

CITATION

ORONSAY AND SOUTH COLONSAY SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST

Argyll and Bute

Site code: 9192

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: NR 365899

OS 1:50,000 SHEET NO: Landranger Series 61

1:25,000 SHEET NO: Explorer Series 354

AREA: 2178.36 hectares

NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES

Biological:	Coastlands:	Machair Sand dunes
	Birds:	Chough <i>Pyrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i> , breeding Chough <i>Pyrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i> , non-breeding Corncrake <i>Crex crex</i> , breeding
	Mammals:	Grey seal <i>Halichoerus grypus</i>

DESCRIPTION:

Oronsay and South Colonsay SSSI covers the southern-most part of the island of Colonsay and all of the mainland part of the island of Oronsay, including the intertidal strand area between the two islands.

The site is of national importance for its coastal habitats (machair and dune), chough, corncrake and grey seal.

Machair systems within the site are found at Machrins, Traigh nam Barc, and the southern part of Oronsay. The system at South Oronsay is both nationally and internationally important and that at western Traigh nam Barc (Ardskenish) is of national importance, although the machair section here is small, and is of interest primarily as a component of a wider system.

There are extensive dune systems within the site but those on Oronsay and at Ardskenish are of national importance. The dunes are extensive, well developed, and with good ecological structure (based on geomorphological variation).

The site supports nationally and internationally important numbers of breeding and feeding chough. Between 2001 and 2005 the site supported approximately 1.2% of the GB population of breeding pairs along with around 5.0% of the GB population of roosting and non-breeding feeding birds in autumn and winter. The dune systems on Oronsay, Ardskenish and fringing The Strand are particularly important for these large non-breeding flocks.

The site also supports nationally and internationally important numbers of breeding corncrake. Between 2000 and 2004 the site supported approximately 1.9% of the GB population of breeding corncrake. The early cover provided by iris, nettle and cow parsley is used by corncrake before they move into hay and silage fields to nest.

The skerries and offshore islands to the south-west and south-east of Oronsay support a nationally important colony of breeding grey seal. The number of seal pups recorded over a 21 year period shows this to be consistently one of the 2 largest grey seal colonies on the Inner Hebrides and west mainland coast of Scotland.

NOTIFICATION HISTORY

First notified under the 1949 Act: 1971 as Colonsay and Oronsay SSSI (parts 5 & 8).
Part of the site re-notified under the 1981 Act: 24 November 1983 as Oronsay SSSI.
Renotified and extended under the 2004 Act: 22 January 2007 as Oronsay and South Colonsay SSSI with a 1,849 ha increase in area.
Citation reviewed under the 2004 Act: 24 January 2019

REMARKS

Part of Oronsay and South Colonsay SSSI is designated as Oronsay Special Area of Conservation (SAC) for the European habitat listed below.

Most of Oronsay and South Colonsay SSSI is designated as Oronsay and South Colonsay Special Protection Area (SPA) for the birds listed below:

Habitat:	Machair
Birds:	Chough (<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>), breeding
	Chough (<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>), non-breeding
	Corncrake (<i>Crex crex</i>), breeding