

# **Greeba Mountain & Central Hills Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI)**

## **Designation Documents**

Please note:

- Notification as an ASSI confers no public right of entry to any land without the permission of the landowner.
- The citations and lists of operations requiring the Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture's consent may be subject to minor editorial changes and should not be assumed to be an exact facsimile of the original legal document.

---

### **Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture**

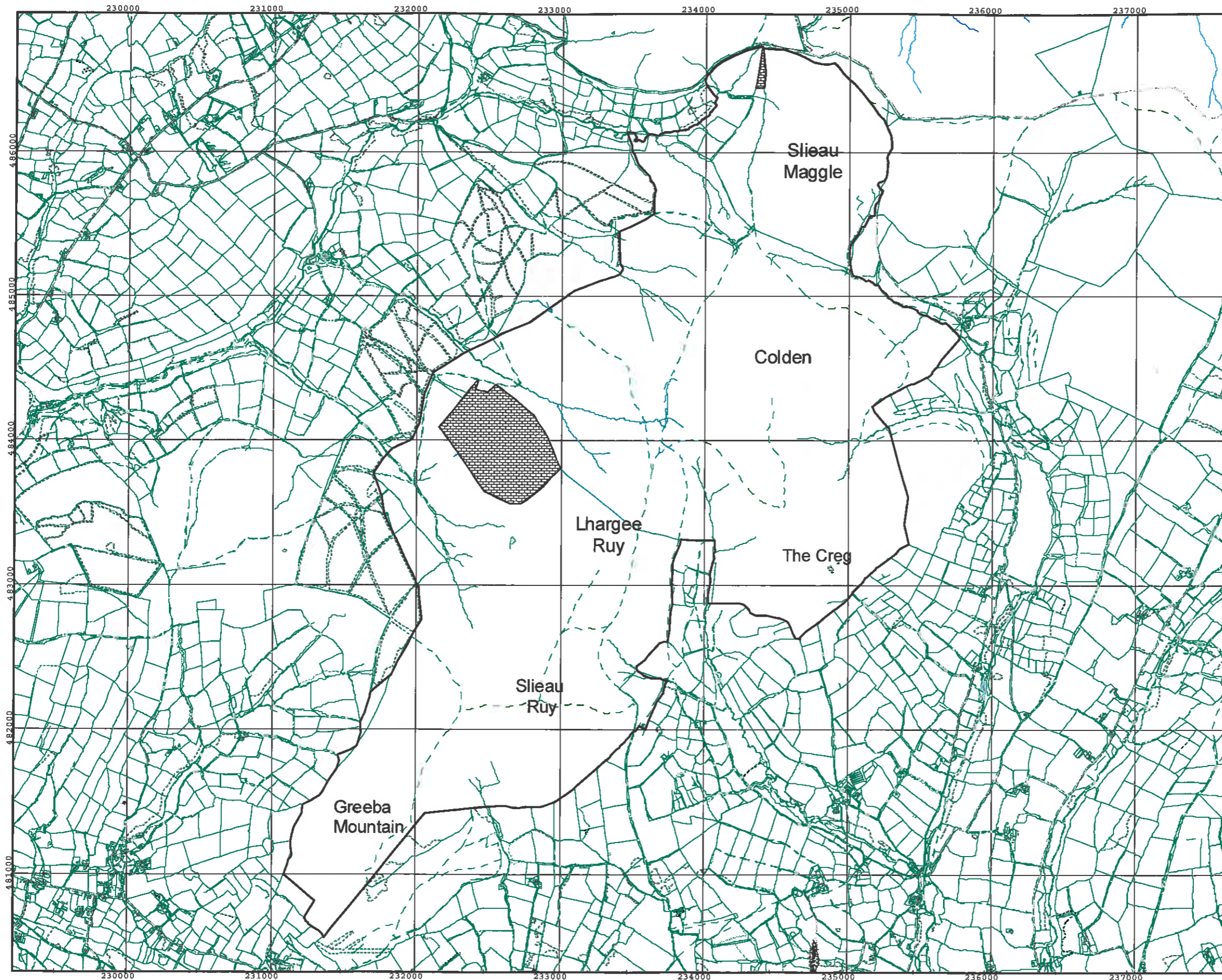
*Rheynn Chymmtaght, Bee as Eiriny's*

This Slieau Whallian, Foxdale Road, St John's, Isle of Man IM4 3AS  
[www.gov.im](http://www.gov.im)



**Isle of Man**  
Government  
*Reillys Eilan Vannin*





**Isle of Man  
Government**  
Ardjyn, Ellan Vannin

Department of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Forestry

**GREEBA MOUNTAIN  
AND CENTRAL HILLS  
AREA OF SPECIAL  
SCIENTIFIC INTEREST**

Area: 1080.95ha (2671 acres)

Greeba Mountain and Central Hills ASSI  
 [Outline] Greeba Mountain and Central Hills ASSI  
 [Hatched] (excluded area)

O/S Grid reference: SC335840  
(approximate centre of site)

Designated: 23rd July 2008

Confirmed: 19th January 2009



The grid lines on this map form  
part of the National Grid,  
and are spaced at 1km intervals

Base Map is  
Crown Copyright  
Department of Local Government  
and the Environment, Isle of Man.  
Unauthorised production  
infringes copyright.

