

**CYNGOR CEFN GWLAD CYMRU
COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES**

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

SWANSEA

OXWICH BAY

Dates of Notification: 1958, 1963, 1969, 1972, 1979, 1984

National Grid Reference: SS 506870

O.S. Maps: 1:50,000 Sheet number: 59
1:25,000 Sheet number: SS 48 and SS 58

Site Area: Total area of SSSI is 427.18 ha, of which the NNR comprises 256.63 ha.

Description:

A coastal area of national nature conservation importance sustaining a rich assemblage of plants and animals.

The central part of the bay accommodates sandy shore, calcareous dune, dune slacks, saltmarsh, freshwater marsh, open water, and fen-carr, while partially wooded limestone slopes flank both sides.

Although cliff vegetation is present on other parts of the coast, heath and dense mixed scrub is particularly well represented on the exposed slopes of Oxwich Point, which also bears the regionally rare shrub Juniper *Juniperus communis*, and the nationally rare Purple Gromwell *Lithospermum purpurocaeruleum*. On the Nicholaston side, the sand covered cliffs represent conditions which are scarce in Swansea county and elsewhere.

Oak is dominant in Oxwich Wood and Crawley Wood, with some ash, elm and small-leaved lime. The rare plant species Rock Whitebeam *Sorbus rupicola* and Stinking Hellebore *Helleborus foetidus* occur, while the woods are important components of the overall diversity.

The freshwater marsh, with reedbeds, poor-fen, and fen-carr, is important as a breeding site for *Acrocephalus* warblers, for small overwintering populations of wildfowl, and Odonata. The saltmarsh shows a zonation through middle marsh communities to a transition zone along the edge of the dunes.

Dune slacks host many species of plant and invertebrate. Plant species include the national rarities *Gentianella uliginosa*, Fen Orchid *Liparis loeselii* and Larger Wintergreen *Pyrola rotundifolia*. The rare strandline beetle *Eurynebria complanata* is found at Oxwich.

Remarks:

Comprises part of the more extensive South Gower Coast site of national nature conservation importance, and includes the former Oxwich Point, Oxwich Marsh South, and Nicholaston Burrows SSSI, and Oxwich National Nature Reserve.

Within Gower AONB