

## CITATION

### VALLA FIELD SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST

Shetland Islands

Site code: 8108

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: HP 585132, HP 585095, HP 585060

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

AREA: 629.20 hectares

## NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES

<b>Geological</b>	<b>Mineralogy</b>	<b>Mineralogy of Scotland</b>
<b>Biological</b>	<b>Birds</b>	<b>Red-throated diver (<i>Gavia stellata</i>), breeding Great skua (<i>Stercorarius skua</i>), breeding</b>

Valla Field SSSI lies in the west of Unst, the most northerly island in Shetland. The site is made up of three discrete parts. The two southerly sections run along the Valla Field ridge and the third is situated on Libbers Hill and Sneuga. The site is mainly heathland and blanket bog, overlying metamorphic rocks (rocks which have been altered by heat and pressure) belonging to the geological unit known as the Valla Field Group. The site is dotted with many small lochans and a few larger lochs.

Outcrops of gneiss (banded crystalline metamorphic rock) on the summit and western slopes of Libbers Hill contain some of the best-developed crystals of the minerals kyanite and staurolite to be found anywhere in Britain. Near the base of the cliffs at Greff, rocks exceptionally rich in iron and magnesium minerals show concentric mineral zoning of two types. These occur either as elongated balls of actinolite (an iron-magnesium aluminosilicate) sheathed in black mica, or as a core of talc with actinolite nodules sheathed in a rock consisting of black mica and talc.

The lochs and lochans throughout the site regularly support nationally important numbers of breeding red-throated diver *Gavia stellata*, representing almost 2% of the British population. Great skua *Stercorarius skua* also breeds in nationally important numbers on the heathland and blanket bog, representing 1.6% of the British population.

## NOTIFICATION HISTORY

Part of site first notified under the 1981 Act: 20 January 1988 as Tonga Greff SSSI.

Valla Field SSSI notified under the 1981 Act: 5 December 2000 and extended under the 2004 Act: 1 May 2012 with a 5.15 ha increase in area.

Valla Field SSSI merged with Tonga Greff SSSI under the 2004 Act: 17 January 2013

## REMARKS

Valla Field SSSI is part of Hermaness, Saxa Vord and Valla Field Special Protection Area (SPA) which is designated for the birds listed below.

- Birds : Seabird assemblage, breeding
- : Red-throated diver (*Gavia stellata*), breeding
- : Fulmar (*Fulmarus glacialis*), breeding
- : Gannet (*Morus bassanus*), breeding
- : Shag (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*), breeding
- : Great skua (*Stercorarius skua*), breeding
- : Guillemot (*Uria aalge*), breeding
- : Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*), breeding
- : Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*), breeding