



Scottish Natural Heritage  
Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba

All of nature for all of Scotland  
Nàdar air fad airson Alba air fad

**OB LUSA TO ARDNISH  
Site of Special Scientific Interest**

**SITE MANAGEMENT STATEMENT**

Site code: 1251

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**Purpose**



This is a public statement prepared by SNH for owners and occupiers of the SSSI. It outlines the reasons it is designated as an SSSI and provides guidance on how its special natural features should be conserved or enhanced. This Statement does not affect or form part of the statutory notification and does not remove the need to apply for consent for operations requiring consent.

We welcome your views on this statement.

This statement is available in Gaelic on request.

<b>Natural features of Ob Lusa to Ardnish SSSI</b>	<b>Condition of feature (and date monitored)</b>
Hettangian, Sinemurian, Pliensbachian	Favourable (June 2003)

**Description of the site**

Ob Lusa to Ardnish Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) encompasses a section of foreshore to the east of Broadford Bay, on the Isle of Skye, and small, adjacent rocky islands. The site includes small coastal cliffs, sandy beaches and inter-tidal rock platforms. Broadford Airstrip runs parallel to an 800 m length of the site and there is a graveyard close to the boundary at Ob Breakish.

The Ob Lusa to Ardnish SSSI is nationally important and widely recognised for its exposures of rocks from the early or Lower Jurassic period. These rocks were formed from loose sediment, mostly sand and mud, laid down around 195 million years ago in a shallow tropical sea known as the 'Hebrides Basin'. Detailed geological mapping of the rock sequence has identified a variety of rock types including two prominent beds of coral known as the Ob Lusa and Ob Breakish Coral Beds. These formed in the manner of present day coral reefs under warm shallow clear water conditions.

This site is also the type locality for the Breakish Formation and the Ardnish Formation, which means that it was from here that these formations or rock sequences were first described. They are now amongst the best-known and most extensively studied Lower Jurassic rock sequences in the Hebrides.

When monitored in 2003, the SSSI was found to be in a favourable condition as key features were all visible. However, the Ob Lusa coral bed has been badly damaged through irresponsible fossil collecting with much of it reduced to rubble.

### **Past and present management**

Because most of the site is inter-tidal it is not subject to management. Crofts adjoin the site and much of the adjacent land is used as rough grazing.

Although Broadford Airstrip is not itself within the site, debris from its construction has encroached upon rock exposures at the high water mark.

The site is well known as a rich source of fossil material and has been subject to extensive fossil collection. The Ob Lusa Coral Bed is particularly vulnerable to irresponsible collecting, being composed of rather attractive fossil coral. Although the site is of importance primarily due to the stratigraphy (rock layer sequences), the fossils are vital for dating the rock layers, interpreting the ancient environment and for allowing the correlation (or links to be made) with other rocks of similar age elsewhere.

### **Objectives for Management**

We wish to work with the owners and occupiers to protect the site and to maintain and where necessary enhance its features of special interest. SNH aims carry out site survey, monitoring and research as appropriate to increase our knowledge and understanding of the site and its natural features and to monitor the effectiveness of management.

### **To maintain the favourable condition of the Hettangian, Sinemurian, Pliensbachian feature by:**

- maintaining the presence of existing exposures of key geological outcrops;
- ensuring rock exposures remain visible and where practicable accessible;
- safeguarding against irresponsible fossil collecting;
- promoting responsible fossil and rock sample collecting as outlined in the Scottish Fossil Code.

Date last reviewed: 15 November 2010