

Visit **Portlethen Moss** and experience the wild side of town with remnant of raised bog, heathland, scrub and woodland.

**Raised bogs** started to form after the last ice age in waterlogged depressions. These depressions were initially filled with groundwater and often supported a lush growth of reeds. Over time, as peat accumulated, the depressions became infilled. Then as rain became the prominent water supply, the peat soil became nutrient-poor and acidic so that heaths, sedges and colourful bog-mosses are now the dominant plant species. These plants and the small creatures that are dependent upon them have many adaptations that allow them to exist in such hostile conditions.

Portlethen Moss has been extensively cut for peat for fuel in the past and these lower cut areas can still be seen. More recently the Moss has been drained to make way for housing and has reduced in size by more than half since the 1970's.

**Portlethen Moss Conservation Group** was formed to protect this valuable piece of wild land. Paths, interpretation boards and a small planted woodland have all enhanced the Moss and the group continues to raise funds and public awareness of this special place.

**Aberdeenshire Council Ranger Service** leads groups and events to foster understanding and care of the natural heritage on the Moss

#### Find out more

[www.portlethen-moss.org.uk](http://www.portlethen-moss.org.uk)

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Take only photographs leave only footprints

Respect your raised bog!



#### How to find Portlethen Moss

Portlethen Moss is sited at the west side of the town close to the A90 dual carriageway.

#### Access

Main entrance is from Bruntland Road with two access points from the adjacent housing estate.

An inner all abilities path gives views over the bog. An Informal outer trail leads off this path, very wet in places, allows a closer look at the bog habitats and links to the other entrance points.

#### Acknowledgements

Photographs by Ken Watson, Helen Rowe, Rob Rowe & Helen Young.

# Portlethen Moss



Aberdeenshire COUNCIL





# What have you seen on the Moss today?



**Sundews** are adapted to life in nutrient poor bogs trapping and eating insects with sticky leaves.



**Hare's-tail cottongrass** tolerates high acidity and prefers hummocks of raised bogs.



**Yellowhammers** are a bird of scrubby ground. Their familiar song '*a little bit of bread and no cheese*' can be heard from gorse bushes where their colouring resembles the gorse in bloom.



The striking **Emperor moth** caterpillars feed mainly on heather. The moth emerges from pupa in late April and can be seen flying through June.



**Sphagnum moss** acts like a sponge absorbing water and nutrients. It can hold up to 20 x's its own weight in water.

With bluish tinged leaves arranged in whorls of four up the stem **Cross-leaved heath** is found in wet heaths and bogs often together with sphagnum.



**Bog Asphodel** bright yellow flowers can be seen growing in clumps around wetter areas of the bog in July and August.



**Palmate newts** prefer shallow ponds in acid rich soils. During the breeding season males develop webbed back feet and a thin filament on the end of their tail.



Many bog pools attract colourful **damselflies**. They lay their eggs into the water and the young live and develop within these pools.



**Frogs** and **toads** return to the bog pools in spring. Toads have drier rougher skin and prefer deeper ponds. Frogs spawn in clumps while toads have long strands.