

5. Target Notes



Appendix 5 Target Notes

From 2012 Phase 1 Habitat Survey. Where features have been previously target noted in the 2007 ES, (Volume 2, Appendix A3a) these are cross-referenced to the Atkins TN

TN 1. Mature oak (*Quercus robur*) and aspen (*Populus tremula*) on the slope rising to Meadowbank quarry with mostly dense birch and aspen scrub on the embankment of the A9. Southwards, and north of the underpass, the A9 is in slight cutting with embankments of heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) and patches of acid grassland of fescues (*Festuca rubra* & *F. ovina*), harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*), catsear (*Hypochaeris radicata*), bell heather (*Erica cinerea*), tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*), heath dog violet (*Viola canina*), heath speedwell (*Veronica officinalis*) devil's bit scabious (*Succisa pratensis*) and scattered young trees of birch, pine and goat willow and a small juniper bush.

NVC Community - U4a (fescue/bent/heath bedstraw grassland). South of this a small burn passes under the A9 in a piped culvert.

TN 2. Open stand of mature parkland oaks and birches over semi-unimproved, sheep-grazed acid grassland dominated by fine-leaved grasses (*F. rubra*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Anthoxanthum odoratum*) with harebell, autumn hawkbit (*Leontodon autumnalis*), cat's ear (*Hyochoeris radicata*) devil's bit scabious, bird's foot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), mouse-ear hawkweed (*Pilosella officinarum*), germander speedwell (*Veronica chamaedrys*), tormentil, heath dog violet, common mouse-ear (*Cerastium fontanum*) and heath bedstraw (*Galium saxatile*).

NVC Community - U4b (Fescue/bent/heath bedstraw grassland, Yorkshire fog/white clover sub-community)



Photograph 1. TN 2 Parkland habitat

General Wade's Road (below) runs through this site in a shallow cutting with bumblebee nests in the bare earth face.

Photograph 2. Alignment of General Wades' road above steep cutting face of the A9 (right of picture).



Steep cutting face adjacent to the verge of the A9 between TN2 and TN3 show areas of bare rock (geology and flora as below for TN 3, Photograph 3 below) with young birch, oak and hazel, and steep grasslands of fescues with mouse-ear hawkweed, dog violet, autumn hawkbit and occasional small juniper shrubs.

Photograph 3. Complex folding in the outcropping rocks



TN 3. Small quarry in mature oak wood with hazel and rowan. Quarry showing exposures of complex, folded gneisses. Similar exposures occur along the A9 verges in this area with seeding birch and oak, fescue grasses, ferns (*Dryopteris felix-mas*, *Polypodium vulgare*) and foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*).

North of the quarry is a small stream between the woodland edge and the field of semi-improved grassland with the narrow and shallow channel mainly occluded by flote-grass (*Glyceria fluitans*) and a variety of wetland herbs along its course, brooklime (*Veronica beccabunga*), marsh willow-herb (*Epilobium palustre*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), water forget-me-not (*Myosotis cespitosa/laxa*), lesser spearwort and water crowfoot (*Ranunculus flammula*, *R. hederacea*). The stream flows eastwards and in culvert under the roadside embankment of colonising birch over on under the A9 through a long culvert passing under the road and a wide embankment on the western verge. Young birches on the embankment with coarse grasses, some dog's mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*) and devil's-bit scabious.

Photograph 4. Looking south to the course of the small burn at TN 3 indicated by rushes along the boundary of the field and woods beyond. Alignment of A9 in the left of picture.



Photograph 5 below: Alignment of G. Wade's Road through parkland habitat to north.



TN 4. Mature parkland oaks over a paddock of semi-improved grassland, well grazed by horses. A line of tall Norway spruce are present along the edge of the lane to the south.

TN 5. Wooded slope (Photograph, 5 left) with large old parkland oaks, old hazel coppice and occasional blackthorn over a grazed ground flora dominated by grasses with occasional patches of wood sorrel (*Oxalis acetosa*). Small open field of semi-improved pasture at the base of slope with mainly fine-leaved grasses (*Athoxanthum odoratum*, *Festuca rubra*, *Agrostis capillaris*) some *Dactylis glomeratus* with germander speedwell, violet, creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), common sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*) and self-heal (*Prunella vulgaris*).

