

## CITATION

### FIFE NESS COAST SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST

Fife

Site code: 634

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: NO 625107

OS 1:50,000 SHEET NO: Landranger Series 59  
1:25,000 SHEET NO: Explorer Series 371

AREA: 117.63 hectares

## NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES

**Geological: Stratigraphy: Lower Carboniferous [Dinantian-Namurian (part)]**

**Biological: Coastlands: Saltmarsh**  
**Coastlands: Maritime cliff**

## DESCRIPTION

Fife Ness Coast Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) consists of the most easterly coastal area of mainland Fife, stretching from Cambo Ness in the north to Kilminning Castle in the south.

A key Dinantian (Lower Carboniferous) aged succession occurs here in extensive coastal sections. Calciferous Sandstone Measures, including the lower Anstruther Beds, the Fife Ness Beds, and the Balcomie Beds exhibit important facies changes and sedimentary features of interest. The predominantly molluscan marine and non-marine faunas found at several horizons in the section (Randerston Limestones and Wormstone Marine Bands) are the earliest fossil occurrences in the East Fife sequence. Palynological ('spore') studies carried out here provide additional interest at this important Lower Carboniferous locality.

This is a diverse site containing extensive 'neutral' cliff-slope grassland and blackthorn-whin scrub with small areas of freshwater fen, beach-head saltmarsh, shingle, maritime grassland and coastal heath. The saltmarshes are of a type which is scarce in Britain and show undisturbed transitions to non-tidal fen vegetation. The site supports several vascular plant species which are rare in the area, including saltmarsh rush *Juncus gerardii*, sea arrowgrass *Triglochin maritimum*, sea milkwort *Glaux maritima*, glasswort *Salicornia*, common bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, greater sea spurrey *Spergularia media*, Scots lovage *Ligusticum scoticum* and sea kale *Crambe maritima* which occurs here at its northern limit in Britain.

## NOTIFICATION HISTORY

First notified under the 1949 Act: 1955, 1972 as Randerston Coast Section SSSI  
Re-notified under the 1981 Act: 25 March 1987 with a 74 ha increase in area.  
Notification reviewed under the 2004 Act: 21 February 2011

## REMARKS

Measured area of site corrected (from 116.9 ha).

Part of Fife Ness Coast SSSI is also designated as part of the Firth of Forth special protection area (SPA) for the birds listed below:

Birds: Great crested grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*), non-breeding  
Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*), non-breeding  
Pink-footed goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*), non-breeding  
Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*), non-breeding  
Scaup (*Aythya marila*), non-breeding  
Eider (*Somateria mollissima*), non-breeding  
Long-tailed duck (*Clangula hyemalis*), non-breeding  
Common scoter (*Melanitta nigra*), non-breeding  
Velvet scoter (*Melanitta fusca*), non-breeding  
Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*), non-breeding  
Red-breasted merganser (*Mergus serrator*), non-breeding  
Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*), non-breeding  
Ringed plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*), non-breeding  
Grey plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*), non-breeding  
Knot (*Calidris canutus*), non-breeding  
Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*), non-breeding  
Bar-tailed godwit (*Limosa lapponica*), non-breeding  
Curlew (*Numenius arquata*), non-breeding  
Redshank (*Tringa totanus*), non-breeding  
Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*), non-breeding  
Red-throated diver (*Gavia stellata*), non-breeding  
Slavonian grebe (*Podiceps auritus*), non-breeding  
Golden plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*), non-breeding  
Sandwich tern (*Sterna sandvicensis*), non-breeding  
Wigeon (*Anas penelope*), non-breeding  
Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), non-breeding  
Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*), non-breeding  
Waterfowl assemblage, non-breeding