

Dalby Coast Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI)

Designation Documents

Please note:

- Notification as an ASSI confers no public right of entry to any land without the permission of the landowner.
- The citations and lists of operations requiring the Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture's consent may be subject to minor editorial changes and should not be assumed to be an exact facsimile of the original legal document.

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**Isle of Man
Government**

Keillys Ellan Vannin

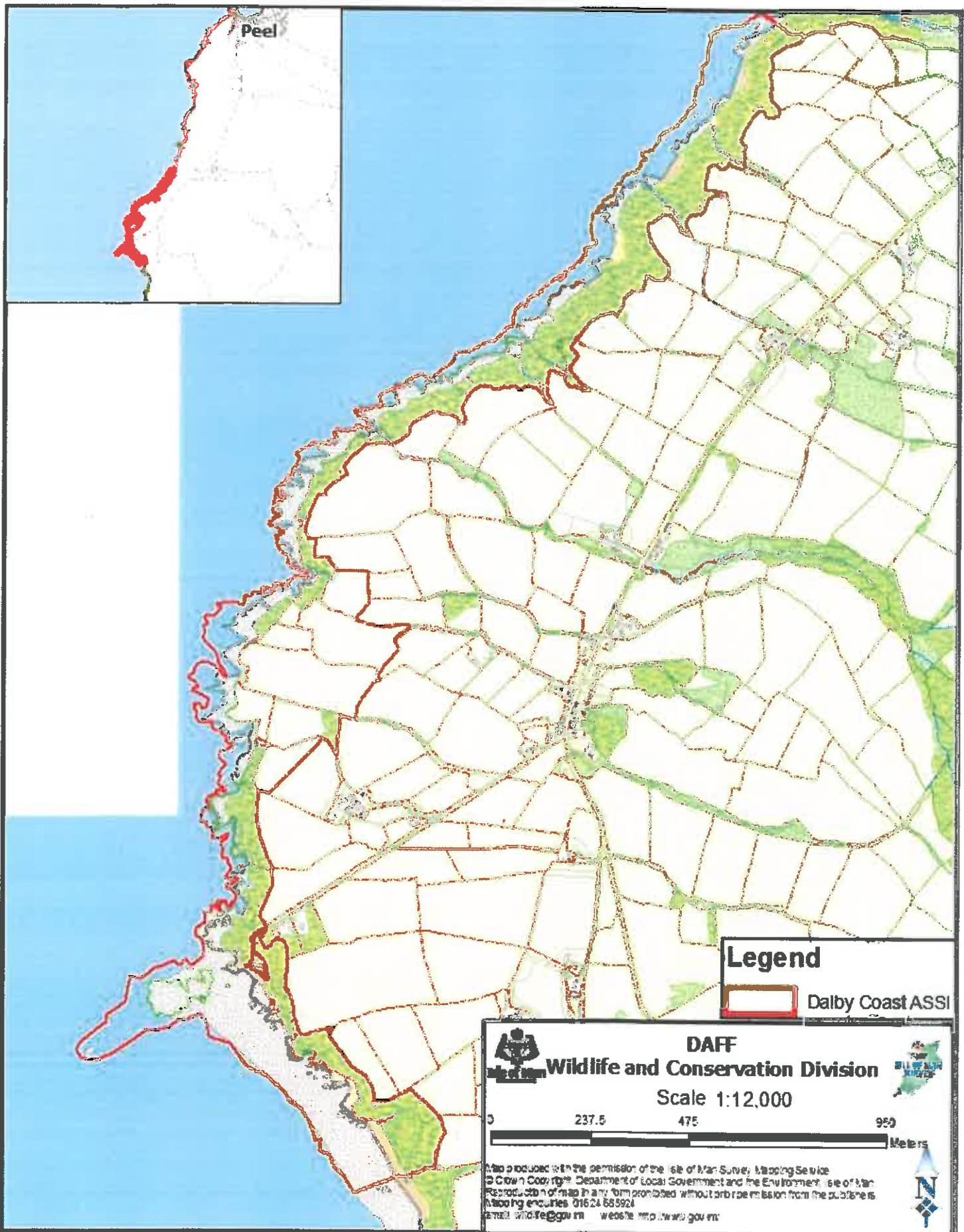
Dalby Coast Area of Special Scientific Interest

Designated: 7th October 2009

Varied and confirmed: 1st March 2010

Area: 62.1 hectares (153.4 acres)

National Grid Reference (centroid): SC 212782



CONFIRMATION OF AN AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST Appendix I

