



Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture

CONFIRMATION OF DESIGNATION OF AN AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST

Douglas Head ASSI

1. The Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture having consulted in accordance with Section 27 of the Wildlife Act 1990 has considered representations received within the prescribed period and has confirmed the area covered by the designation. No changes were made to designation documents following the consultation.
2. The Department continues to be of the opinion that the area of land, outlined on the designation map, is of special interest by reason of its flora, fauna, geological or physiographical features.
3. The Confirmation of Notification consists of this Notice and the attached designation documents (Maps, Citation, Operations requiring DEFA's consent and Views about Management). It has effect immediately and continues in force until rescinded.

Date: 10th February 2023

Signed:

Dr Michelle Haywood MHK,
Member with delegated responsibility for the Environment,
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Annex 1

Citation

NOTIFICATION OF AN AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST

Site name: Douglas Head ASSI

Status: Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) notified under Section 27 of the Wildlife Act 1990.

Area: Isle of Man

Parish: Braddan

Local authority: Braddan and Douglas

Planning Authority: Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture

Ordnance Survey Sheet: 1:50,000 OS Landranger Map No.95 and 1:10,560 Sheet SC37SE

National Grid Reference (centroid): SC 383 746

Area: 34.44ha (= 85.10 acres)

Date notified: 26th September 2022

Date confirmed: 10th February 2023

Date of last revision: N/A

Purpose

Douglas Head is of special interest for its nationally important assemblage of grassland fungi and mosaic of coastal grassland and heath.

Description and reasons for notification:

The ASSI encompasses Douglas Head, a prominent land feature south of Douglas, on the east coast. The steep sided headland rises to 100m. The steeper slopes are dominated by heathland and coastal grassland. The land flattens out at its highest point and this is the main area where the species rich fungi grassland occurs.

Assemblage of grassland fungi

The plateau area of Douglas Head supports an outstanding diversity and abundance of grassland fungi. The waxcap *Hygrocybe s.l.*¹ species diversity is exceptional. Of particular note are the Citrine waxcap *Hygrocybe citrovirens*² and the Dingy waxcap *Neohygrocybe ingrata*², both indicators of grasslands with high species diversity of fungi. Other high diversity indicator species include the orange waxcap *Hygrocybe aurantiosplendens*, fibrous waxcap *Hygrocybe intermedia*, crimson waxcap *Hygrocybe punicea* and splendid waxcap *Hygrocybe splendidissima*. Other species strongly indicative of unimproved grassland include scarlet waxcap *Hygrocybe coccinea*, parrot waxcap *Gliophorus psittacinus*, pale waxcap *Cuphophyllus pratensis var. pallidus*, oily waxcap *Hygrocybe quieta*, honey waxcap *Hygrocybe reidii* and cedarwood waxcap *Hygrocybe russocoriacea*.

In addition club, coral and spindle species (Clavarioid species) were recorded including white spindle *Clavaria fragilis*, smoky spindle *Clavaria fumosa*, meadow coral *Clavulinopsis corniculata*, yellow club *Clavulinopsis helvola* and apricot club *Clavulinopsis luteoalba*. Pinkgills *Entoloma s.l.* species add to the diversity of the assemblage.

Coastal Heathland and grassland

The heathland areas are dominated by heather *Calluna vulgaris* and western gorse *Ulex gallii*. Where the heathland forms a mosaic with the coastal grassland there is greater species richness and species recorded include red fescue *Festuca rubra*, bell-heather *Erica cinerea*, bird's-foot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, sorrel

¹ Sensu lato, meaning 'in a broad sense', used here to indicate that the genus includes taxa previously assigned to it.

Rumex acetosa, sheep's sorrel *Rumex acetosella*, daisy *Bellis perennis*, mouse-ear hawkweed *Pilosella officinarum*, heath bedstraw *Galium saxatile*, pignut *Conopodium majus*, white clover *Trifolium repens*, tormentil *Potentilla erecta*, sweet vernal grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, cat's-ear *Hypochaeris radicata*, sheep's-bit *Jasione montana*, woodsage *Teucrium scorodonia*, harebell *Campanula rotundifolia*, heath dog-violet *Viola canina*, common dog-violet *Viola riviniana*, heath milkwort *Polygala serpyllifolia* and early hair-grass *Aira praecox*.