## NOTIFICATION OF AN AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST Appendix I

**Site name:** Greeba Mountain and Central Hills

**Status:** Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) notified under Section 27 of the Wildlife Act 1990.

**Region:** Isle of Man

**Parishes:** Braddan, German, Marown and Michael

**Local authorities:** Braddan, German, Marown & Michael Commissioners

**Planning Authority:** Department of Local Government and the Environment

**Ordinance Survey Sheet:** 1:50,000 OS Landranger Map No.95 and 1:10,560 sheets SC27, SC28  
**National Grid Reference (centroid):** SC335840 **Area:** 1,080.95ha (2671 acres)

**Date notified:** 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2008

**Date confirmed:** 19<sup>th</sup> January 2009

**Date of last revision:** N/A

### Purpose

The purpose of this designation is to formalise the protection of an area which is important for its assemblage of upland breeding birds, and its upland wildlife habitats – dwarf shrub heath (heather moorland), acid grassland, mire (including blanket bog and acid hillside flushes), and river catchment.

### Description and reasons for notification:

Greeba Mountain and Central Hills ASSI is a large area of upland moorland and grassland comprising five hills in a roughly southwest to northeast line: Greeba Mountain, Slieau Ruy, Lhargee Ruy, Colden and Slieau Maggle. The majority of the area is covered with heather moorland, interspersed with blanket bog and flush, acid grassland and small streams. The streams form the head of a large catchment including the Blaber River (a tributary of Glen Helen and the River Neb), the River Glass and associated Baldwin trout fisheries, and the Greeba River (a tributary of the River Dhoo which runs eventually to Douglas). The Central Hills area thus has a strong ecological influence on wetland habitats throughout the central region of the Island.

The majority of the habitat consists of dwarf shrub heath, i.e. heather-dominated moorland. Some parts of the area are wetter than others, with a full range of wet and dry heath present. Species include ling *Calluna vulgaris* (which dominates the majority of the site), bell heather *Erica cinerea*, cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix* (on the wetter ground), bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus*, common cottongrass *Eriophorum angustifolium*, heath grass *Danthonia decumbens*, heath rush *Juncus squarrosus*, deergrass *Trichophorum cespitosum*, green-ribbed sedge *Carex binervis*, and common lousewort *Pedicularis sylvatica*. In total, over 900 hectares of dry dwarf shrub heath has been recorded on the Central Hills ASSI, amounting to 15% of the total area for this habitat on the Island. Whilst broadly categorised as “dry” heath, there is a diverse range of water levels, with frequent wet areas throughout the ASSI on both the plateaus and the slopes.

Acid grassland occurs throughout the ASSI, interspersed with bog and heath. Many heath and bog plants grow amongst the grasses, which are dominated by mat grass *Nardus stricta*, brown bent *Agrostis vinealis*, common bent *Agrostis capillaris*, red fescue *Festuca rubra* and purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*. On the lower-lying parts of the area sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum* is abundant. Other grassland species include tormentil *Potentilla erecta*, heath milkwort *Polygala serpyllifolia*, heath bedstraw *Galium saxatile*, common bird’s-foot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, common dog’s-violet *Viola riviniana*, sorrel *Rumex acetosa*, wild thyme *Thymus polytrichus*, common cat’s-ear *Hypochoeris radicata*, heath woodrush *Luzula multiflora* and heath spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza maculata*\*\*\*.

The Central Hills contain 20% of the total area recorded as acid/neutral flush habitat on the Island, interspersed with blanket bog. These mire habitats occur in a complex mosaic with acid grassland and heath. Species present include round-leaved sundew *Drosera rotundifolia*, ling *Calluna vulgaris*, lousewort *Pedicularis sylvatica*, crowberry *Empetrum nigrum*, common cotton-grass *Eriophorum angustifolium*, hare’s-

tail cottongrass *Eriophorum vaginatum*, bog asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum*, velvet bent *Agrostis canina*, heath spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza maculata*\*\*\*, bulbous rush *Juncus bulbosus*, purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*, many-stalked spike-rush *Eleocharis multicaulis* and star sedge *Carex echinata*. *Sphagnum* moss is frequent in the wettest areas, blanketing some parts and forming large patches or cushions of moss on the drier, grassier areas. Mosses present include *Sphagnum palustris* agg., *Sphagnum auriculatum*, *Sphagnum capillifolium*, *Sphagnum cuspidatum* and *Polytrichum commune*. In the more low-lying parts of the site, particularly at the north end, the diversity of mire species is higher, with plants characteristic of valley mire and fen meadows as well as bog species. Additional species found in the lower areas include sharp-flowered rush *Juncus actutiflorus*, lesser spearwort *Ranunculus flammula*, devil’s-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, carnation sedge *Carex panicea*, yellow-sedge *Carex viridula* subsp. *oedocarpa*, flea sedge *Carex pulicaris*, marsh lousewort *Pedicularis palustris*, jointed rush *Juncus articulatus* and greater bird’s-foot trefoil *Lotus pedunculatus*. Frogs *Rana temporaria*\*\* breed in considerable numbers in the wetter areas.