Site name: Dalby Coast

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

Area: Isle of Man

Parish: Patrick

Local authority: Patrick Commissioners

Planning Authority: Department of Local Government and the Environment

Ordnance Survey Sheet: 1:50,000 OS Landranger Map No.95 and 1:10,560 sheets SC27, SC28

National Grid Reference (centroid): SC 212782

Area: 62.1 hectares (153.4 acres)

Date notified: 7th October 2009

Date confirmed: 1st March 2010

Date of last revision: N/A

Purpose

The purpose of this designation is to formalise the protection of an area which is important for its geology, flora and wildlife habitats – species-rich meadow, hard coastal cliffs and slopes, coastal grassland, neutral flush, reedbed, vegetated shingle and intertidal habitats.

Description and reasons for notification:

The Dalby Coast ASSI boundary encompasses an important matrix of coastal habitats, grading from species-rich hay meadow to rocky shore. Of most botanical interest is the thin strip of land that forms at the base of the steep coastal slopes that forms the interface between the steep, sloping maritime grassland and the rocky shore. These areas are characterised by base-rich flushes, with orchids and sedges occurring in abundance. Within this narrow zone, a maritime influence quickly dominates and botanical interest is increased with elements of saltmarsh vegetation dominating the upper shore.

The steep rocky cliffs and coastal broughs that stretch from Glen Maye to an area south of Niarbyl are one of the largest continuous areas of unimproved coastal habitat in the Isle of Man. The coast is generally rocky with gently sloping grassy slopes becoming steep south of Niarbyl with low cliffs in places. A number of small streams and springs flow down to the sea and create botanically-interesting wet flushes. One of the largest stands of reedbed occurs to the south of the site.

The coast at Niarbyl is also an important geological site. Recently recognised sandstones of Silurian age (Dalby Group, Niarbyl Formation) meet Ordovician mudstones and siltstones of the Manx Group (Creggan Mooar Formation) on the beach to the north of the cottages. A major fault line across the beach marks the contact between these rocks from two ancient continents that were once on opposite sides of the world, and the closure of the Iapetus Ocean that once separated them.

This stretch of coast, particularly the area to the north of Niarbyl is little disturbed by man. In 'The Naturalist in Man', Garrad wrote '*Where the farmland runs down to the cliff top a substantial hedge marks the limit of cultivation and prevents the descent of grazing animals. In consequence a narrow band of vegetation remains almost unaffected by farming activities....A more varied wildlife survived (here) because of this unintentional protection and the favourable microclimate produced by the nearness of the sea*'.

In addition to providing valuable nesting habitat for a range of coastal birds such as fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis* raven *Corvus corax* and chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax**, the cliffs support patches of diverse coastal grassland, cliff crevice plants and scrub.

Detached cliff sections which now lie within the intertidal zone have similar characteristics to the main cliffs and slopes. Plants present include abundant thrift *Armeria maritima*, English stonecrop *Sedum anglicum*, sea plantain *Plantago maritima*, sea spleenwort *Asplenium marinum*, sea campion *Silene uniflora*, wild thyme *Thymus polytrichus*, sheep's-bit scabious *Jasione montana*, common bird's-foot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, red fescue *Festuca rubra*, silver hair-grass *Aira caryophylla*, honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum*, cat's ear *Hypochoeris radicata*, bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg., dandelion *Taraxacum* sp., and a good range of plants typical of short, neutral grassland. Small freshwater flushes on the sides of the coastal slopes vary the flora, with species such as brookweed *Samolus valerandi*, yellow-sedge *Carex viridula* and lesser spearwort *Ranunculus flammula*.

The whole site is notable for its diversity of habitats. In particular the wet flushes at the base of the cliffs have a high species diversity. Orchid species include Heath-spotted orchid *Dactylorhiza maculata****, Common spotted orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii***, Northern marsh orchid *Dactylorhiza purpurella**** and there are historic records of O'Kelly's orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* subsp. *okellyi***.

Sedges are particularly well represented across all habitats and highlight the diversity of habitats and species-richness of the site with 15 species identified; Distant sedge *Carex distans*, tawny sedge *Carex hostiana*, yellow sedge *Carex viridula* subsp. *serotina*, long-bracted sedge *Carex extensa*, carnation sedge *Carex panicea*, common sedge *Carex nigra*, sand sedge *Carex arenaria*, false-fox sedge *Carex otrubae*, glaucous sedge *Carex flacca*, star sedge *Carex echinata*, oval sedge *Carex ovalis*, flea sedge *Carex pulicaris*, yellow sedge *Carex viridula* subsp. *oedocarpa*, yellow sedge *Carex viridula* subsp. *viridula* and hairy sedge *Carex hirta*.

