

## Urgent: Please Help Save Coul Links!

Briefing note from Butterfly Conservation Scotland  
22 November 2017



Coul Links is an outstanding area of sand dunes in Sutherland that, despite being a protected area with SSSI\*, SPA\* and Ramsar\* designations, is under threat from a proposal by an American billionaire to build a golf course. This proposal echoes the devastating Trump development at Menie dunes in Aberdeenshire which has been in the press again recently over the potential de-notification of the SSSI due to the impact of the golf course.

Coul Links has an important assemblage of Lepidoptera with 16 butterflies and 184 moth species being recorded. It is home to the Gelechiid moth *Caryocolum blandelloides* a provisional RDB1 species that is restricted in the UK to around a handful of coastal dunes on the eastern side of northern Scotland and was first discovered in Britain in 1994, at Coul Links.

Other notable butterflies and moths include Small Blue, Northern Brown Argus (114 recorded on a single day in 2016 denoting a considerable colony), Grayling and thirteen Nationally Scarce moths including Marsh Pug, Scotch Annulet, Lyme Grass, Portland moth and Coast Dart. The site lies within the Easter Ross and Moray Coast Prime Area for Lepidoptera. Despite the scale of the development the developers state that the impact on the key Lepidoptera will be “non-significant”!

The site is also home to several other rare and threatened species including Fonseca’s Seed Fly (*Botanophila fonsceai*), one of the UK’s rarest endemic invertebrates, restricted globally to a short stretch of coast in northern Scotland and highlights, along with the Lepidoptera assemblage, the uniqueness and conservation significance of Coul Links.

Butterfly Conservation Scotland has teamed up with other organisations including RSPB, Buglife, Plantlife and Scottish Wildlife Trust to oppose the development. There is also a local community action group, ‘Not Coul’. For more information see [www.notcoul.com](http://www.notcoul.com). They have also produced a video which includes some incredible footage of the site.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XMVAPLdOCTM>

Please help us to stop this development happening. The developer has so far gained a lot of support for the application so we need as many objections as possible. If you would like to help, **please take 5 minutes to send an email to Highland Council at [elanning@highland.gov.uk](mailto:elanning@highland.gov.uk) to object to this application:**

- **Please put the application reference : 17/04601/FUL in the subject line of the email**
- **Include your name and home address**
- **Make it clear that you are writing to OBJECT to the application because of its impact on wildlife.**
- **Please also encourage friends and family to do the same. Local objections are by far the best so we’re particularly keen to encourage anyone with an address in the Highland Council area to object.**

A short response still counts, but if you have time, a more thorough objection would be fantastic. The current closing date for objections to the application is **December 1<sup>st</sup> 2017**. Contact us for more information at [scotland@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:scotland@butterfly-conservation.org)

For explanation of terms see\*<http://gateway.snh.gov.uk/sitelink/>

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