Photograph 6. Woods on the slope between Dunachton Lodge and its access lane



To the south, open woods dominate a small hill between the lane to Dunachton Lodge and the A9 with oak, birch, rowan, sycamore and larch with areas of bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) and grassland dominated by Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*). Woodland herbs such as wood sorrel and greater stitchwort (*Stellaria holostea*) are locally present.

TN 6. Semi-improved, species-poor grazed field on a slope down to the B9152 with scattered mature oak, birch and coppiced hazel and occasional patches of bracken and soft rush (*Juncus effusus*). An old downy birch in the northern section of this field, close to the Dunachton Burn, and in the area of the bridge diversion during construction, contains a significant trunk cavity suitable for roosting bats (Photographs 7 & 8, opposite top).

Photographs 7 & 8. Old birch in area of Dunachton bridge (left of picture, looking north) diversion works with cavity extending upwards into the main trunk, around 2.5 metres above ground level providing good roosting conditions for bats.



TN 7. Large, old oaks in an enclosed open woodland with birch, hazel and rowan. Some trees may have potential for bat roosts. A varied ground flora comprises patches of grassland (*Holcus mollis*, *Dactylis glomeratus*), scrub (*Rubus fruticosus*) bracken and tall herb (*Urtica dioica*) with male fern, grading into a heathy understory up-slope (*Vaccinium myrtillus* & *Deschampsia flexuosa*) with patches of wood sorrel (*Oxalis acetosa*).

NVC Community - W10 on lower slopes (oak/bracken/bramble woodland), W16 on upper slopes (oak/birch/wavy-hair grass woodland)

Photograph 9 TN 7 Enclosed oak woodland



TN 8. Wooded valley of the Dunachton Burn with much alder, grey willow (*Salix cinerea*) goat willow (*S. caprea*) and downy birch over dogs' mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*). wood sorrel and ferns (*Dryopteris felix-mas*, *D. dilatata*). Open grassy glades support dense clumps of tufted hair-grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*), with Yorkshire fog, soft rush, valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*), creeping buttercup, raspberry (*Rubus idaeus*), marsh and melancholy thistles (*Cirsium palustre*, *C. heterophyllum*).

NVC Community - W4b (alder/ash woodland, remote sedge/marsh thistle sub-community)

Photograph 10. Dunachton burn flowing through riparian woods of alder birch and willow.



Photograph 11. Looking west along the underpass by the Dunachton burn with fish pass shown. Bridge re-construction should allow for a dry ledge on the north side of the burn (or a mammal ledge retro-fitted) and fencing between the burn and the underpass should be permeable to passage by the larger mammals (otter, badger, wild cat).



Photograph 12 & 13. Otter spraint on boulder by the bridge recorded in March 2013



TN 9. A flushed wetland with slow-moving water supporting a mosaic of habitats from wet grassland to mire, comprising cotton grass (*Erophorum angustifolium*), sedge (*Carex nigra*), purple moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*), cross leaved heath (*Erica tetralix*), tufted hair-grass, marsh thistle, velvet bent (*Agrostis canina*), soft rush and bog mosses including *Spagnum tenellum* and *S. capillifolium*. Somewhat sparse stands of mature birch surround the wetland. Dry semi-improved grassland used as a farm track separates the wetland from the embankment of the A9. A pipe culvert under this grassland by the A9 and under the A9 connects the wetland to the area described in TN 10 (see Photograph below) .

Predominant NVC Communities - M6a & M25a (Star sedge/bog moss mire & Purple moor-grass/tormentil mire, cross-leaved heath sub-community)

Photograph 14. Culvert under A9 between sites at TN 9 & 10. A dry culvert for mammal passage is proposed at this location with guide fencing.



TN 10. Damp depression on the east of the A9 with open, rank grassland of Yorkshire fog, tufted hair-grass, soft rush, purple moor-grass, creeping bent, bog myrtle (*Myrica gale*), cross-leaved heath, bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), patches of heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) and Polytrichum mosses (*Polytrichum commune*) with scattered young birch and Scots pine.

NVC Community M25 (Purple moor-grass/tormentil mire)

Dryer, largely unimproved grassland with scattered heather clumps to the north continues to be dominated by Yorkshire fog with common bent, red fescue, some purple moor grass and occasional wavy-hair grass. The cover of heather, purple moor-grass and Yorkshire fog, decreases northwards as the ground rises. Additional herbs include devil's bit scabious, yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), dog violet (*Viola canina*), common sorrel, lady's bedstraw (*Galium verum*), meadow buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), germander speedwell, lesser stitchwort (*Stellaria graminea*) and common mouse-ear. Some mature and seedling birch are present.