Other interesting species recorded recently include black bog rush *Schoenus nigricans*, few-flowered spike rush *Eleocharis quinquefolia*** and saltmarsh flat-sedge *Blysmus rufus***.

The wide-range of semi-natural habitats grading from species-rich meadow to sea-cliff provide excellent breeding and feeding territory for birds, which are sufficient to merit site selection on the grounds of breeding bird diversity alone. Recorded breeding birds that contribute to the scoring of the site for species associated with hard coastline include Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*, Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna**. Eider *Somateria mollissima*, Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*, Ringed plover *Charadrius hiaticula**, Great-black backed gull *Larus marinus*, Rock pipit *Anthus petrosus*, Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*, Raven *Corvus corax* and Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax**.

A total of 32 definite or probable breeding bird species has been recorded since 1998; there are also recent records of a further 44 species of non-confirmed breeding and/or passage or wintering birds, of which 16 are listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife Act 1990.

Viviparous lizards*** have been recorded on the grass banks on the beach road to Niarbyl. It is likely that they occur along the entire coastline of the site.

* = Protected under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife Act 1990

** = Protected under Schedule 7 of the Wildlife Act 1990

***= Protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife Act 1990

Other information:

The designation boundary abuts that of Glen Maye ASSI.

CONFIRMATION OF AN AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST Appendix II

Site Name: Dalby Coast ASSI

Operations likely to damage the special interest of the site

<u>Standard reference number†</u>	<u>Type of operation</u>
1	Cultivation including ploughing, rotovating, harrowing and reseeded
2	Grazing where already damaging, the introduction of grazing and changes in grazing regime (including type of stock or intensity or seasonal pattern of grazing and cessation of grazing).
3	Stock feeding, where already damaging, the introduction of stock feeding and changes in stock feeding practice.
4	Mowing or other methods of cutting where they are already damaging, changes in mowing or cutting regime (including conversion from hay making to silage or cessation of mowing).
5	Application of manure, fertilisers and lime.
6	Application of pesticides, including herbicides (weedkillers).
7	Dumping, spreading or discharge of any materials.
8	Burning, lighting of fires and changes in frequency or pattern of burning, where applicable.
9	The release into the site of any wild, feral or domestic animals *, plant or seed.
10	The killing or removal of any wild animal *, including pest control.
11	The destruction, displacement, removal or cutting of any plant or plant remains, including herb, dead or decaying wood, moss, lichen, fungus, leaf mould or turf.
12	The introduction of tree and /or woodland management and changes in tree and/ or woodland management.
13	Drainage (including moor-gripping, the use of mole, tile, tunnel or other artificial drains).
14	The changing of water levels and tables and water utilisation (including irrigation, storage and abstraction from existing water bodies and through boreholes).
15	Infilling of ditches, dykes, drains, ponds, pools, marshes or pits.
16	Coastal fishing or fisheries management and seafood or marine life collection, where already damaging, the introduction of coastal fishing and changes in coastal fishing practices or fisheries management and seafood or marine life collection, including the use of traps and fish cages.
17	Reclamation of land from sea, estuary or marsh.
18	Bait digging on inter-tidal areas, (if it is shown to be damaging).
19	Erection of sea defences or coastal protection works, including cliff or land-slip

	drainage or stabilisation measures.
20	Extraction of minerals including peat, shingle, sand and gravel, topsoil, subsoil, chalk, lime, limestone pavement, shells and spoil.
21	Construction, removal or destruction of roads, tracks, walls, fences, hardstands, banks, ditches or other earthworks, or the laying, maintenance or removal of pipelines and cables, above or below ground.
22	Storage of materials.
23	Erection of permanent or temporary structures, or the undertaking of engineering works, including drilling.
24	Modification of natural or man-made features (including cave entrances), clearance of boulders, large stones, loose rock or scree and bettering, buttressing or grading rock faces and cuttings, in-filling of pits, and quarries.
25	Removal of geological specimens, including rock samples, minerals and fossils.
26	Use of vehicles or craft likely to damage or disturb features of interest.
27	Recreational or other activities likely to damage features of interest or soil, fauna and flora.
28	Game and waterfowl management and hunting practices, where already damaging, introduction of game or waterfowl management and changes in game or waterfowl management and hunting practices.

† Note: 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.

* "animal" includes any mammal, reptile, amphibian, bird, fish or invertebrate.

1st March 2010