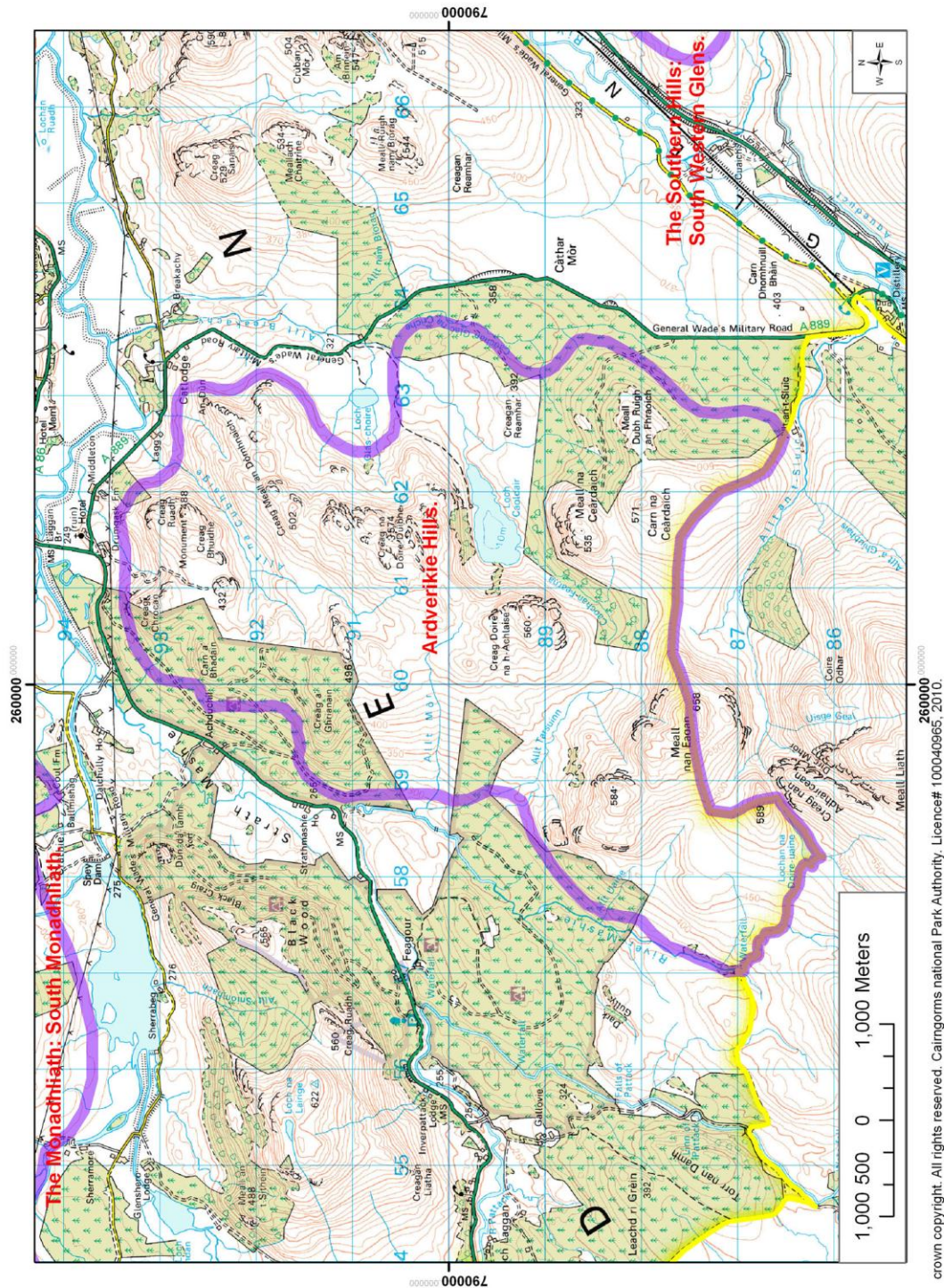


Ardverikie Hills



1.1.1 *Landscape Character*

These small, knobbly, erosion-resistant hills are developed on intensely folded and fractured Moine schists, and have been steepened and roughened by glaciation, with crags most evident on the east-facing sides of the hill summits

The hills contain a series of linked, steep sided and narrow valleys generally orientated south west/north east, creating a relatively complex landscape

The hills are low – rising up to about 650m – but are elevated above the already raised Càthar Mor corridor to the east

Lochs – including Loch Caoldair, set within rocky crags at the heart of this area – and relatively level areas of wetland are enclosed by steep hillsides

The soils are generally immature rankers, which tend to be shallow, poorly developed and acidic, supporting heather and some blaeberry heath

Conifer woodland extends up onto the lower slopes from the low lying bowl of Càthar Mor to the east and the shallow slopes of Strath Mashie to the north west

Semi-natural broadleaved woodland extends into the core of this area along the narrow valleys

There is no historic or pre-historic settlement evident in this area, and apart from a couple of access tracks, one of which is way-marked from the woodland at Càthar Mor, there is no other infrastructure

1.1.2 *Landscape experience*

Although a small area of relatively low hills, the crags and rock outcrops create a rugged character

The small scale, almost intimate character of this area reflects its intricate detailed topography

The rugged, vertical hills contrast with the horizontal expanse of Càthar Mor to the east

This area is secluded, hidden away behind forest on most sides, and rarely visited

The hills are often obscured by woodland, which grows along the lower slopes and screens the hills from surrounding roads

1.1.3 *Relationship to adjacent character areas*

This hill group is at the western edge of the Park, and are part of the transition between landscapes of the east and west sides of Scotland. The Hills form the westerly containment to the expansive bowl of Càthar Mor as well as the south easterly edge to Strath Mashie and Glen Pattack.

1.1.4 *Assessment of distinctiveness*

These small but rugged hills of craggy, exposed rock, form an irregular skyline which is easily recognisable when visible, but the area is secluded and rarely visited, largely tucked away behind surrounding woodland.



The craggy, exposed rock of these hills, with forestry in the foreground



Woodland along the lower slopes, with the Ardverikie hills in the mist