Predominant NVC Community - U4b (Fescue/bent/heath bedstraw grassland, Yorkshire fog/white clover sub-community)

A fenced field to the north has a similar grassland composition but grazing by stock (highland cattle present at the time of survey) has greatly reduced the cover of the herb species and eliminated seedling trees.

TN 11. South easterly facing bank on the western verge of the A9, here in shallow cutting, supports an attractive open, though somewhat species-poor community of fine-leaved grasses dominated by red fescue and sweet vernal-grass with harebell, cat's ear, autumn hawkbit, mouse-ear hawkweed, birds' foot trefoil and scattered heather. Patches of grey Cladonia lichens are frequent.

NVC Community - U4a (Fescue/bent/heath bedstraw grassland)

The open grasslands on this bank with its southerly aspect contrasts with the rank, species-poor coarse grassland across the A9 on the opposite bank of the cutting (NVC Community MG1a - False oat grassland, red fescue sub-community).

Photograph 15. Cutting slope at TN 11 looking southwards along the A9



TN 12. Old woods north of Leault farm on either side of the farm track that crosses the Leault Burn. Alder predominates along the burn with birch and old hazel coppice, festooned with lichens, forming the dominant community of the trackside woodlands. The woodland floor comprises an undergrazed semi-improved grassland.

TN 13. Flushed wet grassland around a small burn draining to the north east under the farm track (eventually meeting the Leault Burn just west of the A9). Plant species include rushes (*Juncus acutiflorus*, *J. effusus*), sedges (*Carex rostrata*, *C. nigra*), lesser spearwort, marsh marigold (*Caltha palustris*), lousewort (*Pedicularis palustris*), devil's-bit scabious, marsh willow-herb with bog pondweed (*Potamogeton polygonifolius*) predominant where water is moving through the drainage channels.

To the south-east, a notable veteran larch (*Larix decidua*) is

present by the stone wall, in the corner of the field of improved pasture to the east of the farm track.

TN 14. An area of sedge (*Carex rostrata*) swamp by the farm track with soft rush, water horsetail (*Equisetum fluviatile*), meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), marsh bedstraw (*Galium palustre*), marsh marigold, water forget-me-not (*Myosotis laxa*) and marsh cinquefoil (*Potentilla palustris*).

Predominant NVC Communities - S9 & S10 according to dominant species (bottle-sedge swamp & water horsetail swamp)

A woodland/scrub formation is present on the western edge of the swamp dominated by grey willow and alder on the ecotone (edge) rising to old hazel coppice, with birch and old blackthorn bushes. The older trees and shrubs here are festooned with lichens.

The drier grasslands around the TN sites 13 and 14 appear somewhat improved and well grazed by sheep but retain a characteristic flora of harebell, eyebright (*Euphrasia spp*), tormentil, lesser stitchwort, autumn hawkbit, creeping buttercup, and white clover (*Trifolium repens*) in a mainly fine-leaved grass sward of red fescue, common bent, sweet vernal-grass, crested dog's tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), meadow-grass (*Poa pratensis*) with some Yorkshire fog.

NVC Community - U4b (Fescue/bent/heath bedstraw grassland, Yorkshire fog/white clover sub-community)

TN 15. A line of veteran ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) along the stone wall extending westwards from the Lealt Burn. Some trees may have potential for bat roosts. Mature ash and alder grow along the banks of the burn upstream (southwards, Atkins TN 3a).

To the north the Burn has been fenced (Atkins TN 2) and new, though somewhat sparse, mixed plantations of seedling trees established (birch, rowan, alder, Scots pine). The grassland within the plantations (Photograph 13 below) has developed into a heterogeneous sward varying in composition in relation to topography and height above the stream.

Damper communities by the burn are indicated by Yorkshire fog, tufted hair-grass, sneezwort (*Achillea ptarmica*), marsh marigold and meadowsweet; tall swards of intermediate grassland with red fescue, common bent, cocksfoot, false oat, knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), lady's bedstraw, pignut (*Conopodium majus*), meadow vetchling (*Lathyrus pratensis*), germander speedwell, lesser stichwort, tufted vetch (*Vicia cracca*), common sorrel; and in places on the higher hummocks, dry grassland of wavy hair-grass with devil's-bit scabious, harebell and tormentil.

