

CITATION

PRIEST ISLAND
SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST
Highland (Wester Ross)

Site code: 1313

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: NB925022

OS 1:50,000 SHEET NO: Landranger Series 15
1:25,000 SHEET NO: Explorer Series 439

AREA: 131.82 hectares

NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES

Biological

Coastlands: Maritime cliff

Birds: Storm petrel (*Hydrobates pelagicus*)

DESCRIPTION

Priest Island Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is the outermost and most exposed of the Summer Isles. It lies approximately 22km west of Ullapool. This site has been notified for the nationally important coastal cliff and heath vegetation and for the internationally important breeding population of storm petrel.

Maritime cliff (vegetation)

A range of coastal plant communities grow on low cliffs around the island. Most of the coastal plants characteristic of Wester Ross are present, such as thrift *Armeria maritima*, sea plantain *Plantago maritima* and spring squill *Scilla verna*. Locally, spray and maritime heath communities are well represented, with plants such as common scurvygrass *Cochlearia officinalis* and sea mayweed *Tripleurospermum maritimum*.

Storm petrel

The island supports an internationally important breeding colony of storm petrel, of which there are estimated to be thousands of pairs. These birds nest in the boulder screes and boulder beaches in various locations across the island. This is one of the largest storm petrel colonies in Scotland and one of the ten largest colonies in Britain.

NOTIFICATION HISTORY

First notified under the 1981 Act: 25 June 1985

Notification reviewed under the 2004 Act: 14 October 2008

REMARKS

Measured area of site corrected (from 137.5 ha).

Priest Island SSSI is also designated as Priest Island Special Protection Area (SPA) for storm petrel (*Hydrobates pelagicus*).