
NWHG Ref. 035 — Bear Cave

Location, grid reference

The cave, one of several, is located on the southern slopes of the Allt nan Uamh valley, Grid Ref. [NC 276 171].

GCR site reference, block, volume and notified feature of SSSI?

GCR Ref. 1491, Quaternary Block, Vol. 6. Notified feature of Ben More Assynt SSSI.

Description and geological significance

This is a key site of importance for studies of Pleistocene vertebrate faunas. This and the other caves contain predominantly undisturbed Pleistocene deposits with great potential for finds of vertebrate fossils. Bear cave was evidently used by brown bears for winter hibernation during post-glacial times.

Accessibility

Access requires a 2.5 km walk from the A 837 eastwards up the valley of the Allt nan Uamh over rough and locally steep and boggy terrain. No access for all abilities.

Conservation

Moderate to high conservation requirement due to nature, fragility and accessibility of this very important site.

Visibility and “clarity”

Visibility poor, requiring local knowledge.

Interpretation and interpretation potential

There is considerable scope here for interpretation with potential for a leaflet describing the formation of the cave(s) and the range of vertebrate faunas found so far. The site may be incorporated within a guided walk up the valley and should certainly be included in a future Geopark guide. There is considerable scope for developing the site as a teaching aid for schools and universities.

Key references

LAWSON, T.J. 1988. Caves of Assynt, Grampian Speleological Group.

LAWSON, T. 1995. The Creag nam Uamh caves. In Lawson, T. (eds) *The Quaternary of Assynt and Coigach; field guide*. Quaternary Research Association, Cambridge, 87–103.

LAWSON, T.J. 1993. Creah nam Uamh. In Gordon, J. E. & Sutherland, D. G. (eds) *Quaternary of Scotland*. Geological Conservation Review Series, 6, Chapman and Hall, London, 127–133.