NVC Communities:

- the greater part of the grassland accords to MG1e (false oat grassland, knapweed subcommunity,
- wet grasslands on the burn margin - MG1c (false oat grassland, meadowsweet subcommunity) and;
- the dry hummocks - U2a (wavy hair-grass grassland).



Photograph 16, top left. Veteran ash along the stone wall west of the Lealt burn upstream of the A90 culvert. Any reconstruction necessary of stone walling should ensure that moss or lichen encrusted surfaces are restored with the colonised face outwards.

Photograph 17, top right, Lealt burn grasslands in an enclosed young woodland plantation

Photograph 18, left. Lealt Burn culvert with broad dry ledge for farm stock access, providing good access for also for native wild mammals including deer.

TN16. Small hill north of the Leault Burn with a sparse stand of mature aspen (*Populus tremula*) and a large pile of stones in the field corner to the north of this which may provide a refuge for amphibia and common lizard (Photograph 15 below).

Photograph 19. Looking south to the mound with mature poplar to the east of the A9 with the pile of stones on the edge of the re-seeded pasture.



TN 17. Small remnant areas of higher ground by the A9, in otherwise highly improved, re-seeded pasture, which retain a largely unimproved grassland flora. Species include yarrow, common mouse-ear, bird's foot trefoil, devil's bit scabious, harebell, eyebright, tormentil, lesser stitchwort, autumn hawkbit, meadow and creeping buttercup, common and sheep's sorrel, white clover, in a mainly fine-leaved grass sward of red fescue, common bent, sweet vernal-grass, crested dog's tail, meadow-grass, with some Yorkshire fog and perennial rye-grass. Over the fence to the north, the banks of the at-grade loop of the Kincaig

House/Farm access track supports a similar community with heather and wavy-hair grass with colonising birch scrub.

NVC Community - U4b (Fescue/bent/heath bedstraw grassland, Yorkshire fog/white clover sub-community)

TN 18. Another area of unmanaged, heterogenous grassland (Atkins TN 5) by the subway track (Baldow Smiddy Underpass) from the B9152, under the A9 to access Kincaig House and Farm. Damp grasslands predominate in the central area as indicated by soft rush, tufted hair-grass, purple moor-grass, Yorkshire fog with valerian, sneezewort, angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*) and meadowsweet and scattered small saplings of downy birch and grey willow. Drier grasslands support red fescue, common bent, ragwort (*Senecio jacobea*), lady's bedstraw, yarrow, autumn hawkbit, pignut, knapweed, bird's foot trefoil, ribwort plantain, germander speedwell and bitter vetch (*Lathyrus linifolius*) with patches of heather, tormentil, sheep's sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*) and harebell. A stand of dense, semi-mature birch separates the grassland from the A9.

NVC Communities:

- wetter grassland - M27c (meadowsweet/angelica mire, soft rush/Yorkshire fog subcommunity).
- drier community grading from MG5 to U4 (crested dog's tail/knapweed grassland & fescue/bent/heath bedstraw grassland)

TN 19. Lateral flush, seeping southwards into a small burn, with sedges (*Carex nigra*, *C. rostrata*, *C. viridula*), cotton grass, cross-leaved heath, bog myrtle, marsh thistle bog asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*) and bog mosses (*Sphagnum spp.*). Soft rush, marsh marigold, water forget-me-not, spearwort, water mint, meadowsweet and common sedge are frequent along the banks of the burn. Burn passes in culvert under the A9 by the Baldow Smiddy underpass (Photograph 16, opposite).

Photograph 20 & 21. Baldow Smiddy culvert and underpass. Provision of a dry culvert here is not necessary as long as any fence between the burn and side road is permeable to passage by the larger mammals in order to provide access into the underpass. (Retrofitting dry ledge within the culvert should also be considered)



TN 20. Remnant field of rank, species-poor grassland with a central dominance of bracken used as a temporary store for felled timber. Dense birch screens the field from the A9.

TN 21. Remnant of a open glade in a grassy depression in an otherwise densely regenerating area of mixed birch and pine woods. Two nests of the wood ant, *Formica lugubris*, are present by the base of the deer fence forming the highway boundary, on the east side of the fence. This is the only location where wood ants were recorded on the eastern verge of the A9.

