

**Environmental Statement for SSSI Moine Mhor
Crinan Canal, Towpath Upgrade.**

Crinan Canal, The Moine Mhor SSSI and SAC were identified as areas that should not be impacted upon. Moine Mhor SSSI and SAC are protected for several features. The SAC was designated for the following: Active raised bog, Atlantic salt meadows, Degraded raised bog, Intertidal mudflats and sandflats, Marsh fritillary butterfly, Otter, Western acidic oak woodland. SSSI was designated for: Breeding bird assemblage, estuarine raised bog, Marsh fritillary, saltmarsh, upland oak woodland.

As the work on the towpath upgrade is limited to the width of the towpath and does not extend down the embankment towards the Moine Mhor none of the physical features will not be affected. The marsh fritillary butterfly does not emerge until May so will not be affected by the proposed work in March/April. The Moine Mhor is also designated for breeding birds and otters. An otter survey has been conducted on site. There are three mammal paths leading from the estuary up to the canal. The embankment was checked for otter field signs, such as holts, resting places and spraint. No field signs were found. It has been recommended in the environmental appraisal to cover any excavations left open overnight to protect nocturnal animal transiting along the towpath. It is anticipated that there will be no impact on the nesting birds on the Moine Mhor, due to the work being limited to a stretch of towpath that lies adjacent to the Moine Mhor SSSI and SAC and the breeding areas being more than 500m away on the opposite side of the River Add.