

Access

There are no public footpaths to the reserve. Access is via a rough track from Broomfield (farm cottage). The access from the farm buildings is across farmland, the route is not sign posted. There are no designated routes within the reserve. The Scottish Wildlife Trust is obliged to repair damage to farmland, fences, gates etc. caused during access to Cander Moss reserve across the adjoining farmland. Visitors should remember that the terrain is difficult and wet and wearing wellies or strong waterproof boots are advised.

Flora

Cander Moss is a remnant of a formerly more extensive raised bog. The OS map of 1864 shows the area in the southern end of the Moss as Cander loch but marked with the "Marsh" symbol. The mire-expanse is characterised by a microtope which features high ridges, separated by Sphagnum dominated hollows and recovering erosion channels. The ridges are approximately 30-50cm above the water table and are dominated by Heather Ling, *Calluna vulgaris*, with occasional Bilberry, *Vaccinium myrtillus* and Crowberry, *Empetrum nigrum*. Most of the recovering erosion channels are dominated by *Sphagnum capillifolium*, *S. papillosum* and *S. magellanicum*. Other bog plants found here include cross leaved heath, *Erica tetralix*, the insect eating Round-leaved sundew, *Drosera rotundifolia*, Hares-tail cotton-grass, *Eriophorum vaginatum* and Bog asphodel, *Narthecium ossifragum*. The Sphagnum hollows which are at, or just below the water table, are dominated by *S. cuspidatum* often with fringing *S. tenellum*.

The eastern periphery of the reserve includes a scots pine plantation, a semi-natural birch woodland and a small area of unimproved grassland.

A list of 47 species of Fungi have been recorded (Graeme Walker, October 1989).



Wildlife (Fauna)

Past surveys indicate the rich wildlife of this site and a number of exciting finds have already been made. Specialised bog plants such as the cranberry and round-leaved sundew are of particular interest as they are quite rare locally. The colony of the ringlet butterfly which has been discovered at the edge of the moss is a definite bonus as this butterfly has declined markedly in recent years in Central Scotland.

The moss also supports many other animals; families of roe deer, breeding curlew, snipe, buzzards, kestrel, willow tit, redshank and many different kinds of songbirds. A Yellow Browed Warbler was record here in the Autumn of 1994. Jack Snipe has also been recorded during the Autumn passage. There are also early indications that the moss is a rich site for moths and butterflies.

Archaeology Past and Present Land Use

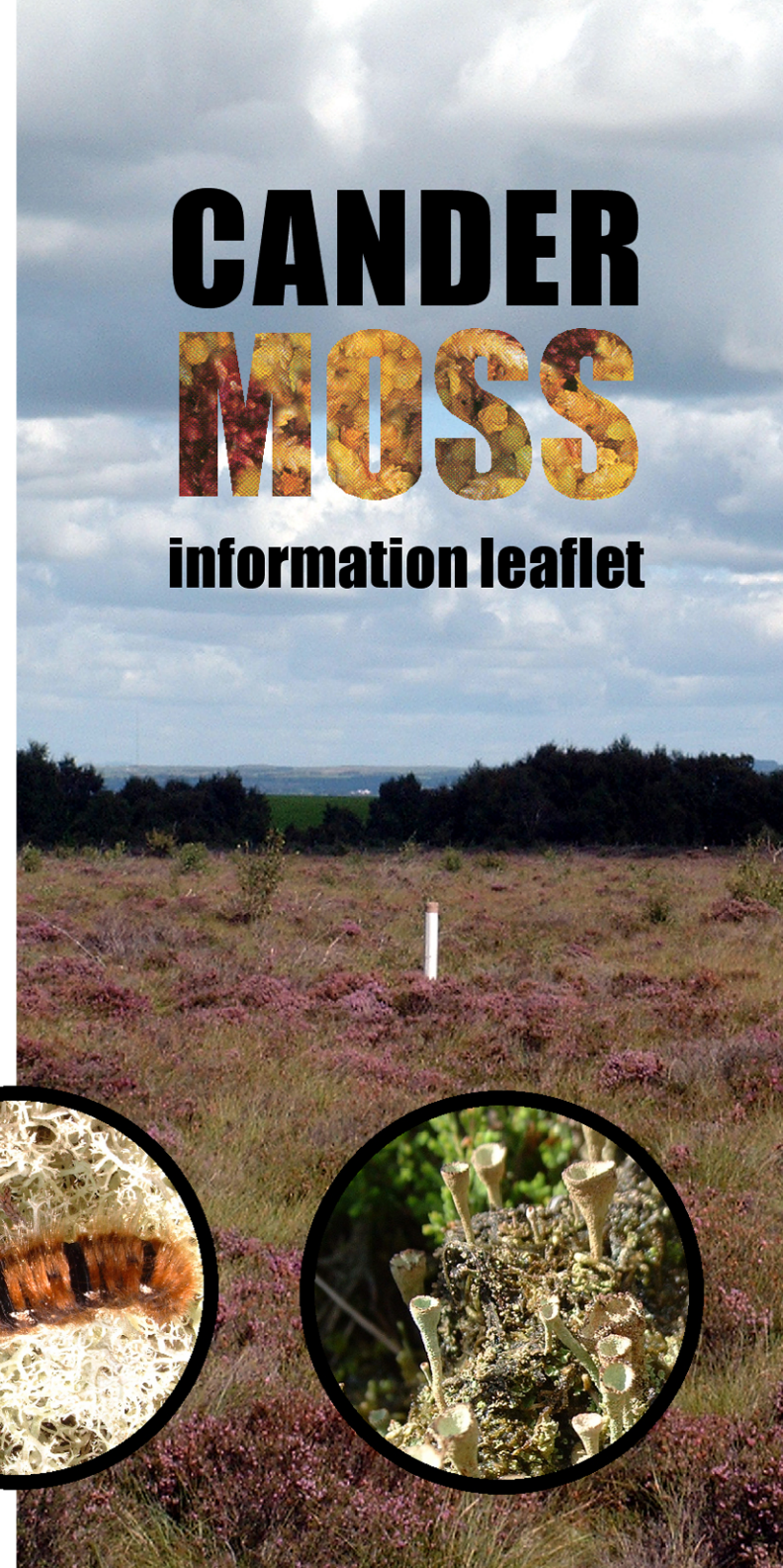
Records of past land use are poor. However, there is evidence of past human activities. These include peat digging which has occurred at the margins, cultivation of grassy areas by the eastern boundary and grazing.

