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.

Description: The most important seabird site in southern Britain with maritime grassland, lusher
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
Dunnock.

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good times to visit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May - Jun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluebells and Red Campion</td>
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<td>Apr - Jul</td>
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<tr>
<td>Puffins and other seabirds</td>
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<tr>
<td>All year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grey Seals</td>
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<td>Aug - Oct</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grey Seal pups</td>
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