

MEDIA RELEASE

Register of Sites of Special Scientific Interest Goes Live

Registers of Scotland (RoS) will maintain a new online Register of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) from today (30 June 2008).

The Register will hold information on all SSSIs across Scotland. A SSSI is an area of land that Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) considers to be special for its plants, animals, habitats, rocks or landforms, or a combination of such natural features.

The purpose of SSSIs is to safeguard and represent the diversity and geographic range of the natural features of Scotland and all of the EU member states.

James Meldrum, Keeper of the Registers of Scotland, said: "We are delighted to be maintaining this new, online SSSI Register, which will make it even easier to access legal information about Scotland's sites of special scientific interest".

Stewart Pritchard, SNH said: "We are very pleased to see this new register come on line. It will be particularly useful for people carrying out property searches, whether they are owners, potential buyers or their professional advisors. It also links with the Sitelink facility on the SNH website, which provides further information on individual sites, including a 'what's in my back yard' facility."

The Register will hold the following information on every SSSI:

- a citation describing the land and natural features for which SNH considers it to be of special interest;
- a PDF map of the boundary. (Digital SSSI boundaries are also provided for illustrative and search purposes); and
- a list of operations requiring consent.

The Register is available to both the public and legal profession at: www.SSSI.ros.gov.uk.

Searching the Register is free of charge. Users can find SSSIs using either a map or by entering search criteria such as a town name or postcode.

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Notes to editors:

1. Under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, Registers of Scotland was identified as the body to keep the official Register of Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

2. There are about 1,440 SSSIs in Scotland covering over 1 million hectares or some 12% of the country. They vary in size from less than 1 hectare to over 30,000 hectares.
3. SNH is responsible for designating areas of land as Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Under the Register of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (Scotland) Regulations 2008, SNH is responsible for sending information relating to any new SSSI and any changes to an existing SSSI to Registers of Scotland.
4. Further information about SSSIs can be found on the SNH website at: <http://www.snh.org.uk/about/ab-pa01.asp>.
5. RoS's purpose is to record and safeguard rights. RoS is the Government Department responsible for registering a variety of legal documents in Scotland. RoS compiles and maintains 16 public registers but its work is dominated by the two main registers recording ownership of, and rights over, land and property – the Land Register and the General Register of Sasines. To find out more about the work of RoS, go to: <http://www.ros.gov.uk>.

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