

SITE NOTIFIED TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE ON 3 FEBRUARY 1999

COUNTY: NORTHUMBERLAND SITE NAME: THE ALLERS AND
LILBURN VALLEY JUNIPERS

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the
Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981, (as amended)

Local Planning Authorities: NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL,
Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council, Northumberland National Park

National Grid Reference: NT 999212

Ordnance Survey Sheets 1:50,000: 75 1:10,000: NT 92 SE, NU 00 SW

Area: 98.83 (ha.)

First Notified: 1999

Description:

The Allers and Lilburn Valley Junipers is an area of relict juniper woodland and ancient alder woodland on the eastern edge of the Cheviot, Northumberland. Juniper woodland is rare in Northumberland and this site is one of the largest in the county with bushes of varied ages. Alder woodland has a restricted distribution in Northumberland and rarely occurs in extensive stands. Both woodland types are under threat principally from grazing which prevents regeneration.

The main area of juniper *Juniperus communis* occurs along the south-facing slopes of the Lilburn Burn below Dod Hill. There is a second large stand on steep slopes to the east of the north flowing Lilburn Burn with scattered individuals and groups along the burn sides. Although most of the bushes are mature or old there is regeneration with some young plants and seedlings. Rowan *Sorbus aucuparia* trees are scattered among the juniper and the field layer is dominated by bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* with wood sorrel *Oxalis acetosella*, common dog-violet *Viola riviniana*, heath bedstraw *Galium saxatile* and harebell *Campanula rotundifolia*.

The alder *Alnus glutinosa* woodland consists of mature, old and veteran trees along the sides of the burn and forming several large stands on adjacent, flushed slopes. Regeneration has been suppressed by grazing and there are few young trees. Other trees and shrubs include hazel *Corylus avellana*, rowan, elder *Sambucus nigra*, willows *Salix spp.*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and downy birch *Betula pubescens*. The field layer is dominated by soft-rush *Juncus effusus*, Yorkshire-fog *Holcus lanatus*, bracken, tufted hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa* and marsh horsetail *Equisetum palustre* with meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, marsh-marigold *Caltha palustris*, remote sedge *Carex remota*, blinks *Montia fontana* and marsh hawk's-beard *Crepis paludosa* in wetter areas. Other plants present include hard shield fern *Polystichum aculeatum*, maidenhair spleenwort *Asplenium trichomanes*, polypody *Polypodium vulgare*, primrose *Primula vulgaris*, opposite-leaved and alternate-leaved golden-saxifrage *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium* and *C. alternifolium* and moschatel *Adoxa moschatellina*.