SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST**
Highland (Easter Ross and Cromarty)

Site code: 1181

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: NH 130450

OS 1:50,000 SHEET NO: Landranger Series 25
1:25,000 SHEET NO: Explorer Series 430

AREA: 5,451.79 hectares

NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES**Biological: Upland habitats: Upland assemblage****DESCRIPTION**

This large and remote SSSI lies in the central mountains of Ross and Cromarty, between Loch Monar in the south and upper Strathconon in the north. It supports an extensive assemblage of upland habitats and provides a link between those in the Affric-Cannich group to the south and the Fannichs and other hills to the north.

The assemblage of upland habitats extends over two major mountain ranges (Maoile Lunndaidh and Bidean an Eoin Deirg/Sgurr a' Chaorachain) and includes alpine moss heath, snowbeds, alpine heath, subalpine dry heath and tall-herb ledges. The species rich summit heath is the most outstanding and extensive feature and is dominated by woolly hair-moss *Racomitrium lanuginosum* with abundant cushion forming alpine plants such as thrift *Armeria maritima*, least willow *Salix herbacea*, sibbaldia *Sibbaldia procumbens* and moss campion *Silene acaulis*.

A range of montane heaths are present including those with abundant alpine bearberry *Arctous alpinus* and crowberry *Empetrum nigrum* and the more restricted hepatic rich types. Virtually the full range of snowbed plant communities are present at the head of north facing corries. The cliffs are locally base-rich and good tall-herb ledge communities are present with species such as alpine saw wort *Saussurea alpina*, purple saxifrage *Saxifraga oppositifolia* and, on more acid ledges, *Alchemilla glomerulans*. Beneath these base-rich cliffs, flushed grassland has developed with chestnut rush *Juncus castaneus* and russet sedge *Carex saxatilis*.

NOTIFICATION HISTORY

First notified under the 1949 Act: 1974

Re-notified under the 1981 Act: 5 March 1985 with a 116.3 ha decrease in area

Notification reviewed under the 2004 Act: 10 February 2010

REMARKS

Measured area of site corrected from 5420 ha.