

- 4.5.4** The four aims must be achieved collectively and in a coordinated way.
- 4.5.5** The National Park covers 3,800 sq km which is approximately 5% of Scotland's land area. Approximately 16,000 people live in the National Park, 25% of the area is designated as being of European importance for nature conservation, it contains extensive mountain areas and significant stretches of two of Scotland's major rivers and numerous listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments.

### **An Camas Mòr in the Context of the Protection of the Area - Spey SAC**

- 4.5.6** The River Spey and its most important tributaries are designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) under the EC Habitats Directive. This European designation reflects the clean nature and the physical and chemical changes that occur from source to the mouth of the river. The designation lists the qualifying interests of the SAC as; Atlantic salmon, sea lamprey, otter and freshwater pearl mussel. The River Spey is one of the most important rivers in Western Europe for freshwater pearl mussel and although stretches have been severely affected by pearl fishers, a recent survey has indicated a sizeable population with breeding occurring. This species of mussel has declined drastically throughout much of its global range.

### **An Camas Mòr in the context of the National Scenic Area (NSA)**

- 4.5.7** The Cairngorms Mountains NSA extends from Glen Feshie in the west to Glen Builg in the east; from Pityoulish & Ryvoan in the north and the Geldie Burn in the south. It embraces the principal summits of the bulky Cairngorms Plateau and the woodlands and forests that cloth its lower slopes and flank the greater and lesser watercourses. It is designated an NSA because it meets the criteria of "unsurpassed attractiveness which must be conserved as part of our national heritage".
- 4.5.8** The Cairngorm Mountains NSA was designated in 1980. The intention eventually is to subsume this designation within the National Park Plans once they are adopted to safeguard and enhance the NSA interests. The part of the citation relevant to An Camas Mòr refers to the forest around the plateau foot and in Rothiemurchus the mixture of native pine and birch woodland carpeted with a rich ground flora. Within the An Camas Mòr boundary the ancient woodland in the south east part of the site would be conserved. Other parts of the site are less important for the NSA citation. The proposed development would not affect the integrity of the NSA.

## **4.6 Protected Species**

- 4.6.1** The surrounding area contains the protected species, both those protected at an International and a National level. It also contains many bird species which are specially protected at an International and a National level. Particular habitats in the area are listed under the Habitats Directive and are known for their

biodiversity, for example, the ancient Caledonian pinewood areas close by and they also contain protected species at an International and National level.

## **4.7 Development of the Area**

**4.7.1** Highland and Islands Enterprise has set out its strategy for developing a competitive region in its operating plan 2008 to 2011. This focuses on sustainable economic growth with one of its priorities being a supportive business environment and quality of place. Critical requirements to achieve this include growing the population in every part of the region so that it rises to half a million in a generation, and allowing those propulsive businesses in the region to grow.

**4.7.2** The Aviemore area is seen as a growth point for this type of business. An Camas Mòr would help facilitate this strategy by providing the quality of place for the growing population, and by providing a home for small scale propulsive businesses.

## **4.8 Conclusion**

**4.8.1** An Camas Mor represents a unique opportunity in terms of environment, located as it is, within Cairngorms National Park, the Cairngorm Mountains National Scenic Area next to River Spey Special Area of Conservation and adjacent to Aviemore and the Cairngorms Mountains.