

CITATION**HASCOSAY
SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST
Shetland Islands**

Site code: 767

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: HU 553923

OS 1:50,000 SHEET NO: Landranger Series 1
1:25,000 SHEET NO: Explorer Series 470

AREA: 164.92 hectares

NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES**Geological: Structural and metamorphic geology: Moine****Biological: Bogs: Blanket bog
Birds: Dunlin (*Calidris alpina schinzii*), breeding****DESCRIPTION:**

Hascosay Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located on a small island, situated in Colgrave Sound between Yell and Fetlar. Hascosay island is no longer inhabited but is still used for grazing.

The island is also of importance for its geological features which contribute to the understanding of the geological evolution of Shetland and of the Caledonian Orogenic belt of Britain and Scandinavia. The island is situated on the boundary between the rocks of Yell to the west and Unst and Fetlar to the north and east. Yell is built of highly metamorphosed and migmatized metasedimentary gneisses (sedimentary rocks that have been highly altered and partially melted by intense heat and pressure) which may represent a basement to the major nappes of Unst and Fetlar. The relations of the Moine-like rocks of Yell to the Dalradian sequences of Unst and Fetlar have been interpreted as a 'slide' which can best be studied on the southern coast of Hascosay, on either side of Ramna Geo/Grey bearded Man.

Hascosay contains some of the finest peatland in Shetland. The extent of gently undulating bryophyte-dominated mire surface is unusual anywhere in Britain. The presence of the bog moss *Sphagnum fuscum* in such conditions adds to the rarity of the community and confirms the relatively undamaged nature of the blanket bog. The low ridge margins to the pools which are composed of bryophytes but without *Sphagnum* are a particular feature of Shetland and the site displays these better than any other example recorded in the islands.

Dunlin (*Calidris alpina schinzii*) breed on Hascosay in very high densities. Although populations of this species on small islands can fluctuate hugely, the dunlin on Hascosay remain at the highest density recorded anywhere in Shetland. Other breeding birds of note recorded on the island are red-throated diver (*Gavia stellata*), Arctic skua (*Stercorarius parasiticus*), great skua (*Stercorarius skua*) and Arctic tern (*Sterna paradisaea*).

NOTIFICATION HISTORY

First notified under the 1981 Act: 25 January 1998

Notification reviewed under the 2004 Act: 17 January 2011

REMARKS

Measured area of site corrected (from 165.2 ha).

Hascosay SSSI is designated as Hascosay Special Area of Conservation (SAC) for the European habitats and species listed below.

Habitats: Blanket Bog
Species: Otter (*Lutra lutra*)