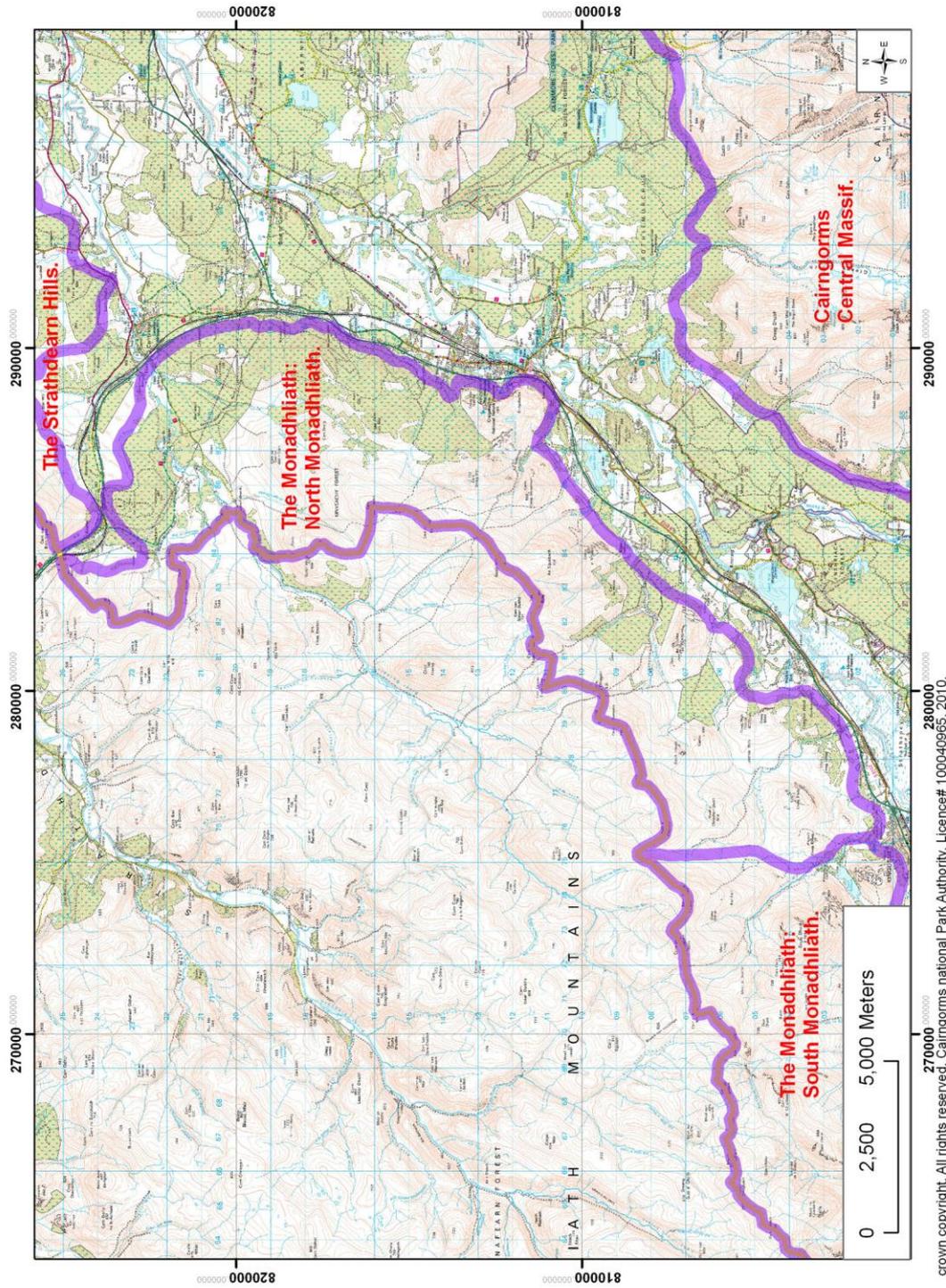


I.1 The Monadhliath: North Monadhliath



1.1.1 *Landscape Character*

These south easterly orientated glens and slopes of the rounded hills and long ridges of the Monadhliath form the north western boundary to the Park

The high plateau shows few signs of significant glacial erosion in this northern section of the Monadhliath. Its relative monotony is partly a reflection of the uniformity of the underlying Moine schists, but it is also an old erosion surface which has tilted towards the north east

While within the wider extent of the Monadhliath, long glens and ridges extend north-east/south west, here wide side valleys and generally shallow bowls of land drain south-eastwards to the Spey and its tributaries

This part of the Monadhliath is generally more subdued than the more rugged southern Monadhliath, and has lower and more rounded terrain especially on the south east flanks overlooking Strathspey, because the lower terrain offered fewer opportunities for mountain glaciers to form during the latest period of repeated glaciation

The lower hills limit the sense of enclosure and the north/south elongated ridges form large scale, undulating terrain

Occasional steep sided glens and rocky upper slopes can be found in this area, especially on hillsides facing Strathspey

Burns traverse the gentle gradients in wide sweeps, often through wetter land, but with few identifiable tributaries

While there is extensive heather moor and upland grassland across this area, there are also large areas of geometrically shaped conifer woodland, often on gently sloping ground, which extends well into the interior of the glens

There is little recorded evidence of past land use or settlement beyond the immediate side slopes of Strathspey

Tracks, suitable for off road vehicles, extend along the lower glen floors, leading to more minor access routes on higher ridges

1.1.2 *Landscape experience*

The simple topography of low relief and smooth slopes creates a relatively open, expansive landscape on the upper slopes, although forestry can be a contrasting enclosing element

This area is secluded but not especially remote, with the forest and associated activities limiting the sense of remoteness

1.1.3 *Relationship to adjacent character areas*

The part of the Monadhliath forms a visual backdrop and a more secluded hinterland to the landscape character areas within Strathspey. These hills are also visible from the Rothiemurchus, Inshriach and the Cairngorm massif.

1.1.4 *Assessment of distinctiveness*

The smooth, subdued land form strongly reflects glacial erosion, and underpins the low relief which creates a relatively open landscape. It differs from the Southern Monadhliath in terms of the presence of the forestry and lack of recorded historic settlement, as well as being perceived as less remote.



Low relief and shallow glens of the subdued terrain of the North Monadhliath, with woodland in the foreground



Long slopes, with roughened by glacial erosion as they extend down towards the Spey, contain shallow bowls and wide side valleys