

CITATION

CENTRAL SANDAY SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST

Orkney Islands

Site code: 354

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: HY 700393

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

AREA: 631.99 hectares

NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES

Geological:	Geomorphology:	Coastal Geomorphology of Scotland
Biological:	Coastlands:	Machair
		Saltmarsh
		Sand dunes

DESCRIPTION:

Central Sanday Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) covers an area of coastline in the centre of the island of Sanday stretching from Kettletoft Bay in the west to the Bay of Newark in the east. The site is particularly important in furthering our understanding of the influence of a variety of natural processes on coastline development. The site is also nationally important for its large area of machair, saltmarsh and sand dune habitats.

The site contains an outstanding mixture of blown-sand and shingle landforms including tombolos (accumulations of sand and shingle connecting headlands and islands), spits, sandflats, dunes and machair. The large range of these landforms, within such close proximity to each other make this site highly unusual and demonstrate the different processes which have acted upon the site.

Central Sanday SSSI supports an extensive area of machair and it is unusual to find a site of this size outside of the Western Isles. Machair is a low-lying fertile plain influenced by shell sand and is an uncommon habitat. It supports a high density and diversity of wild flowers which vary in relation to moisture, sand stability and management. Some of the characteristic plants of the machair on this site include autumn gentian *Gentianella amerella* ssp. *septentrionalis*, lesser meadow-rue *Thalictrum minus* ssp. *arenarium* and limestone bedstraw *Galium sternerii*.

The area between the Plain of Fidge and Tres Ness is the biggest and most complex sand dune system in Orkney. These dunes are dominated by marram *Ammophila arenaria* and a variety of herbs such as lady's bedstraw *Galium verum* and bird's foot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus* can be found amongst the grass.

The salt marshes adjacent to Cata Sand and Little Sea are two of the largest and most floristically diverse salt marshes in Orkney, supporting several locally scarce

species. The largest populations of sea aster *Aster tripolium* and annual sea-blite *Suaeda maritima* in Orkney grow in the salt marsh beside Little Sea.

NOTIFICATION HISTORY

First notified under the 1981 Act: 6 August 1987

Notification reviewed under the 2004 Act: 23 December 2011

REMARKS

Measured area of site corrected (from 654.7ha).

Part of Central Sanday SSSI is also designated as part of East Sanday Coast SSSI which is notified for the following features.

- Intertidal habitats : Mudflats
- : Rocky shore
- : Sandflats
- Vascular plants : Vascular plant assemblage
- Mammals : Common seal (*Phoca vitulina*)
- 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
- : Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*), passage

Part of Central Sanday SSSI is also designated as part of Sanday Special Area of Conservation (SAC) for the European habitats and species listed below and as 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