TN 22. Large, dry pond by the Lower Milehead underpass, apparently ephemeral (Atkins TN 11) with a central dry bed colonised by redshank (*Persicaria maculosa*) surrounded by a zone of bottle sedge succeeded by an outward fringe of tall reed canary-grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) with scattered grey willow. South of this, between the forest track and the A9, another dense bed of reed canary grass may also represent a former pond or swamp, now dry.

Juniper bushes (Atkins TN 12) occur between the large pond and the fence by the road to Alvie Lodge/ Alvie Home Farm. Chicken-wire mesh on the fences along this section provide an impediment to free passage by wildlife between the woods and the underpass (Photograph 22, opposite). Arrangements should be in place to remove sections of such mesh as part of the improvement works to allow permanent access for wildlife between the underpass and the adjacent woods.

Photograph 22. Mesh fencing renders the underpass unusable to wildlife such as badgers and may encourage species such as pine marten or wild cat to climb the A9 highway fence to cross the alignment in preference to using the underpass.



TN 23. Recently cut wayleave colonising with acid-neutral grassland (Yorkshire fog, creeping soft grass (*Holcus mollis*), red fescue and wavy-hair grass) with heather and bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*) in a stand of dense young birch with Scots pine.

TN 24. Mature Scots pine woodland with a lush ericaceous ground flora of heather, bilberry and cowberry (*Vaccinium vitis-idea*) and occasional birch, rowan and aspen. The wood is listed as ancient woodland in the SNH inventory and other ground flora species recorded (Atkins TN 14) that are consistent with this status include hairy woodrush (*Luzula*

pilosa), cow wheat (*Melampyrum pratense*), wood anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), wood sorrel, chickweed wintergreen (*Trientalis europea*) and autumn lady's tresses (*Goodyera repens*). This wood and its adjacent verge along the western edge of the A9 represents the core area for the northern wood ant (*Formica lugubris*).

NVC Community - W18b (Scots pine woodland, bilberry/cowberry sub-community).

Photographs 23 (left) & 24 (right). Wood ant (*Formica lugubris*) nests in typical locations along the A9 western verge, on the sunlit edge of the young pine woods.



TN 25. Land west of Alvie Lodge enclosed by a circuitous track comprises a stand of mature spruce and pine in the south and garden in the north with deciduous trees (beech, sycamore, birch, willow) and a tennis court.

TN 26. A dense belt of mature western hemlock between the track to Alvie Lodge and a deer fence to the north. Open Scots pine woods to the north of the deer fence continue to support wood ant's nests but at a decreasing density.

TN 27. Recently cleared patches in the dense young Scots pine on the cutting slope on the east side of the A9 with common wintergreen (*Pyrola minor*) growing in the cleared areas.

TN 28. A compartment of mature Scots pine with deer fencing lacking on the northern boundary and consequently undergrazed with a depauperate ground flora, dominated by grasses especially in the north of the compartment. Very few nests of wood ant occur here, and only in the south of the compartment, though nests remain frequent over the deer-fenced A9 boundary, on highway land. Feeding remains of red squirrel were found in these woods.

TN 29. Ditch with no apparent flow running through a small mire system (Atkins TN 16) connecting to a bog and open water complex to the west (not surveyed but see Atkins TN 17). The ditch and its surrounding wetland supports a flora of purple moor-grass, soft rush, compact rush (*Juncus conglomeratus*) bog myrtle, bottle sedge, cotton grass, bog pondweed, marsh violet (*Viola palustris*), cross-leaved heath, Polytrichum moss (*P. commune*) and bog mosses (*Sphagnum spp.*).

Predominant NVC Community - M25a (Purple moor-grass/tormentil mire, cross-leaved heath subcommunity).

A pipe culvert under the A9 is present here, but is dry, potentially providing a valuable mammal underpass point but prevented from functioning effectively by the mesh applied to the highway deer fencing (Photographs 25 & 26) . Such old, and new culverts must be opened up to effective use by mammals as part of the improvement works by ensuring appropriate fencing design to allow continuity of passage.

Photographs 25 & 26. Pipe culvert rendered inefficient by the mesh of the adjacent deer fence. A lightly used trail is present along the road-side edge of the deer fence suggesting occasional use by wildlife moving within the road corridor.



