

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

CARDIFF

FLAT HOLM

<u>Date of Notification:</u>	1972, 1983, 1993
<u>National Grid Reference:</u>	ST 220649
<u>O.S. Maps:</u>	1:50,000 Sheet number: 171 1:25,000 Sheet number: ST 26
<u>Site Area:</u>	23.75 ha

Description:

Flat Holm is located some 4 km south east of Lavernock Point off the Welsh coast of the Severn Estuary. The site has both biological and earth science interests: rare coastal plant species, coastal plant communities and an important section for the Dinantian of South Wales/South-West England respectively.

The thin cliff-top soils support a maritime sward including red fescue *Festuca rubra*, sea stork's-bill *Erodium maritimum*, thrift *Armeria maritima* and buck's-horn plantain *Plantago coronopus*. The central part of the island is dominated by coarse grassland with extensive areas of coastal scrub and bracken which have arisen since the cessation of agricultural management.

The island is one of the few British stations for the rare wild leek *Allium ampeloprasum* and another plant of restricted distribution in Britain, bird's-foot clover *Trifolium ornithopodioides*, is also found here.

Flat Holm supports a notable breeding colony of lesser black-backed gulls and to a lesser extent herring gulls. Numbers reached a peak in 1976 when there were 4,000 pairs of each species. Since then numbers have fluctuated around 1,500 pairs in total. More than 100 pairs of Shelduck also breed on the island.

The south western shoreline (from North West Point to Lighthouse Point) shows good sections of the Carboniferous Limestone, including the Gully Oolite (Chadian), Clifton Down/Casewell Bay Mudstone, Flat Holm Limestone Member (Arundian) and Birnbeck Limestone. The type section of the Flat Holm Limestone Member records the Arundian transgression, with a unique series of oolitic and bioclastic limestones interbedded with restricted lagoonal dolomites.

Remarks:

The island is a Local Nature Reserve, declared in 1975.

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