

64. Cemaes Head

Teifi Estuary, Pembrokeshire

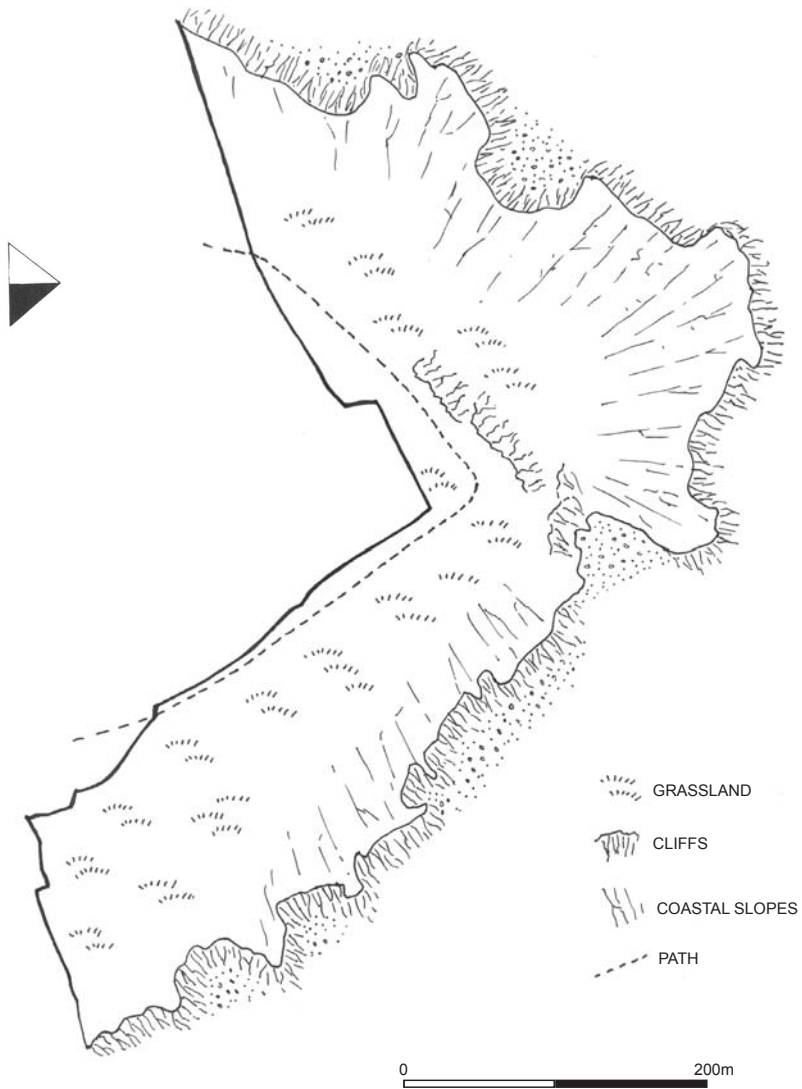
Grid References	O.S. Explorer map 198 Cardigan & New Quay. Main entrances: SN135495 & SN130497, Site centre: SN131500
Status	SSSI.
Tenure	Purchased by the Trust in 1984 with help from the Countryside Commission, Dyfed County Council, NCC and WWF.
Size	20 ha (49.4 acres).
Location and Access Notes	There is a car park at Poppit Sands (SN152484). Take the coastal footpath north west, about 2 km to the reserve boundary. During the summer months there is a car park at SN135493.
Public transport	The Poppit Rocket runs between Cardigan and Newport, passing close to the reserve. www.pembrokeshiregreenways.co.uk for timetables.

Description: Cemaes Head is the most northerly of the many fine headlands on the Pembrokeshire coast and overlooks the broad sweep of the mouth of the Teifi estuary towards the Trust's Cardigan Island Nature Reserve.

A whole range of features are exhibited from the sheltered eastern side to that exposed to the full force of the south westerly Atlantic weather. For the most part the headland comprises steep, at places extremely steep, slopes which eventually give way to cliffs of various heights, though generally no more than 100 m or so. These cliffs are intersected by gullies and at places sea caves and small beaches. The geology of Cemaes Head is mainly Silurian sedimentary rocks of the Devonian series.

There are areas of Pony and Rabbit-grazed maritime grassland on the more exposed western slopes. This grassland is comprised of Red Fescue (5-7) and Thrift (4-10), and has abundant Spring Squill (4-5) and Sea Plantain (6-8). Patches of maritime heath with Heather (Ling) (7-9), Bell Heather (7-9) and Western Gorse (7-9) occur on the highest parts, and Bracken is abundant, especially on the more sheltered eastern slopes where control is necessary. Climbing Corydalis (5-9) is found amongst the Bracken, whilst the seabird cliffs support the large fleshy-leaved variety of Buck's-horn Plantain (5-8).

There are extensive areas of close-cropped sward on the west side of the Head formed through Pony grazing, which is an advantage to the small Chough population, consisting of one breeding pair on the reserve and one other just outside the boundary, although the site is used by many others for foraging. Small numbers of Herring Gulls, Fulmars and Shags breed, together with a colony of Cormorants. Other species of note include Peregrines, Kestrel, Raven, Wheatear, Stonechat and Skylarks, which breed on the reserve. Grey Seals haul out on inaccessible beaches in the winter and breed in the late summer, and are sometimes to be seen swimming offshore, as are schools of Dolphins and Porpoises. Mammals include Rabbits and Bank Voles.



Management Objectives: To control Bracken and enhance the sward structure through Pony grazing, allowing for areas of short sward to encourage feeding Chough, and longer areas for nesting Skylarks. Pony dung provides additional feeding opportunities for Chough.

Good times to visit

Mar to Jul	Coastal breeding birds, carpets of Spring Squill
Jul - Sept	Grey Seals
Dec - Jan	Grey Seals