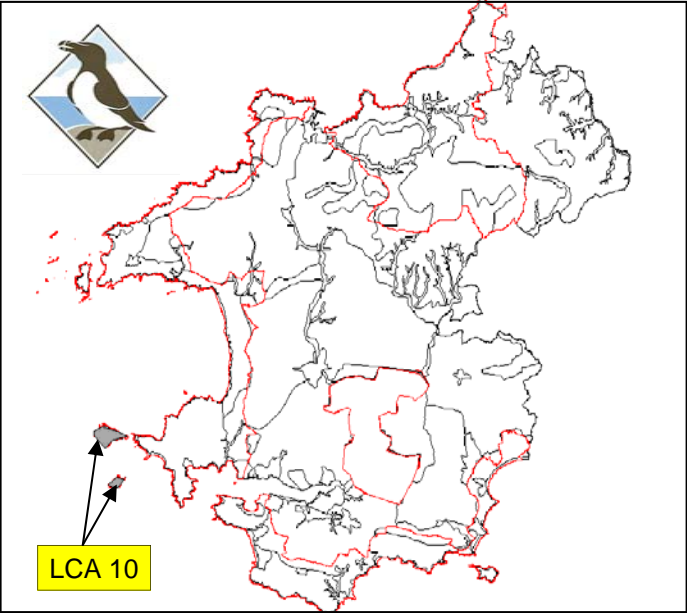


Pembrokeshire Coast National Park  
LCA 10 - SKOMER & SKOKHOLM



Location, Context and Physical Characteristics

Skomer and Skokholm lie a short distance off the mainland coast west of Marloes. These two islands rise to 79m and 40m AOD, respectively. They are separated by Broad Sound and the waters surrounding Skomer and Marloes Peninsula are designated as a Marine Nature Reserve (MNR).

Visual and Sensory Characteristics

Skomer and Skokholm are very attractive islands on the west Pembrokeshire coast. These are rich in natural vegetation with coastal grassland and scrub developed particularly well due to low levels of agricultural management in the recent history of the islands. Being of a particularly unspoilt nature adds to the scenic value of the area set within the seascape of which it offers panoramic views.

Vegetation and Habitat Characteristics

Both Islands are dominated by their dramatic sea cliffs and rocky shores and inland plateaus. Vegetation is very heavily influenced by exposure to wind and salt and is dominated by sea cliff grassland with small areas of heath. The interior plateaus where soils are deeper and a little more sheltered from salt spray are dominated by extensive areas of bracken. On both islands in the spring there are sheets of bluebells and red campion and these give way to thrift and sea campion on the cliffs and coastal slopes.

The Islands are important for a number of species including Manx shearwater, storm petrel, auks, peregrine falcon, grey seal, chough and rare species of lichen.

The marine environment, both subtidal and intertidal is extremely rich in habitats and species, some of which reach their northern-most limits; some their southern-most limits of their UK distribution in the Skomer MNR.

Geological Characteristics

Planned surface of Skomer Island, averaging at around 50-60 m but rising locally to just under 80m AOD. Surface crags are typical. Includes The Neck, a smaller island to the east and linked by a narrow ridge. Rocky coast of Skomer Island mainly has cliffs with virtually no foreshore, excepting a small beach in the Haven area. Dominated by Silurian volcanic rocks. Flat-surfaced Skokholm Island, at around 40-45m, has steep cliffs and narrow rocky foreshore areas. Composed of late Silurian or early Devonian siltstones and sandstones of the Old Red Sandstone.

Historic and Cultural Characteristics

Prehistoric field system and settlements, Iron Age fort and standing stones are all of national significance. The offshore islands of the Pembrokeshire coast are of international importance for their spectacular natural heritage, diversity of habitats and species, and archaeological evidence. Skomer, in particular, has an extremely good survival of a prehistoric field system with dwellings, fields and water management features. Skomer Island is a Registered Landscape of Outstanding Historical Importance in Wales. The Trinity House Lighthouse on Skokholm adds to sense of place.



Evaluation & Recommendations

LCA No.	Character Area	Visual & Sensory Aspect Areas	Geological Landscape Aspect Areas	Landscape Habitats Aspect Areas	Historic Landscape Aspect Areas	Cultural Landscape Aspect Areas
10	Skomer & Skokholm	94 - Outstanding	133-Outstanding 134-Outstanding 135 Moderate	281- Outstanding 478- Outstanding 931- Outstanding	42284-Outstanding 42285-Outstanding	859-Outstanding 860-Outstanding

LANDMAP Aspect Evaluation Terms:  
Outstanding: Of International or National Importance  
High: Of Regional or County Importance  
Moderate: Of Local Importance  
Low: Of Little or No Importance

(The reference numbers in the table refer to the discrete Aspect Areas identified )

Special Qualities (Key Landscape Characteristics)

- These islands are highly attractive coastal wilderness areas, virtually undisturbed and rich in wildlife
- There are extensive sea views and, although visible from much of the local mainland, they remain out of site from the main embarkation landing at Martin’s Haven, which adds a sense of mystery and heightens the arousal of curiosity and the desire to travel out to explore them
- Evidence of old stone walls gives an indication of the islands’ culture and history of human occupation, a landscape of outstanding historical and cultural value. Skomer can be regarded as being worthy of international value in view of the quality of its archaeological sites
- Skomer Island is a Registered Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales, significant in that it shows human activity in a closed microcosm, with extensive, well-preserved,, relict remains of prehistoric settlements, field systems and recent farming activity
- The offshore islands of the Pembrokeshire coast are of international importance for their spectacular natural heritage, diversity of habitats and species, and archaeological evidence. Skomer and Skokholm have long been recognised as such, with their status as bird sanctuaries and the designation of Skomer Marine Nature Reserve. Both Skomer and Skokholm are SSSI sites and are National Nature Reserves. They are of international importance with European designations as SPAs. The waters surrounding both Skomer and Skokholm lie within the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC.
- Uniquely, these islands have a preponderance of outstanding values recorded across all five evaluated landscape Aspects.

Discernible Landscape Trends

- The islands are under an appropriate low level of maintenance as wilderness areas, and the trend appears to be constant
- There is aerial photographic evidence of the spread of bracken adversely affecting the visibility and integrity of archaeological remains on Skomer over the past 10 years.

Management Guidance

- Continue the management of the area as a wildlife reserve, in line with wider legislative policy and in order to preserve the attractive naturalistic landscape features of coastal grassland
- Preserve the unspoilt island character of the LCA through avoiding inappropriate development or land use.
- Maintain historic farm buildings and other elements of the agricultural landscape, especially field boudaries
- Manage the land so as to conserve the complex and important prehistoric remains
- Monitor the spread of bracken and implement appropriate control measures if the bracken growth is confirmed as adversely affecting archaeological features
- Monitor seabird numbers
- Monitor the environmental impact of visitors in relation to the conservation of coastal heathland and grassland habitats and their associated fauna.
- Ensure that as far as possible ancient monuments and remains are not lost or damaged.