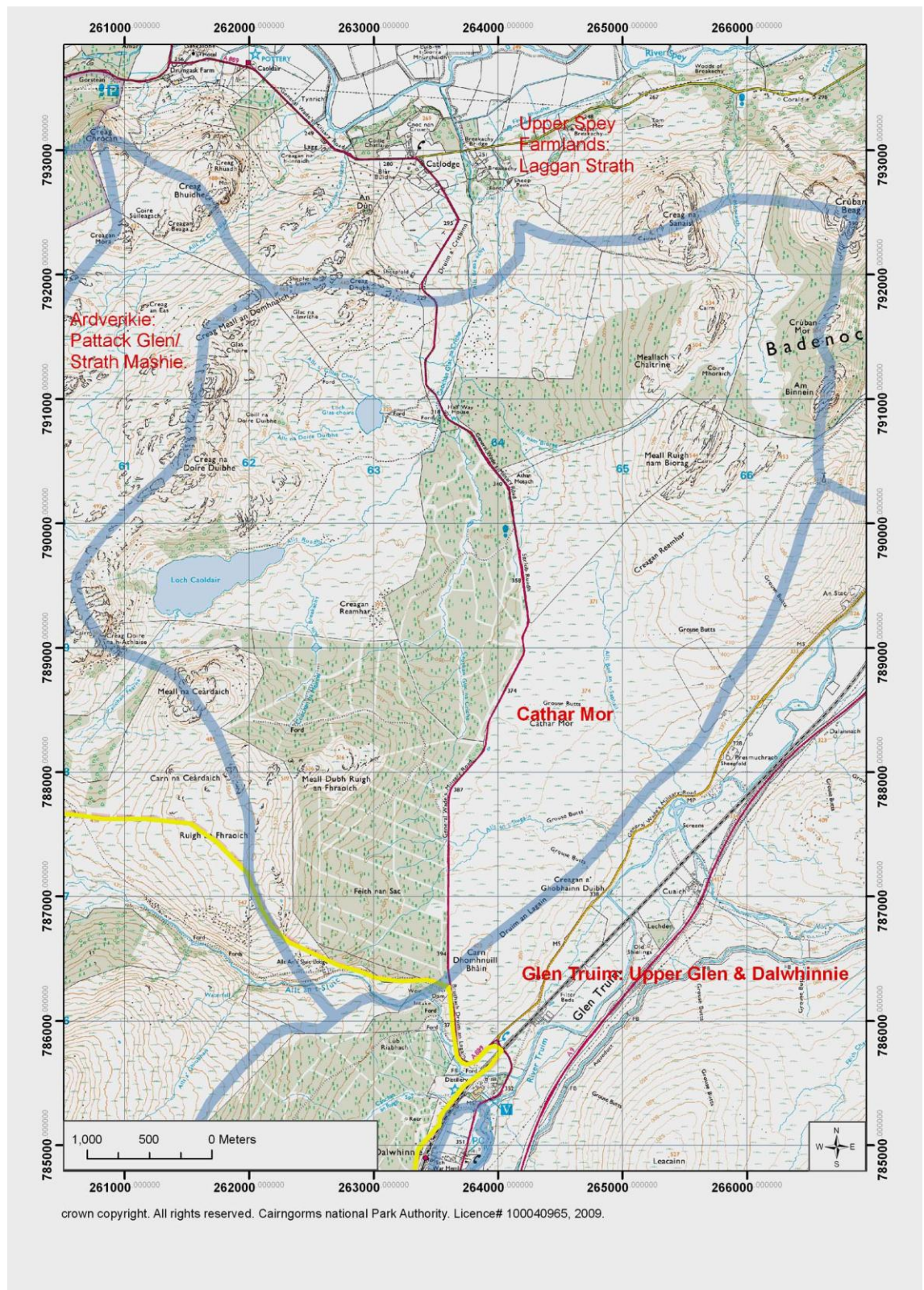


I.1 Càthar Mòr



1.1.1 *Landscape Character*

This expanse of undulating, raised moorland is an old valley floor which has largely escaped glacial erosion, because ice flow has tended towards adjacent valleys

Flaggy Moine schist bedrock lies underneath a veneer of glacial deposits and peat bog, forming an irregular shaped bowl partially contained by craggy, irregular shaped hills, steepened and roughened by glacial erosion

The ice-roughened hills to the east, around Cruben Beag, are particularly striking, with long slopes to the west and cliffs facing east

Occasional hummocks of glacial deposits become more frequent to the north, where the terrain becomes more complex as it drops down to the Laggan Strath

To the south west, a pronounced break in slope, up to 150m high, forms a well-defined edge to Glen Truim

Long watercourses, with few tributaries drain to the Spey in the north and the Truim to the south

Two lochs – Loch Caoldair and Loch Glas-Choire – are located west of the A889. The largest, Loch Caoldair is bounded by rocky crags

Heather moorland, with occasional wet heath in shallow dips, extends over most of the moor, and is managed as grouse moor

There is extensive conifer woodland across the moorland, in places reaching up to the rocky outcrops below the hill summits

Settlement is limited to a single house next to the A889

The A889 crosses the middle of moor on the line of one of Wade's military roads

Several access routes and forest tracks lead into the hinterland especially to the west, including to Loch Caoldair

1.1.2 *Landscape experience*

The moor feels open, expansive and often larger than it is in reality, despite the forestry, which is increasing the enclosure as it grows

Travelling onto the moor along the A889, there is a strong sense of being elevated, which is reinforced by the steep slopes at either end, where the moor rises up above Glen Truim and Strathspey. This is most pronounced in winter, when snow drifts across the Cathàr Mòr corridor

There are fine, panoramic views to the small enclosing hills and the more distant Cairngorms and the Monadhliath across the sweeping expanse of the moor

Views down into the adjacent valleys are suddenly revealed when arriving at the crest of the elevated edges of the moor

The simplicity of the vegetation and apparent lack of built structures means that occasional infrastructure, such as the telecommunications mast, is a visual feature

The area around Loch Caoldair is relatively secluded, in part hidden from the road by woodland and well contained by hills

1.1.3 *Relationship to adjacent character areas*

This character area is very inter-visible with surrounding character areas, with 'borrowed' views of the surrounding mountains. In addition, it forms the southern boundary to the Laggan Strath, and partially contains Upper Glen Truim, and contrasts with these more settled, busier valleys

1.1.4 *Assessment of distinctiveness*

This landscape is dominated by the sense of elevation and expanse, the visual simplicity of the vegetation pattern, and the lack of settlement and infrastructure.



From the A889, the expanse of the moor is obvious, here with the knobbly skyline of the eastern hills outlined beyond



Moorland, developed on hummocky glacial deposits along the edge to Glen Truim



Autumn colour and young, planted forest where the terrain becomes more hummocky at the northern edge of the moor, before it drops down to Laggan strath



There is extensive woodland across the moor, partially obscuring views to the western hills at Ardverikie