

EC Directive 92/43 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora

Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Name:	Isles of Scilly Complex
Unitary Authority/County:	Isles of Scilly
SAC status:	Designated on 1 April 2005
Grid reference:	SV883111
SAC EU code:	UK0013694
Area (ha):	26850.95
Component SSSI:	Annet SSSI, Pentle Bay, Merrick and Round Islands SSSI, Samson SSSI, St Martin's Sedimentary Shore SSSI, Tean SSSI, Wingletang Down (St Agnes) SSSI

Site description:

The Isles of Scilly archipelago supports extensive areas of undisturbed intertidal and subtidal sandflats which are particularly important for exceptionally rich communities occurring in coarse sediments, including clean sand, a substrate that is usually poor in species. Although sheltered, the sediments include little mud because the surrounding seas have a low suspended sediment concentration, resulting from the islands' isolation and the presence of oceanic water. The sandflats exposed at low tide between the northern islands are of international marine nature conservation importance, owing to their extent and diversity and the presence of species rarely found elsewhere in the intertidal. The lower shore and subtidal sandflats include extensive and diverse beds of eelgrass *Zostera marina*, with an unusually species-rich associated biota, including various seaweeds and fish and rich sediment communities of anemones, polychaete worms, bivalve molluscs and burrowing echinoderms. Many southern species are present, often in large numbers, including the hermit crab *Cestopagurus timidus* the spiny cockle *Acanthocardia aculeata* and the trumpet anemone *Anthopleura ballii*. There are rich communities present on the tide-swept sandbanks in the narrow channels between the islands and in the deeper, more stable, wave-sheltered sediments. The fauna of these sediments includes tanaid crustaceans, a diversity of polychaete worms, and various echinoderms.

The islands are surrounded by reefs and rocky islets, some only extending into the shallow subtidal, others extending well beyond 50 m depth. The location of the islands, exposed to the full force of the Atlantic, leads to the development of extremely exposed communities on west-facing reefs, whilst on the east-facing coast, more sheltered and silted reefs occur. The south-westerly position of the islands leads to a range of warm-water species being present, including sunset cup-coral *Leptopsammia pruvoti*, pink sea-fans *Eunicella verrucosa*, and Weymouth carpet-coral *Hoplangia durotrix*.

The Isles of Scilly are an important stronghold of the shore dock *Rumex rupestris* at the south-western limit of its UK range. The site also supports grey seals *Halichoerus grypus*.

Qualifying habitats: The site is designated under **article 4(4)** of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following habitats listed in Annex I:

- Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide. (Intertidal mudflats and sandflats)
- Reefs
- Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time. (Subtidal sandbanks)

Qualifying species: The site is designated under **article 4(4)** of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following species listed in Annex II:

- Grey seal *Halichoerus grypus*
- Shore dock *Rumex rupestris*

This citation relates to a site entered in the Register of European Sites for Great Britain.

Register reference number: UK0013694

Date of registration: 14 June 2005

Signed: *Trew Salmon*

On behalf of the Secretary of State for Environment,
Food and Rural Affairs