

CITATION

**NORTHWALL
SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST**
Orkney Islands

Site code: 1246

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: HY 727445, HY 744446, HY 756444, HY 754457

OS 1:50,000 SHEET NO: Landranger 5
1:25,000 SHEET NO: Explorer Series 465

AREA: 240.19 hectares

NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES

| | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Biological: | Coastlands: | Machair |
| | Freshwater habitats: | Machair loch |

DESCRIPTION:

Northwall Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is made up of four separate areas in the north-east of Sanday. These areas are located around the machair lochs North Loch, Loch of Rummie, Loch of Brue, Loch of Langamay and Westayre Loch. The site is notified for its nationally important machair and machair loch habitats.

Machair is one of the rarest habitats in Europe and can maintain a rich diversity and density of wildflowers. Northwall SSSI is significant as it contains the largest area of machair to be found outside of the Western Isles. The site has an abundance of yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor*, grass of Parnassus *Parnassia palustris* and ragged robin *Lychnis-flos-cuculi*. Mosses characteristic of wet dune areas are well represented and it is also the only known Orkney location of the liverwort *Moerckia hibernica*. Around and in the machair lochs amphibious bistort, yellow flag iris and reed canary-grass can be found.

NOTIFICATION HISTORY

First notified under the 1949 Act: 1973 as Northwaa SSSI

Re-notified under the 1981 Act: 11 October 1983 with a 181 ha (approx.) decrease in area.

Notification reviewed under the 2004 Act: 25 February 2011

REMARKS

Measured area of site corrected (from 251.3ha).

Part of Northwall SSSI is part of East Sanday Coast SSSI which is notified for the following features.

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|----------|---|---------------------------------------|
| Habitats | : | Mudflat |
| | : | Rocky shore |
| | : | Sandflat |
| Species | : | Common seal (<i>Phoca vitulina</i>) |

: Vascular plant assemblage

Birds : Bar-tailed godwit (*Limosa lapponica*), non-breeding
: Purple sandpiper (*Calidris maritima*), non-breeding
: Ringed plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*), non-breeding
: Sanderling (*Calidris alba*), non-breeding
: Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*), non-breeding

Part of Northwall SSSI is part of Sanday Special Area of Conservation (SAC) designated for the European habitats and species listed below and is part of East Sanday Coast Special Protection Area (SPA) for the birds listed below.

Habitats : Intertidal mudflats and sandflats
: Reefs
: Subtidal sandbanks

Species : Common seal *Phoca vitulina*

Birds : Bar-tailed godwit *Limosa lapponica*, non-breeding
: Purple sandpiper *Calidris maritima*, non-breeding
: Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*, non-breeding