

County: Cornwall

Site Name: Bude Coast

District: North Cornwall

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981, as amended.

Local Planning Authority: North Cornwall District Council

National Grid Reference: SS 200069 **Area:** 92.5 (ha) 228.6 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 190 **1:10,000:** SS 20 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): – **Date of Last Revision:** –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1987 **Date of Last Revision:** –

Other Information:

This is a new site.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

The cliffs between Compass Cove and Furzey Cove immediately adjacent to Bude on the North Cornwall coast exhibit important geological features, and the coastal cliff-top grasslands to the south of Bude Haven support a number of rare and locally restricted plants.

This coastal section provides excellent exposures of the complex fold and fault structures of the Bude Formation, a rock sequence of Upper Carboniferous age which consists of alternations of sandstones, siltstones and shales. These exposures are of a great value in clearly demonstrating the structural character of the central part of the Culm Synclinorium, a region of down-warped strata extending eastwards from this coast to near Exeter which is recognised as a major feature of the geology in South West England. A wide variety of styles of folding and faulting is displayed and the complex relationships between folding and faulting have been studied here in detail. The quality of these exposures has permitted detailed cross-sections through the strata to be constructed, making an important contribution to our understanding of the geology of this region.

The vegetation on the cliff tops south of Bude Haven comprises herb-rich calcareous grassland and coastal scrub. Dominated by red fescue *Festuca rubra* the grassland has abundant low-growing herbs such as ribwort and buck's-horn plantain *Plantago lanceolata* and *P. coronopus* and knapweed *Centaurea nigra* and include several species which are very uncommon in the county such as adder's-tongue *Ophioglossum vulgatum*, dwarf thistle *Cirsium acaule* and autumn gentian *Gentianella amarella*.

The scrub comprises European gorse *Ulex europaeus* and bramble *Rubus fruticosus*. The edges of some of the scrub patches provide a habitat for hoary ragwort *Senecio erucifolius*. Sea cliff plant communities include rock sea-lavender *Limonium binervosum*, a plant of restricted coastal distribution.

Birds breeding on this stretch of coast include raven *Corvus corax*, stonechat *Saxicola torquata*, rock pipit *Anthus spinoletta* and wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*.