

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

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

FLINTSHIRE/DENBIGHSHIRE

**GRONANT DUNES AND
TALACRE WARREN**

Date of Notification: 1971, 1983, 1998

National Grid Reference: SJ 100847

O.S. Maps: 1:50,000 Sheet Number: 116
1:10,000 Sheet Number: SJ08 NE/SE, SJ18 NW/SW

Site Area: 518.8 ha

Description:

Gronant Dunes and Talacre Warren SSSI is located between Prestatyn and Talacre on the North Wales coast, and is of special interest for botanical, entomological and ornithological reasons. These dunes, in combination with other associated coastal habitats, represent the only significant remnant of what was once an extensive dune system along the north coast of Wales.

The site is effectively divided into two dune systems by the Prestatyn Gutter, with Gronant Dunes to the west and Talacre Dunes to the east. Gronant Dunes consist of a single dune ridge to the west dividing into a series of ridges to the east, between which are areas subject to tidal inundation. Offshore bars and shingle banks occur along the seaward margin. Talacre Warren consists essentially of two dune ridges between which are a series of dune slacks, and behind which are fixed dune grassland and scrub.

The dunes support a characteristic flora dominated by marram grass *Ammophila arenaria* with sand couch grass *Elytrigia juncea* and lyme grass *Leymus arenarius*. Other species include sea holly *Eryngium maritimum*, sea sandwort *Honkenya peploides* and pyramidal orchid *Anacamptis pyramidalis*. The nationally scarce dune fescue *Vulpia fasciculata*, Portland spurge *Euphorbia portlandica* and white horehound *Marrubium vulgare* are also present. The dune slacks support a rich flora which includes early marsh orchid *Dactylorhiza incarnata*, northern marsh orchid *Dactylorhiza purpurella*, southern marsh orchid *Dactylorhiza praetermissa*, and the nationally scarce seaside centaury *Centaureum littorale*. The rare liverwort *Petalophyllum ralfsii* also occurs in the dune slacks. Other coastal habitats present on the site include freshwater and brackish marshes, dominated by common reed *Phragmites australis* and sea club-rush *Bolboschoenus maritimus* respectively.

The site supports a rich invertebrate assemblage which comprises many nationally scarce species and five Red Data Book species, of which the most important are the sandhill rustic moth *Luperina nickerlii gueneei*, the sand wasp *Podalonia affinis* and the mining bee *Colletes cunicularius*. One of the shingle spits supports nationally important numbers, and the largest breeding colony in Wales, of the little tern *Sterna albifrons*. Other bird species which occur in nationally important numbers are sanderling *Calidris alba* which overwinter at Gronant,

and cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* which roost on the foreshore in summer. Of additional interest are the high tide wader roost and winter gull roost at Gronant. The foreshore in summer is also an important roosting and loafing area for terns on passage.

Remarks:

The liverwort *Petallophyllum ralfsii* is listed on Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Annex II of the EC Habitats and Species Directive (92/43/EEC).

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