Study of the aerial photographs reveal steady human interference of the moss and its environs. The most drastic development from the initial 1948 photographs and revealed on the 1967 photographs is the construction of the M74 which cuts through the extreme SE edge of the moss. This is likely to have caused a detrimental effect to the hydrology of the mire. Likewise the M74 cuts through the large pine plantation which is now only a third of the size revealed in the 1948 photographs. Ridge and furrow patterns are clearly visible from 1948 within this field. By the time of the 1988 photographs this field has been completely reclaimed as grazing land.



CANDER MOSS

information leaflet



CANDER MOSS WILDLIFE RESERVE

Location/Status

Cander Moss is a 24 hectare (59.3 acres) peat bog located 2 kilometres east of the village of Stonehouse, east of the M74 motorway. The reserve is a Site of Special Scientific Interest registered in 1986.

The Formation of Peat Bogs

Raised peat bogs are formed as a result of a complex interaction between plant communities and water levels over several thousands of years.

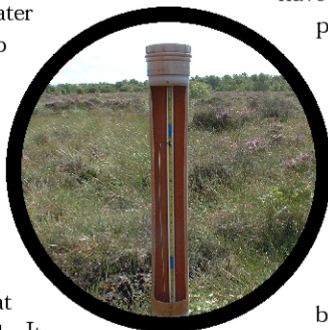
Initially the site of the moss is a shallow reed fringed pool. As the reeds die, they fall into the pool and fill it in. The cold acidic waters of the pool inhibit natural decay of the reeds leading to an accumulation of dead plant material. As the water becomes shallow enough sphagnum moss starts to grow out across the pool from the margins. Sphagnum moss draws water up and holds it like a sponge so as the moss grows upwards it takes the water table up with it. The continuing wet, acidic conditions in the sphagnum moss still inhibit plant decay so a deep layer of peat is formed from the partially preserved dead moss. The centre of the moss continues to build upwards over the centuries as layers of peat are laid down on top of each other and compressed. It is this process which causes the classic 'domed' appearance of the bog and leads to the name 'raised bog'.



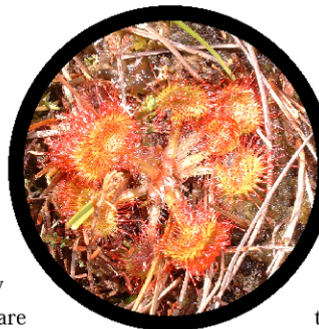
The Importance of Peat Bogs for Wildlife Conservation

The environment of the peat bog is extremely harsh and exacting, as for much of the year the ground is waterlogged and essential plant nutrients are in very poor supply. However there are many plants and insects specially adapted to these testing conditions which then find it difficult to survive anywhere else.

Until recently peat bogs were widespread and extensive in lowland Scotland. However they are relatively easily reclaimed for productive land use and many have been drained and afforested or turned to agriculture. Peat extraction and extensive grazing and burning have destroyed many more. Those raised peat mosses which still remain relatively unspoiled in central Scotland are of great value for nature conservation. The Scottish Wildlife Trust already owns or manages nine such sites as wildlife reserves.



Although the Cander moss has already been declared by the Nature Conservancy Council as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, it is the gifting of the moss by the East Kilbride Development Corporation in 1986 to the Scottish Wildlife Trust which has safeguarded its future.



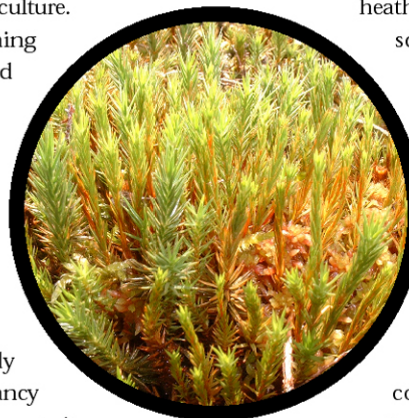
Their prime objective is the maintenance of the moss for wildlife conservation. Although there is potential for scientific and educational study, general public access to the reserve still has to be monitored because of the real danger of trampling damaging the delicate moss vegetation and the increased chance of accidental fire.

Conservation management is necessary at the moss to ensure it is kept in optimum condition for wildlife.

This involves increasing the water level by blocking drains and ditches and removing seedling trees which tend to dryout the moss surface.

Cander Moss

Cander Moss is a classic peat bog habitat of hummocks of heather interspersed with sphagnum hollows with birch scrub on its eastern edge. There is a small pine plantation at the corner of the western edge and in the north-east corner of the moss a small triangular patch of rough pasture.



Cander Moss bears all the hallmarks of a little disturbed peat bog. The appearance of the centre of the bog with heather hummocks and sphagnum pools is indicative of a healthy developing bog. Even though the bog has been reduced in size when the M74 motorway was constructed down the west side of the Moss, the motorway now completely restricts public access from the west and may have usefully protected the moss from the abuses it suffered in the past.

