

Appendix 4 – Environmental Features

Key Habitats

Table 1: Notable Scottish Biodiversity Strategy habitat priorities supported by this LMP

Habitat	Objective	Actions
Blanket bog	Survey and record to identify location and protect/restore.	Do not plant trees on deep peat (peat depth > 50cm), on active peat bogs or on areas of peat bog which can be restored as active. Undertake peat bog restoration where appropriate through removal of non-native trees, furrow smoothing and drain blocking to retain water within the site.
Bog Woodland/Wet Woodland	Survey and record to identify location and protect/restore.	Existing sites to be retained and protected. Reduction of grazing impacts will protect and enhance sites. Remove non-natives and rewet the area where required by drain/furrow blocking.
Caledonian Woodland	Survey and record to identify location and protect/restore	Although none of the woodland in the South Loch Ness LMP is considered original Caledonian Pinewood there are areas of PAWS and LEPO where the woodland is developing a similar structure. Due to its local importance for species and habitat some SP will be managed to create important habitat.
PAWS	PAWS restoration.	Maintain a monitoring program. Complete the removal of non-native conifers from the PAWs areas and monitor and remove ongoing regenerating non-natives.
Other native woodland and Long Established Woodland of Plantation Origin (LEWPO)	Survey, protect, restore and enhance.	Remove non-native trees within native woodland areas. Monitor Ancient and semi-natural woodland and natural regeneration of native trees on open/woodland areas. Encourage natural regeneration of native trees through deer management. Retain best examples of LEPO as important habitat.

Key Species

Table 2: Notable EPS, Scottish Biodiversity Strategy species priorities and actions supported by the LMP. NatureScot Disturbance Distances and FCS Guidance Note 32: Forest operations and birds in the Scottish Forests (2006) will be adhered to. Prior to any operation a full environmental walk over survey will be carried out to identify any designated species. Through the internal work plan process these constraints will be identified and communicated to relevant Forestry works Managers who will be responsible for all agreed mitigation measures which will be put in place to protect any vulnerable species. For species with designations NatureScot will be liaised with to ensure up to date information and no protected species are being disrupted.

Species	Objective	Actions
Red Squirrel	Species present in LMP. Survey, monitor, protect.	Part of site is a Red squirrel Stronghold. Diversification of tree species and age class will create a range of coning times and food availability. Pre-operational surveys will identify and protect any dreys. Any felling of dreys will be in accordance with licensing from NatureScot with associated mitigation.
Badger	Species present in LMP. Survey, monitor, protect.	Survey sites prior to forestry operations. Manage forestry operations to avoid disturbance of breeding badgers and damage to setts. Any felling of trees within proximity of setts will be in accordance with licensing from NatureScot with associated mitigation.
Raptors	Species present in LMP. Survey and protect.	Survey sites prior to forestry operations. Manage forestry operations to avoid disturbance of nesting and roosting birds.
Pine Marten	Species present in LMP. Survey and protect.	Integrate protection of the species during forestry operations if necessary by protection of den and trees/stumps in which they breed. Retain ancient trees/deadwood with holes and increase the quantity of deadwood throughout the site.
Juniper	Species present in LMP. Survey and protect.	Identify and protect existing plants. Restoration of native woodlands/PAWS will provide opportunities for expansion of this species.
Pinewood Flora (e.g. Twinflower, Coral Root Orchid)	Species present in LMP. Survey and protect.	Protect existing plants.
Bats	Survey, Monitor for species. Protect.	Integrate protection of breeding/roost sites and of the species during woodland management where necessary. Protect ancient trees which have potential for bat roosts.

Species	Objective	Actions
Black Grouse	Survey, Monitor for species. Protect.	Sites will be surveyed prior to operations. Manage forestry operations to avoid disturbance of breeding and lekking birds.
Otter	Survey and protect	Manage forest operations to protect and enhance habitats and any operations will be carried out under license from NatureScot. Pre-operational surveys will identify and protect Otter breeding and resting sites.
Water Vole	Survey and protect	Manage forest operations to protect and enhance habitats and any operations will be carried out under licence from NatureScot.

Non-natives

Table 3: Known non-natives in the South Loch Ness LMP area with their objectives and actions

Habitat	Objective	Actions
Rhododendron	Remove from area	Aim for complete removal on FLS land.
Mink	Monitor	Any reports of Mink will be followed up by onsite monitoring and if necessary trapping and removal.
Wild Goat	Monitor	

Other invasive non-native species will be monitored and removed as necessary.

Heritage Features

The forests within this plan are rich in archaeological features. This includes a mixture of scheduled and unscheduled. The Highland Historic Environment Records has been consulted during the preparation of this plan. Following FLS Historic Environment Planning guidance, this LMP describes and considers the historic environment relevant to the plan area.

The Archaeology Record Table (below) includes details of the relevant scheduled monuments.

In general all significant archaeological sites are protected and managed according to “The FLS Practice Guide to Archaeology and the Historic Environment” (2022) which describes our protection and conservation of “important historic environment features” (UKFS) “of special cultural and historical significance” (UKWAS) within the wider framework of sustainable land management.

By taking an asset management approach to the historic environment on Scotland’s national forests and land we can inform and direct our resource investment. This includes where to undertake survey and recording, assessing what conservation options are appropriate, and how best to present relevant sites to the public. Our asset management approach provides a framework for discussion and assessment and helps to ensure that complex issues are recognised, considered and addressed.

The main objectives of historic asset conservation management are to ensure the historic asset’s stable condition or to slow its gradual decay. All scrub vegetation and regenerating trees within the relevant area will be cut off at ground level using appropriate hand or power tools and removed. Bracken encroachment shall be controlled within appropriate areas as necessary through strimming, bashing and / or chemical spraying, as appropriate. Any tree felling, harvesting or thinning work within the relevant area (and including a buffer zone of 20m around it) will be planned and organised to avoid any damage to the historic asset in the course of felling and timber extraction. Scheduled Monument Clearance will be necessary in advance of any forestry works, conservation management, consolidation or repair and development that may cause damage or disturbance within the scheduled area. No replanting will take place within the scheduled area (nor usually within a buffer zone of 20m around it).

All records are maintained on FLS GIS systems and further surveys will be carried out to identify new or undiscovered sites.

SAM Number	Feature location/description	Grid Ref
11884	Dun Deardail Fort	NH 526 238

Planted Ancient Woodland Site Appraisal

FLS policy is to restore a minimum of 85% of all sites classified as Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS). This is in addition to the protection and enhancement of Ancient and semi-natural Woodland Remnants. The extent and location of the PAWS sites in the LMP area are detailed below. There are approximately 298 ha of PAWS within the plan area. The table below also outlines the threat level based on recent survey information.

Key management for the other sites are prioritised removal of non-native conifers. Once non-natives have been removed there is a subsequent rolling programme of regeneration removal. Most PAWS sites will be restored using natural regeneration of existing native species but where there is a lack of seed source for under-represented species, these may be planted. A key objective in the restoration programme will be the continual reduction of grazing pressure to levels that allow sufficient natural regeneration to establish.