Feeding birds

Additionally the grassland is used by feeding chough *Pyrhocorax pyrrhocorax** and curlew *Numenius aquaticus**#.

Other information:

² = listed on the global IUCN Red List of Threatened Species

* = species on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife Act 1990

= Isle of Man Red List Bird of Conservation Concern

Annex 2

List of operations requiring consultation with DEFA

The operations listed below may damage the features of interest of **Douglas Head ASSI**. Before any of these operations are undertaken you must notify DEFA in writing, following section 27 of the Wildlife Act.

It is usually possible to carry out some of these operations in certain ways, or at specific times of year, or on certain parts of the ASSI, without damaging the features of interest. If you wish to carry out any of these activities please contact a DEFA Biodiversity Officer who will give you advice and, where appropriate, issue consent. Please help us by using the form sent to you with the notification documents to ask us for consent to carry out these operations.

In certain circumstances it will not be possible to consent these operations, because they would damage the features of interest. Where possible a Biodiversity Officer will suggest alternative ways in which you may proceed, which would enable consent to be issued. To proceed without DEFA's consent may constitute an offence. If consent is withheld, or conditions attached to it, which are not acceptable to you, you will be provided with details of how you may appeal to DEFA or agree arbitration.

Site Name: Douglas Head

Operations likely to damage the special interest of the site

	Type of Operation	Reason
1	Cultivation, including ploughing, rotovating, harrowing and re-seeding.	Grassland and fungi could be destroyed.
2	Grazing, the introduction of grazing and alterations to the grazing regime (including type of stock, intensity or seasonal pattern of grazing).	Features sensitive to over or under grazing, which could lead to changes in community composition.
3	Stock feeding, the introduction of stock feeding and alterations to stock feeding practice.	Could lead to localised nutrient enrichment or poaching which would damage grassland and fungi.
4	Mowing or cutting of vegetation (where already damaging), the introduction of mowing and alterations to the mowing or cutting regime (such as from haymaking to silage).	Grassland and fungi sensitive to cutting or mowing, which could lead to changes in community composition if carried out inappropriately.
5	Application of manure, slurry, silage liquor, fertilisers and lime.	Grassland and fungi sensitive to nutrient enrichment, which could lead to dominance by competitive species.
6	Application of pesticides, including herbicides (weedkillers) whether terrestrial or aquatic, and veterinary products.	Grassland, fungi and associated flora/fauna all sensitive to these, both through direct loss and changes to community composition.
7	Dumping, spreading or discharge of any materials.	Risk of obscuring/smothering grassland, damaging fungi and effects of leachate.
8	Burning and alterations to the pattern or frequency of burning.	Grassland and fungi sensitive to burning, both through direct loss and change to community composition.
9	Release into the site of any wild, feral, captive-bred or domestic animal, plant, seed or micro-organism (including genetically modified organisms).	Could lead to unforeseen interactions with indigenous species and changes in community composition.
10	Killing, injuring, taking or removal of any wild animal (including dead animals or parts thereof), or their	Could lead to unforeseen changes in community composition, for instance if key herbivores,