Greeba Mountain and Central Hills ASSI supports a wide range of characteristic upland breeding birds. These include Hen harrier *Circus cyaneus*\*, Red grouse *Lagopus lagopus*, Raven *Corvus corax*, Curlew *Numenius arquata*\*, Stonechat *Saxicola torquata* and Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*. Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*\* and Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* are known to have bred on the ASSI in the recent past, and nearby breeding Peregrine *Falco peregrinus* and Long-eared owl *Asio otus*\* rely on the ASSI as hunting territory. In addition to the important breeding assemblage of upland birds, the area supports many other species, including breeding Dunnock *Prunella modularis*, Grasshopper warbler *Locustella naevia*\*#, Grey wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*, Skylark *Alauda arvensis*\*#, Songthrush *Turdus philomelos*\*#, Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*, Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*\*, Lesser redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*, Reed bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*\*#. Non-breeding birds which benefit from the area as a feeding ground include Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*, Golden plover *Pluvialis apricaria*\*, Jack snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*\*, Redwing *Turdus iliacus*, Snow bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*, Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*\*, Swift *Apus apus*\* and Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*\*.

\* = Protected under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife Act 1990

# = Birds of Conservation Concern Red List species <sup>1</sup>

\*\* = Protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife Act 1990

\*\*\* = Protected under Schedule 7 of the Wildlife Act 1990

### Other information:

Blanket bog is a Priority Annex 1 habitat under the EU Habitats Directive; Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix* and European dry heaths are both Annex 1 habitats. These habitats are all internationally rare and/or threatened.

<sup>1</sup> Gregory Richard D, Wilkinson Nicholas I, Noble David G, Robinson James A, Brown, Andrew F, Hughes, Julian, Proctor Deborah, Gibbons David W, and Galbraith Colin A. (2002) The population status of birds in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man: an analysis of conservation concern 2002-2007. **British Birds** Vol 95 No 9 Pages 410-448

**Site Name: Greeba Mountain and Central Hills**

Operations likely to damage the special interest of the site

Standard reference number†	Type of operation
1	Cultivation including ploughing, rotovating, harrowing and reseeded
2	Grazing where already damaging, the introduction of grazing and changes in grazing regime (including type of stock or intensity or seasonal pattern of grazing and cessation of grazing).
3	Stock feeding, where already damaging, the introduction of stock feeding and changes in stock feeding practice.
4	Mowing or other methods of cutting where they are already damaging, changes in mowing or cutting regime (including conversion from hay making to silage or cessation of mowing).
5	Application of manure, fertilisers and lime.
6	Application of pesticides, including herbicides (weedkillers).
7	Dumping, spreading or discharge of any materials.
8	Burning, lighting of fires and changes in frequency or pattern of burning, where applicable.
9	The release into the site of any wild, feral or domestic animals *, plant or seed.
10	The killing or removal of any wild animal *, including pest control
11	The destruction, displacement, removal or cutting of any plant or plant remains, including herb, dead or decaying wood, moss, lichen, fungus, leaf mould or turf.
12	The introduction of tree and /or woodland management and changes in tree and/or woodland management.
13	Drainage (including moor-gripping, the use of mole, tile, tunnel or other artificial drains).
14	The changing of water levels and tables and water utilisation (including irrigation, storage and abstraction from existing water bodies and through boreholes).
15	Infilling of ditches, dykes, drains, ponds, pools, marshes or pits.
20	Extraction of minerals including peat, shingle, sand and gravel, topsoil, subsoil, chalk, lime, limestone pavement, shells and spoil.
21	Construction, removal or destruction of roads, tracks, walls, fences, hardstands, banks, ditches or other earthworks, or the laying, maintenance or removal of pipelines and cables, above or below ground.
22	Storage of materials.
23	Erection of permanent or temporary structures, or the undertaking of engineering works, including drilling,.
24	Modification of natural or man-made features (including cave entrances),

	clearance of boulders, large stones, loose rock or scree and bettering, buttressing or grading rock faces and cuttings, in-filling of pits, and quarries.
25	Removal of geological specimens, including rock samples, minerals and fossils.
26	Use of vehicles or craft likely to damage or disturb features of interest,
27	Recreational or other activities likely to damage features of interest or soil, fauna and flora.
28	Game and waterfowl management and hunting practices, where already damaging, introduction of game or waterfowl management and changes in game or waterfowl management and hunting practices.

† Note: each type of operation has a standard reference number; for each site, only those operations which are relevant to the site will be listed, hence there may be gaps in the numbering for some sites.

\* "animal" includes any mammal, reptile, bird, amphibian, fish or invertebrate.