

CITATION

**COLLIESTON TO WHINNYFOLD COAST
SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST**
Aberdeenshire

Site code: 392

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: NK042285 to NK086337

OS 1: 50 000 SHEET NO: Landranger Series 30
1: 25 000 SHEET NO: Explorer Series 421, 427

AREA: 103.9 hectares

NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES

Geological	: Structural and metamorphic geology	: Dalradian
Biological	: Coastlands	: Maritime cliff Seabird colony
	: Birds	: Kittiwake <i>Rissa tridactyla</i> : Guillemot <i>Uria aalge</i> : Fulmar <i>Fulmarus glacialis</i> : Razorbill <i>Alca torda</i>
	: Vascular plants	: Sea wormwood <i>Seriphidium maritimum</i>

DESCRIPTION

Collieston and Whinnyfold are located on the east coast of Aberdeenshire about 15 km south of Peterhead. This section of coast is important for geology and for coastal habitats and seabird colonies.

GEOLOGY

Dalradian

The well-exposed coast section between Collieston and Whinnyfold demonstrates the nature of early folding in the some of the youngest Dalradian rocks seen in the North-east Grampian Highlands. These Collieston Formation beds lie in the lower part of the Southern Highland Group and comprise turbiditic, originally sandy and muddy, psammites, semipelites and pelites. 'Bouma sequences' that typify turbidite successions can easily be recognized.

The rocks are folded into a large, composite, recumbent syncline. Numerous smaller-scale anticlines and synclines have axes that plunge gently to the north and axial planes that dip gently to the north-east. The beds become younger eastwards and hence the folds face east. Much of the succession lies on the upper inverted limb of the main syncline, as is shown by the graded bedding. The Collieston-Whinnyfold folds may represent the most north-easterly exposed extent of the Tay Nappe, although the structure here seems to have reduced amplitude.

The more-pelitic rocks contain abundant cordierite, and andalusite is present in all but the lower grade north-eastern part of the section.

The site is of crucial importance in terms of regional interpretations of the Dalradian sequence and structure and lends itself to further study as well as providing an excellent teaching section.

BIOLOGY

Birds

Several headlands within this site support large colonies of cliff-nesting seabirds, in particular kittiwake, guillemot, razorbill and fulmar, with smaller numbers of puffin.

Habitats

The coastal slopes have interesting species-rich grasslands and flushes. Possibly due to the local microclimate and relatively fertile soils, these contain several plants which are scarce or rare in north-east Scotland, including carline thistle *Carlina vulgaris*, cowslip *Primula veris* and the most northerly population of sea wormwood *Seriphidium maritimum* in Britain.

NOTIFICATION HISTORY

First notified under the 1949 Act: 1971.

Re-notified, under the 1981 Act: 29 April 1985.

Notification reviewed under the 2004 Act: 13 June 2011.

REMARKS

Measured area of site corrected (from 104.2 ha).

Collieston to Whinnyfold Coast SSSI is part of Buchan Ness to Collieston Special Area of Conservation (SAC), which is designated for the European habitat listed below and is also part of Buchan Ness to Collieston Special Protection Area (SPA), which is designated for the birds listed below.

Habitat: Vegetated sea cliffs
Birds: Breeding seabird assemblage
Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*
Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*
Guillemot *Uria aalge*
Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*
Herring gull *Larus argentatus*