	eggs and nests, including pest control and disturbing them in their places of shelter.	pollinators or predators affected. Direct damage to sward and fungi could result from some methods.
11	Destruction, displacement, removal or cutting of any plant or plant remains, including tree, shrub, herb, hedge, dead or decaying wood, moss, lichen, fungus, leaf-mould, and turf.	Damage to grassland habitats and constituent species and fungi.
12	Tree and/or woodland management (where already damaging), the introduction of tree and/or woodland management (where applicable) and alterations to tree and/or woodland management (including planting, felling, pruning and tree surgery, thinning coppicing, changes in species composition, removal of fallen timber).	Risk of incidental damage to grassland and fungi, direct loss and changes in community composition due to shading.
13	Draining (including moor- gripping, the use of mole, tile, tunnel or other artificial drains).	Risk of incidental damage and direct loss to grassland and fungi.
14	Alterations to water levels and tables and water utilisation (including irrigation, storage, abstraction from existing water bodies and through boreholes). Also the modification of current drainage practices.	Grassland sward sensitive to changes in hydrology. Direct damage to grassland and fungi in the immediate vicinity.
15	Infilling of ditches, dykes, drains, ponds, pools, marshes or pits.	Direct damage to grassland and fungi.
20	Extraction of minerals including peat, shingle, hard rock, sand, gravel, topsoil, subsoil, lime, limestone pavement, shells and spoil.	Direct loss of grassland and fungi.
