

## CITATION

**SANDNESS COAST  
SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST**  
Shetland Islands

Site code: 1684

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: HU 169571, HU 198582

OS 1:50,000 SHEET NO: Landranger Series 3  
1:25,000 SHEET NO: Explorer Series 467

AREA: 11.1 hectares

## NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES

**Biological: Intertidal marine habitats and saline lagoons: Rocky shore**

### DESCRIPTION

Sandness Coast Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located on the north-west shore of the West Mainland of Shetland, opposite the island of Papa Stour. The site runs from Quivla Taing in the west to Neap of Norby in the east and includes the shore of the Holm of Melby. It comprises the intertidal zone between low and high water marks. The site is notified for its rocky shore.

Sandness Coast SSSI is an example of moderately exposed rocky and boulder shore environment in Shetland, reflected in the presence of typically northern species such as the northern starfish *Leptasterias muelleri*. It shows a good range of wave and tidal current exposure gradients. It is remarkable for the variety of biotopes found within a relatively small area: twenty three different intertidal biotopes have been identified within the 4.25 km shoreline of the SSSI. The site contributes significantly to the diversity of biotopes recorded within Papa Stour Special Area of Conservation. Characteristic features include wide lichen zones, numerous species-rich rock pools, barnacle and small mussel crusts, diverse and dense red algal communities, sparse fucoid algae communities and kelp communities such as those associated with dabberlocks *Alaria esculenta* and oarweed *Laminaria digitata*.

Although most of the shoreline within the site is made up of bedrock and boulders, two large sand beaches with areas of boulders and rocky reefs are also present. They support biotopes ranging from sparse faunal communities associated with mobile boulders at the top of beaches to hardy fauna and algae subject to sand scour on rock outcrops lower down the shore. Transitional communities are found on the boulders at the edge of the beaches.

### NOTIFICATION HISTORY

First notified under the 1981 Act: 4 November 1997

Notification reviewed under the 2004 Act: 17 January 2011

### REMARKS

Measured area of site corrected (from 10.67 ha).

Most of Sandness Coast SSSI is also within Papa Stour Special Area of Conservation (SAC), which is designated for the European habitats listed below. Part also overlaps with Melby SSSI, which is notified for the feature listed below.

#### Papa Stour SAC

Habitats : Reefs  
: Sea caves

#### Melby SSSI

Paleontology : Silurian - Devonian Chordata