

CITATION

LUSKENTYRE BANKS AND SALTINGS SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST Western Isles

Site code: 1114

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: NG080973

OS 1:50,000 SHEET NO: Landranger Series 14, 18
1:25,000 SHEET NO: Explorer Series 455

AREA: 1082.06 hectares

NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES

Geological: Geomorphology: Coastal geomorphology of Scotland

Biological: Birds:	Breeding bird assemblage
Coastlands:	Machair
Coastlands:	Saltmarsh
Coastlands:	Sand dunes
Intertidal marine habitats:	Sandflats
Fens:	Flood-plain fen
Freshwater habitats:	Dystrophic and oligotrophic lochs
Upland habitats:	Upland assemblage

DESCRIPTION:

Luskentyre Banks and Saltings SSSI, on South Harris, exhibits one of the best transitional sequences in the Western Isles (and possibly western Scotland). Habitats range from the coastal environment through to calcareous grassland to acid moorland, which is reflected in the associated flora and fauna. The site is important for physiographical and botanical features.

There is distinct zonation from shell sand beach and intertidal sandflats, through areas of saltmarsh or sand dunes and dry machair to rough pasture and hillside moorland over granite.

The water systems include running water, oligotrophic and dystrophic lochs with associated fens, and brackish water estuaries. A substantial estuarine *Phragmites* swamp grows at Liana Horgabost.

Luskentyre Banks and Saltings is an important site for feeding, breeding, wintering and migrating birds, especially waders and wildfowl.

The area between Luskentyre and Corran Seilebost is an important locality for coastal geomorphology, containing a wide variety of beach, dune and machair landforms which together form a single geomorphological system of the highest

importance. Luskentyre Banks and Corran Seilebost both provide unusual settings for machair development, on a promontory and peninsula, respectively. At Luskentyre Banks the juxtaposition of erosional and depositional forms (including some of the highest sand hills in the Outer Hebrides) as well as active and mature forms make it one of the most dynamic and geomorphologically interesting coasts in the Outer Hebrides. Corran Seilebost is significant for a dynamic spit and is a representative example of Harris dune and machair landforms. However, it is the integral nature of the total landform complex, incorporating Luskentyre Banks, Corran Seilebost and the extensive intertidal sand beach of Traigh Luskentyre. Adjacent saltmarsh is of prime geomorphological significance. The total system appears to represent the reshaped remnants of a much larger area of machair, fragmented by postglacial submergence, it has outstanding potential for studies in coastal evolution.

NOTIFICATION HISTORY

First notified under the 1949 Act: 1974

Re-notified under the 1981 Act: 14 March 1984

Notification reviewed under the 2004 Act: 30 March 2011 and
24 August 2012 (citation only)

REMARKS

Measured area of site corrected (from 1172 ha).