21	Destruction, construction, removal, rerouting, or regarding of roads, tracks, walls, fences, hardstands, banks, ditches or other earthworks, including soil and soft rock exposures or the laying, maintenance or removal of pipelines and cables, above or below ground.	Direct loss of or incidental damage to grassland and fungi.
22	Storage of materials.	Risk of obscuring/smothering grassland and fungi, and effects of leachate.
23	Erection of permanent or temporary structures or the undertaking of engineering works, including drilling.	Direct loss of important habitats and fungi.
24a	Modification of natural or man-made features (including cave entrances) and clearance of boulders, large stones, loose rock or scree.	Potential damage to habitat and breeding birds.
25	Removal of geological specimens, including rock samples, minerals and fossils.	Potential damage to habitats.
26	Use of vehicles or crafts	Damage to grassland fungi, for instance from soil compaction or wheel-rutting.
27	Recreational or other activities.	Damage to grassland and fungi, for instance due to excessive trampling.
28a	Game and waterfowl management and hunting practices and alterations to game and waterfowl management and hunting practice.	Direct loss of wildlife interest.
28b	Use of lead shot	Could lead to lead contamination.
29	Modification of existing illuminations or new illuminations.	Detrimental impacts to nocturnal wildlife.

Notes:

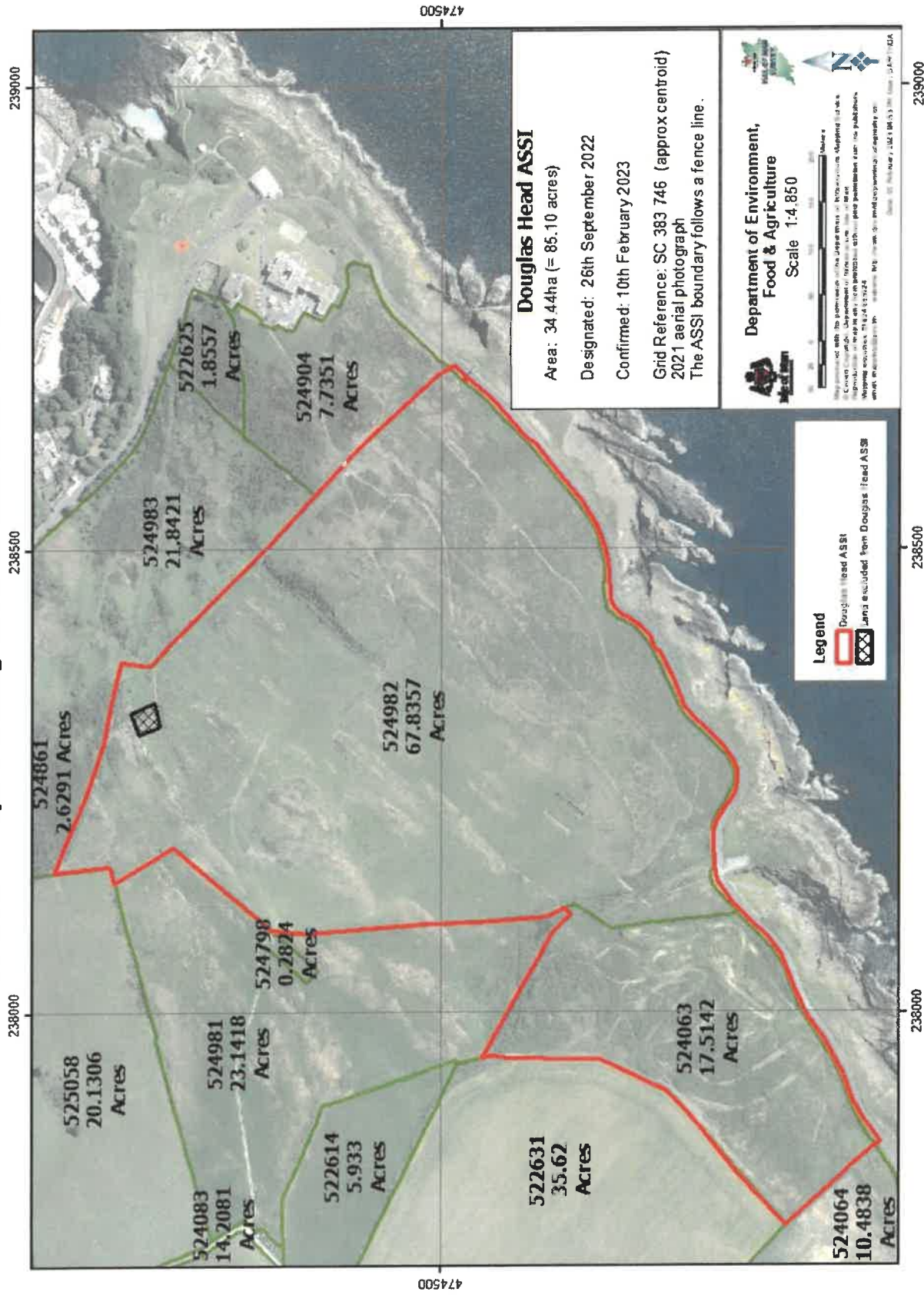
1. This is a list of operations appearing to DEFA to be likely to damage the special features of this ASSI as required under Section 27 of the Wildlife Act 1990. Each type of operation has a standard reference number; for each site, only those operations which are relevant to the site will be listed, hence there may be gaps in the numbering for some sites.
2. Any reference to 'animal' in this list shall be taken to include any mammal, reptile, amphibian, bird, fish or invertebrate.

