

Native Woodland Fragments in Caithness

By David Glass and Ken Butler



Introduction

The table below is a list of the known fragments of native woodland in Caithness, compiled by members of the Caithness Biodiversity Group. It is a companion to the “Notes on Caithness Woodland” –reference 1.

References

1. Butler,J.K. (2016): *Notes on Caithness Woodland: Internet link:*
https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/8093852/Notes_on_Caithness_WoodlandV0.1.pdf
2. Crampton,C.B. (1911)*The Vegetation of Caithness Considered in Relation to the Geology;*
Internet Link: <http://bit.ly/zErC3Z>
3. [Butler,J.K.\(2003\): *Badryrie Wood, 18 Years On.* Caithness Field Club Bulletin Vol 6 No7.](#)
4. [Bell,K.\(2014\) *Notes on Tacher Wood*](#)

RECORD OF NATIVE WOODLAND FRAGMENTS IN CAITHNESS

updated October 2016

Purpose: To record fragments of native woodland in Caithness and to monitor their condition. The Native Woodland Survey of Scotland (NWSS) was carried out from 2006-2013 and recorded woodlands of area exceeding 0.5 hectare. Most of the surviving fragments of native woodland in Caithness have an area lower than 0.5 hectare and were not recorded in NWSS.

Name of Site	NGR	Date surveyed	Description
Bridge of Westfield	ND056642	2007	~ 12 large Aspen trees on East bank. Hazel trees on both banks
Thurso Riverside	ND112672 etc	2007	~ 8 Aspens on West bank above footbridge Aspens on East bank at Salmon Pool 1 large Aspen on West bank at Mall above road bridge (possibly planted) Hazels on East bank at Salmon Pool. Hazels on West bank under Juniper Bank (possibly planted)
Westerdale		2007	Large Aspen trees at Old Post Office and at other locations around village
Dirilot	ND126487		Important site with Aspen, Hazel and Wayfaring Tree
Scarfskerry	ND266746	2007	An area of exceptionally stunted Aspens on grassy face of geo. ~20 stems with more ramets on flat above.
Dunnet Head		2007	25 discrete groups of Aspens on the cliff edges and inland. Largest group (Loch Bushta) estimated to contain 300 stems. Detailed records held by D Glass. Survey report in Caithness Field Club Bulletin.
Allt Gleann Chorcaill (Sandside Burn headwaters)	NC9698 5772	2008, 2016	5 Aspens up to 8 metres in height on rocky slope. 2016 – No change. 2 large Rowans about 400 metres south.
Sandside Burn	NC9714 5871	2008, 2016	Small group of Hazel and Rowan on East bank. A very isolated Hazel refugium which is under pressure from deer. 2016 report:- 2 mature Hazel and about 12 Rowan. Willow sp. and Dog Rose also present. Thick growth of Gorse and Broom. 10 Rowans + seedlings upstream of main group.
Sandside Burn (Achins)	NC957640	2008, 2016	Alders continuous alongside burn from Reay to Achins. This is an important population of Alder.
Helshetter Wood		2008	A plantation but might contain native fragments along burn
Sandside Burn from Reay to sea			Probably mainly planted woodland but might contain native fragments
Cnoc Glas	ND0414 5231	2008	2 Aspens on cliff overlooking river with extensive suckering on peat flat alongside

			track to Loch Caluim. A notable isolated remnant in the Upper Forss catchment.
Halkirk Burn	ND1403 5993	2015	One large and prominent Aspen in arable field on bank of burn, close to road bridge. Many ramets despite grazing.
Braal			Many large Aspens – not surveyed
Gills			Some scrub beside burn on South side of road. Not examined.
Ord Burn (may be a few metres inside Sutherland!)	ND0561 1738	25.06.14.	~ 20 Aspens up to 3 metres in height. Other species present. Nice site – needs a proper survey. Possibly threatened by Gorse.
Glutt Water	ND 9834 approx	?	Probably one or more trees along burn upstream of The Glutt. Needs a look.
Gieselittle	South from ND113652		Extensive area of Gorse on steep slope on East bank of river. Some trees present but site not examined, just looked at from a distance.
Berriedale (Windy House)	ND125232 approx	30.04.16.report – not examined	Aspens on cliff edge became visible after sheep excluded.
Tacher Wood	ND170464	18.06.16.	First surveyed 2008. The established trees were Downy Birch, Aspen, Bird Cherry, Hazel and Rowan. Deer fence erected and planting of enlarged area carried out. Inspected in 2016 by Karen Bell: - the large aspen trees were found to be at two stages of leaves emerging. 3 large trees at ND 17030 46439 were just at the stage of leaves emerging. Two large trees at ND 17072 46392 have new leaves fully formed. This might indicate more than one clone is present.
Badryrie Wood	ND207433	13.06.16.	In 1984 Caithness Field Club recognised the importance of this small native woodland and erected a deer fence. 2016 report:- Downy Birch and Willow sp. present. Fence intact and trees in good condition with some regeneration. About 20 Birch and willow outside enclosure in poor condition.
Beinn Ratha Plantations		2016	1874 OS map does not depict any woodland at the location. Planted c.1900 and severely damaged by a storm in the mid 20 th century. Consists of two plantations which now have some characteristics of native woodland. Several juniper noted in 2016 might have been recently planted. Warrants a proper survey.