

73. Skokholm Island

St Bride's Bay, Pembrokeshire

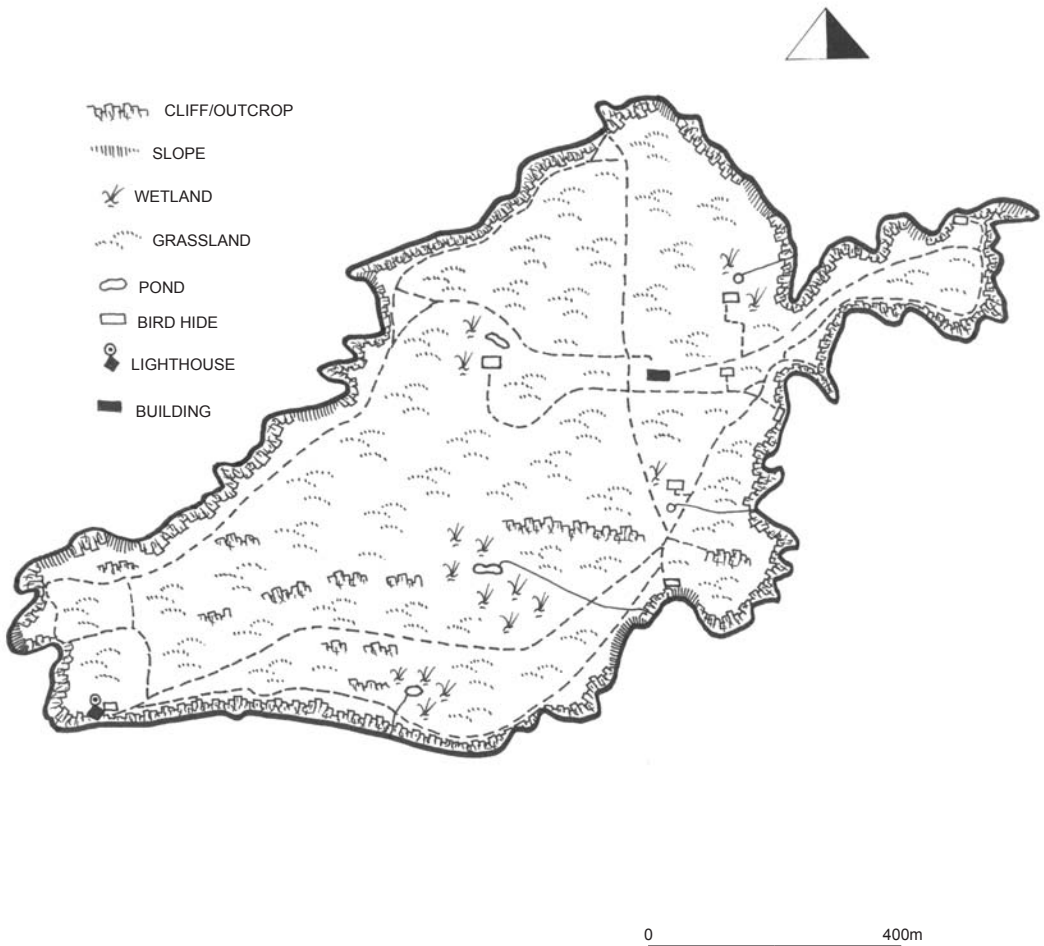
Grid References	O.S. Explorer map OL36 South Pembrokeshire. Site centre: SM735050
Status	SSSI and part of a cSAC and SPA.
Tenure	Leased from the Dale Estate since 1948, and then purchased in 2006 with support from National Heritage Memorial Fund, the Tubney Trust, CCW and a public appeal.
Size	100 ha (260 acres).
Location and Access Notes	The island is south west of the Marloes Peninsula, next to Skomer Island. Access is restricted to residential visitors and occasional Trust-organised day visits during the summer. Contact the Trust at Cilgerran for more details.
Public transport	Not applicable.

Description: The plateau of this island slopes gently from 50 metres to around 20 metres above the cliff tops in the east. It is composed mostly of Old Red Sandstone. The farm buildings forming the current accommodation were probably built early in the 18th century. By the beginning of the 20th century, the island had lain derelict for some time. Ronald Lockley then took a lease in 1927, repaired the buildings and gradually built up the Bird Observatory, which operated until 1976 apart from periods during the war years. In 1916 the lighthouse was built, which is now automatic.

The flora is typical of sub-maritime grassland, grading into heath in places although heavily affected by the resident Rabbit population. The site supports a number of plant species of limited distribution like Three-lobed Water Crowfoot, Tree Mallow and Rock Sea Spurrey as well as Small Nettle, more commonly found in the east. Thrift and Sea Campion occur on the south and west coasts. The wetland areas support Mudweed, Broad-leaved Pondweed, Marsh St. John's Wort and Shoreweed, with Lesser Skullcap and Allseed nearby. Saltmarsh species include Sea Milkwort and Common Sea Purslane. An assemblage of nationally scarce and rare lichens occur including the scheduled Golden Hair lichen *Teloschistes flavicans*.

The island is famed for its Manx Shearwaters and Storm Petrels and also supports strong colonies of Puffin, as well as Razorbills and Guillemots. There is a large colony of Lesser Black-backed Gulls and Herring Gulls and Great Black-backed Gulls are also present. The island is a breeding site for Oystercatchers and Chough as well as Skylark and Wheatear, and is well known for its migrant birds including Chiffchaff, Willow Warblers, Whitethroat, Spotted and Pied Flycatchers and Redstart. Rare birds have included Spoonbill, Hoopoe, Wryneck, Bluethroat, Glossy Ibis, Purple Heron, Golden Oriole and Lapland Bunting.

There are no indigenous mammals, but a large and unusually varied population of Rabbits was introduced by the Normans. House Mice were accidentally introduced in the late 19th century and the only reptile on the island is the Slow Worm. Grey Seals breed and haul out on the foreshore and other marine mammals to be seen include Porpoise and Common Dolphin.



Management Objectives: To maintain the current mosaic of habitats, and manage the spread of Bracken. To monitor important seabird populations.

Good times to visit

Apr - Sept Breeding and migrant birds, with Seals all through the season and Dolphins / other cetaceans later in the summer.