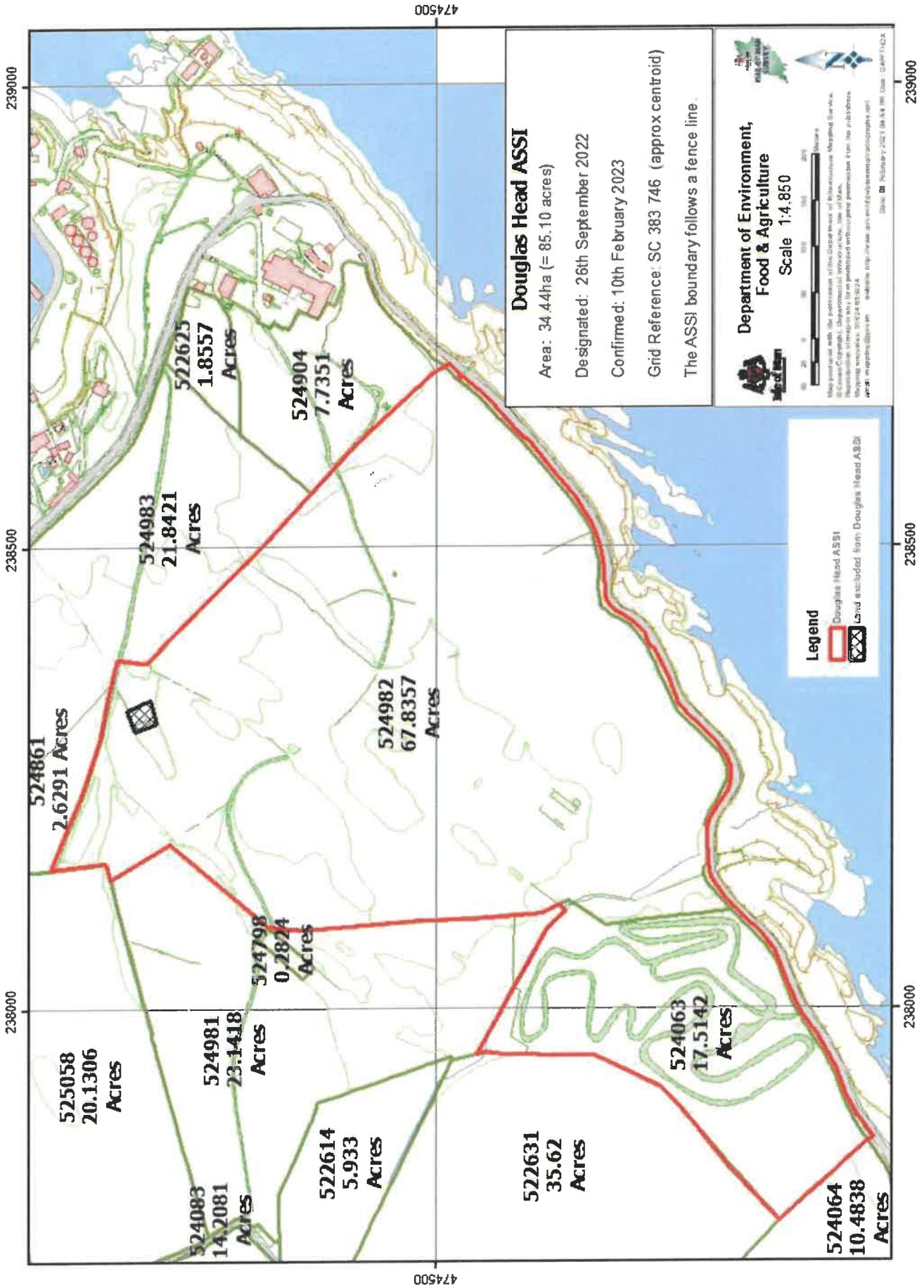
Date notified: 26th September 2022

Date confirmed: 10th February 2023

Date of last revision: N/A

Annex 3 Maps showing the land that is confirmed





Annex 4

Views about Management

This is not a legal document.

A statement of DEFA's views about the management of Douglas Head Area of Special Scientific Interest

This statement represents DEFA's views about the management of the ASSI for nature conservation. This statement sets out in principle, our views on how the areas of special conservation interest can be conserved and enhanced. DEFA does not have a duty to notify the owners and occupiers of ASSI of its views about the management of the land, but DEFA has determined that this would be good practice with ASSI designations.

Not all of the management principles will be equally appropriate to all parts of the ASSI. Also, there may be other activities, additional to our current views, which can be beneficial to the conservation and enhancement of the features of interest.

This statement does not constitute consent for any of the 'operations requiring DEFA's consent'. Written notice to DEFA is still required. DEFA welcomes consultation with owners, occupiers and users of the ASSI to ensure that the management of this site conserves and enhances the features of interest, and to ensure that all necessary prior consents are obtained.

Management principles

Enclosed fungi rich grassland

The grassland should be managed using sympathetic and generally traditional methods. Applications of lime, artificial fertilisers, herbicides and fungicides should be avoided (except in exceptional circumstances and with consent). Grazing with sheep or cattle maintains the grassland and without such management the sward will become progressively dominated by heathland shrubs. The majority of the sward should be no more than 5cm high by the end of August and from September to December grazing should be monitored to ensure the majority of fruiting fungi are not being trampled and destroyed by livestock; if this is the case livestock numbers must be reduced. Supplementary feeding should be avoided, if required it should be provided in an adjacent field (not designated an ASSI) and where this is not possible restricted to one area of the field; nutrient enriched dung caused by supplementary feeding being deposited on the land could lead to a decrease in fungi species diversity. The existing drainage should be maintained as changes in ground water level could change the fungi diversity. The soil structure and fungi hyphae (long filamentous branches of fungi) living within it should be well maintained; soil aeration, mole drainage, ploughing and compaction could all cause damage to the hyphae and should therefore be avoided.

Sedimentation, eutrophication and pollution could all have an impact on the adjacent Marine Nature Reserve and such potential impacts must be taken into consideration in all management decisions.

Enclosed Heathland (including mosaics of coastal heathland and grassland)

Maintain through light sheep or cattle grazing: supplementary feeding should be avoided, if required it should be provided in an adjacent field (not designated an ASSI) and where this is not possible restrict to one area of the field. Applications of lime, artificial fertilisers, herbicides and fungicides should be avoided (except in exceptional circumstances and after consultation). If required, areas of heathland can be cut or burnt on a long cycle (generally longer than 8 years) to maintain the current extent and species diversity of the habitat. Sedimentation, eutrophication and pollution could all impact on the adjacent Marine Nature Reserve and these impacts must be taken into consideration in all management decisions.

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This document can be provided in large print or audio tape on request.



Isle of Man
Government

Reillys Eilan Vannin