

CITATION

**BORGUE COAST
SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST**
Dumfries and Galloway

Site code: 245

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: NX610457

OS 1:50,000 SHEET NO: Landranger Series 83
1:25,000 SHEET NO: Explorer Series 312

AREA: 730.56 hectares

NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES

Geological: Stratigraphy: Wenlock
Geological: Structural and metamorphic geology: Caledonian Structures

Biological: Coastlands: Sand dune
Biological: Coastlands: Maritime cliff
Biological: Birds: Common gull (*Larus canus*), breeding
Biological: Birds: Great black-backed gull (*Larus marinus*), breeding

DESCRIPTION

The Borgue Coast Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) extends for approximately 20km northwest/southeast between Kirkcudbright Bay and Fleet Bay. The site contains the best examples of maritime heath and dune grassland vegetation and some of the largest seabird colonies in the Stewartry district. The area of the SSSI that is of interest for its Caledonian Structures is the intertidal coastal outcrop near Barlocco Isle. The Wenlock sediments area constitutes the intertidal coastal exposure on the Meikle Ross peninsula.

The Borgue Coast SSSI is of interest for its sediments of Wenlock age which were laid down in a high energy, deep ocean environment. The site is particularly important as it contains the type locality of the Ross Formation. The beds contain pelagic fossils called graptolites, which allow the sediments to be correlated with other sediments and for the sequence to be placed in a stratigraphic (chronological) order. The rock exposure also shows classic sedimentary structures, which are associated with these deep ocean (turbidite) deposits.

These sediments were pushed together and became compressed, "crumpled" and thickened in the mountain-building event, similar to the process occurring in the Himalayas at present. The resulting folds present on this site are known as Caledonian Structures.

The flora are highly varied, reflecting the base-rich outcrops within a generally acidic environment, the varying degrees of exposure and the variety of coastal

forms from dune grassland through steep grassy slopes to 60 metre high cliffs. Perennial flax occurs on the dunes at one of its few British locations and several sea-cliff species such as rock sea-lavender and rock sea-spurrey occur at or near their north-western limit in Britain. A number of local species occur in the clifftop sward, such as spring squill in substantial carpets, mountain everlasting, purple milk-vetch, fragrant orchid, wild onion, and keeled garlic.

The seabird colonies include the largest populations in the district of great black-backed and common gulls in addition to smaller numbers of kittiwake, guillemot, razorbill, fulmar and black guillemot. The cliffs also support a small nesting colony of house martins. Small numbers of turnstones also overwinter here.

NOTIFICATION HISTORY

First notified under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949: 1968 and 1974.

Re-notified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981: 17 June 1988 with a 542 ha decrease in area. Part of the previously notified site has been renotified separately under the 1981 Act as Shoulder o' Craig SSSI.

Notification reviewed under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004: 17 September 2010.

REMARKS

Measured area of site corrected (from 749.1 ha).