

COUNTY: CORNWALL SITE NAME: GERRANS BAY TO CAMELS COVE
DISTRICT: CARRICK

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

Local Planning Authority: CARRICK DISTRICT COUNCIL + CORNWALL COUNTY COUNCIL

National Grid Reference: SX 886370 - Area: 139.5 (ha) 344.7 (ac)
SX 935388
Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 204 1:10,000:

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1951/1973 Date of Last Revision: 1973

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1986 Date of Last Revision:

Other Information:

Previously notified as 2 sites - Camels Cove SSSI (1951) and Gerrans Bay to Nare Head SSSI (1973). Within Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Heritage Coast. Part owned by National Trust. Boundary amended by extension and deletion.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

The site stretches for 10 kilometres along the east side of the Roseland Peninsula on the South Cornwall coast between Creek Stephen Point in Gerrans Bay to Manare Point on the east side of Camels Cove. This section of coastline is particularly important for its rich and diverse plant and bird life together with features of geological and geomorphological interest.

The shore section exposes a complex geological sequence through Silurian Rocks with a series of good strike exposures. The main promontories are composed of diabase, whilst much of the underlying rock is of Lower Devonian Grampound Grit and basal conglomerate, with local lenticles of Silurian Limestone, calcareous slate and outcrops of gabbro. Pendover contains an excellent example of the Quaternary Succession on the south coast of Cornwall. Two distinct shore platforms are overlain by raised-beach and head deposits and the fine sections display interesting lateral facies variability in the sediments. This recently-described site provides considerable opportunity for further investigation to elucidate the Quaternary history and geomorphology of SW England. There are exposures of 'submerged forest' offshore from Pendover Beach.

The dissected coastline, which results from the complexity of the geology, gives rise to a wide range of intertidal habitats with a rich and varied flora and fauna.

The coastal vegetation ranges from dune communities behind the beach at Pendover, with three locally rare plant species, Hairy Bird's-foot-Trefoil (Lotus hispidus), Subterranean Clover (Trifolium subterraneum), and Least Soft-brome (Bromus ferronii), to cliff communities with the uncommon Sea Kale (Crambe maritima), Rock Sea Lavender (Limonium binervosum) and Maidenhair Fern (Adiantum capillus-veneris). There are records of the Red Data Book plants Little Robin (Geranium purpureum) and Shore Dock (Rumex rupestris) from the raised beach at Camel's Cove and this is the only Cornish locality for the rare Dotted Sedge (Carex punctata). Other plant communities within the site include cliff-top grassland and scrub with Ivy Broomrape (Orobanche hederaceae) and Oak-Elm woodland (Quercus robur and Ulmus glabra) which merges with patches of wet carr with Willow (Salix cinerea) and Common Reed (Phragmites australis).

Nare Head is nationally important for its lichens, with 180 species recorded, including 13 national rarities. The bryophytes include 10 rare species.

The site supports a wide range of coastal breeding birds including Stonechat (Saxicola torquata), Raven (Corvus corax) and Rock Pipit (Anthus spinoletta) and has an important seabird colony on Gull Rock. This, Cornwall's largest south coast colony, has nearly 100 Guillemots (Uria aalge), 300 pairs of Kittiwakes (Rissa tridactyla), and nearly 200 nests of Shags (Phalacrocorax aristotelis). Six other seabird species, including Cormorant (Phalacrocorax carbo) and Razorbill (Alca torda) are known to breed here.