TN 30. A tall cutting face of rather rank grassland but with a number of herb species present, albeit at quite low densities and areas with an acid grassland influence. A tall sward of mainly coarse grasses predominate: Yorkshire fog, cocksfoot & false oat but also areas with red fescue, sweet vernal grass and wavy-hair grass with the occasional clump of heather and herbs such as harebell, devil's bit scabious, heath bedstraw and tormentil. A sparse scattering of other herbs include, bitter vetch, tufted vetch, birds' foot trefoil, yarrow, cat's ear, common sorrel, red & white clover, slender St. John's wort (*Hypericum pulchrum*), violet, meadow and creeping buttercup, self-heal, ribwort plantain, germander speedwell and meadow cranesbill (*Geranium pratense*).

Groups of young and semi-mature trees include larch, Scots pine, beech, birch and aspen. A small juniper bush is present at the southern end of the cutting.

During a site visit by staff of the Cairngorms National Park in July 2006, greater butterfly orchid was found in this site (Atkins 2007 and D. Hetherington pers comm..). No evidence was found for the presence of this species during the 2012 August survey.

NVC Communities - Mosaic of MG5 (Crested dog's tail/knapweed grassland) and U4 (fescue/bent/heath bedstraw).

The opposite cutting face, smaller in scale, also supports a similar number of herb species and the survey by Atkins (Atkins TN 19) considered this section to be the most species rich section of roadside verge. The habitat is, however, similarly dominated by grass species and the distribution of herb species is somewhat sparse.

North of this cutting is a watercourse, culverted under the road with roadside drainage ditches on either side of the A9 inflowing from the north (Atkins TN 20) that have colonised with an array of aquatic species, presumably from the adjacent watercourse. Aquatic plant species include a high cover of the non-native monkey flower (*Mimulus sp.*) sharp-flowered rush, soft rush, bulbous rush, marsh marigold, spearwort, broad-leaved pondweed (*Potamogeton natans*) and bottle sedge (Photographs 23 & 24). Burn flows north-east, past Dalraddy farm, into Loch Alvie

Photographs 27 & 28 below. Dalraddy culvert and roadside ditch on the east of the A9. Provide dry culvert for mammal passage with guide fencing.



TN 31. A compartment of unmanaged land between the track to a former quarry and the Allt an Fhearna comprising a stand of veteran wych elms with common lime and ash and a coarse grass and nettle community around. Some trees have cavities and crevices with potential for bat roosts. To the north, damp grasslands grade down the flood plain to the river. The grasslands are relatively species-poor, dominated by common bent, Yorkshire fog and tufted hair grass with an increasing cover of soft rush and sharp-flowered rush towards the river with occasional common sorrel, marsh willowherb and meadow vetchling. The community appears secondary in origin, possibly developed on former arable land. Scrub of broom is developing in the north-west corner together with seeding alder (Photograph 29). Trees lost to bridge works at the Allt an Fhearna will be replaced by mixed native wet woodland plantings in this area.

Photograph 29. Site for woodland mitigation, taken looking south-west from the A9 with the Allt an Fhearna right of picture and the stand of veteran wych elm in the far left.



Mature alder woodlands dominate the banks of the Allt an Fhearna together with grey and goat willows, birch and the occasional aspen (Atkins TN 25) and some of the mature alder trees may also have potential for bat roosts (Photographs 30 & 31 below). Younger wet woodland of alder (Photograph 32) dominates the narrow flood-plain between the river and the eastern embankment of the A9 with older trees along the river banks. Scats and spraints indicate use of the Allt an Fhearna corridor and underpass under the A9 by pine marten and otter (Photographs 33 - 35 below).

Photographs 30 & 31 below. Older alders in the riparian woodlands by the Allt an Fhearna. Cavities in any trees to be removed for bridge works will require inspections for bat roosts.



Photograph 32. Looking north through wet alder woods between the A9 embankment (left of picture) and the Allt an Fhearna (right).



Photograph 33. Otter spraint staining a boulder downstream of the A9 bridge



Photographs 34 & 35. Allt an Fhearna and underpass. Note trash line on fencing indicating height of spate flows. Bridge works should allow for retention of dry ledge or retro-fit ledge on north bridge abutment at a height to accommodate mean high-water levels to allow passage to mammals.

