

74. Skomer Island

St. Bride's Bay, Pembrokeshire

Grid References	O.S. Explorer map OL36 South Pembrokeshire. Site centre: SM725095
Status	SSI, NNR, Special Protection Area, Scheduled Ancient Monument and Geological Conservation Review Site.
Tenure	Leased from CCW.
Size	292 ha (721 acres).
Location and Access Notes	Situated at the southern end of St. Bride's Bay. Access to the island is by boat from Martin's Haven during the summer period, Tuesday - Sunday. Car parking, boat and landing fees apply. Contact the Trust for accommodation details. Dogs are prohibited.
Public transport	Not applicable.

Description: The most important seabird site in southern Britain with maritime grassland, lush inland vegetation, streams and man-made ponds. Rich in historical remains.

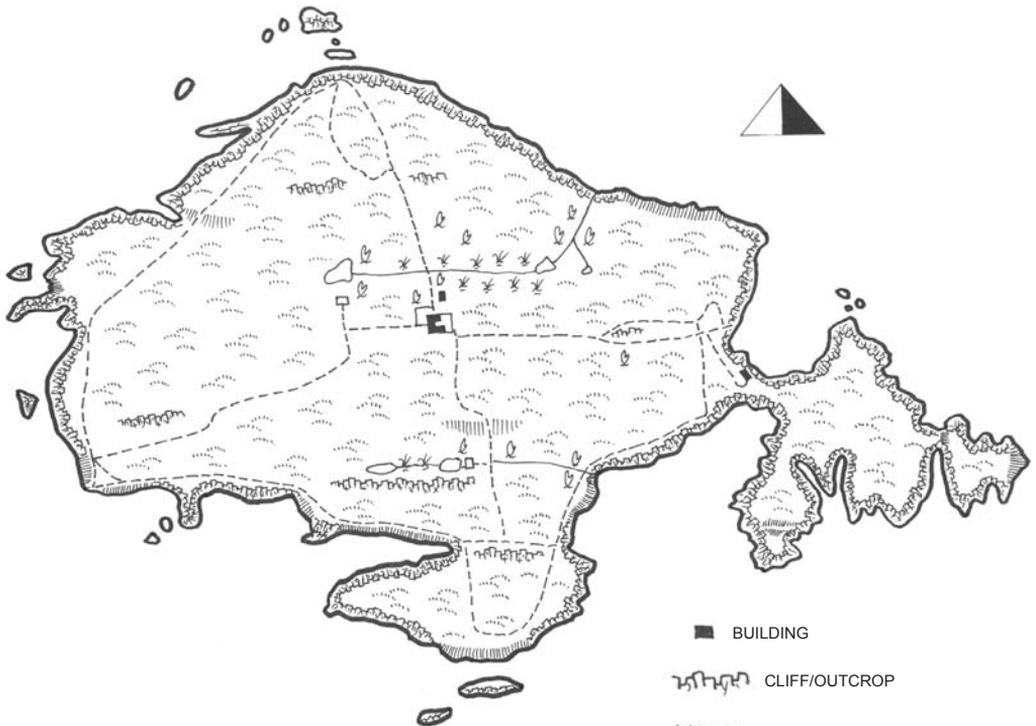
Most of the island is 60 metres above sea level and is intersected by a series of ridges, the highest being near the centre at 75 metres high. At one point the island is nearly bisected, except for a narrow isthmus. Considerable evidence of human occupation in prehistoric times includes early field systems, huts and enclosures. The current farm buildings were erected in 1834 and the island managed as a farm, then passing through four different owners. The buildings were severely damaged by a storm in 1954 and renovation of the outbuildings started in 2005. The island was bought by the Nature Conservancy Council, now CCW, in 1959, with help from the Wildlife Trust.

During May and June the island is carpeted with Bluebells and Red Campion, with Thrift and Sea Campion seen along cliff edges later in the year. Large areas of the island are dominated by Bracken and much of the rest of the island is exposed and plants are therefore limited to salt and wind-tolerant maritime grasses.

The main interest of the island is the seabirds. The colony of Manx Shearwater is possibly the largest in the world, and the Puffin, Storm Petrel, Guillemot and Razorbill colonies present a significant proportion of the total population of these species in Britain as a whole. On the cliffs there are thousands of Kittiwakes, and hundreds of Fulmar, augmented by Herring, Lesser and Great Black-backed Gulls. Apart from the seabirds, breeding species include Short-eared Owl, Curlew, Chough and Peregrine. Other species include Oystercatchers, Mallard, Moorhen, Raven, Buzzard, Kestrel, Little Owl, Meadow Pipits, Skylark, Wheatear, Rock Pipit, Whitethroat and Dunnoek.

The land mammals include a unique island race of Bank Vole, known as the Skomer Vole, as well as Wood Mouse, Rabbit, Common and Pygmy Shrew. The only reptiles on the island are Slow Worm and Common Lizard, and amphibians include Common Toads, Common Frogs and Palmate Newts. Butterflies include Meadow Brown, Grayling, Small Copper and migrants.

Grey Seals haul out onto the rocks at low tide and breed on the beaches and in the caves in autumn and early winter.



Management Objectives: To manage access so that public safety and the important features of the island are protected. To manage the habitats to maintain the current diversity, including control of Bracken, and to monitor important seabird and Seal populations.

Good times to visit

May - Jun	Bluebells and Red Campion
Apr - Jul	Puffins and other seabirds
All year	Grey Seals
Aug - Oct	Grey Seal pups