

# Heathland Education Pack

# Teachers' guide



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## Preface

*Thinking globally and acting locally is an adage that can find resonance within the heathlands of Britain - they are in fact more endangered than rainforests. Yet the apparent lack of interest of many individuals, young and old alike, may need an education that is real and memorable requiring an engagement towards both global and local environmental issues and involvement with the natural world that is hands-on and real.*

*Natural History as a topic does not sit easily in the national curriculum and, even if it did so, young people would not need a lecture or a text book explaining 'this is what you can see if' or 'this is what happens when' but that begins on the inside of individuals and works outwards with 'what can you see?' By starting small and getting big this poverty of experience may grow into a caring experience with nature. The ever-increasing popularity of 'Forest Schools' is an indication of this growing approach to learning. Here on the Isles of Scilly, the Doiley Woods outdoor classroom is a further reflection of this style of learning. We therefore make no apologies for the 'touchy feelyness' of the pack as our philosophy is one grounded in the notion that learning should be fun, participatory, risky and challenging.*

*Children visiting the Isles of Scilly are fortunate to find that there are many natural places where they can gain a genuine hands-on experience of nature. It will not however be natural to many of those children who, as recent research shows, have a 'radius of activity' from the home base that is reducing rapidly in direct proportion to the increasing anxiety of parents to let their children roam free. There is a need therefore to recreate within children at least some glimmer of appreciation for nature that can translate itself thousands of miles to the Amazon rainforest or to heathlands of our local community.*

*This pack therefore aims to give children and adults an opportunity through the various activities to appraise and energize their appreciation and involvement in the changing nature of their environment. The activities are designed to create a link that can reconnect children with nature.*

Kevin Leeman and Julie Love - 2008

## Hints for the teacher

### Aims

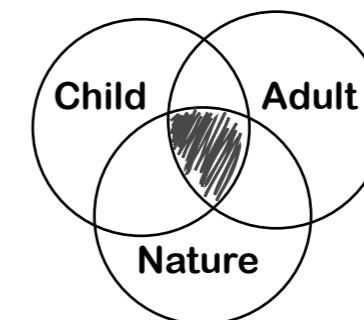
While the pack hopes to provide structured activities that have focus and purpose, the overriding aim has to be to allow children to find spontaneous inner connections that may arise from just being. This will undoubtedly have educational merits and also help in the improvement of the psychological well being of our children. The activities will allow children to enjoy themselves, stay safe, and become healthier at a variety of different levels across many spheres of holistic well being. The Department for Education and Skills - 'Learning Outside the Classroom' says that such activities can:-

- Develop skills and independence in a range of environments
- Make learning more enjoyable and relevant
- Develop active citizens and stewards of the environment
- Nurture creativity
- Provide opportunities for informal learning through play
- Develop the ability to deal with uncertainty
- Provide challenge
- Improve young people's attitudes towards learning

The activities will also provide support for many different areas of the curriculum yet we have avoided the temptation to block them into sections according to subject headings as a teacher's own creativity and professionalism can identify links, and also because the natural world is not split into arbitrary man-made compartments. Choose whichever pathway you like using the activity guide as they are all part of the child's experience. What is done with that experience will depend on the individual child's skills and interests, as well as the teachers willingness to allow spontaneous responses.

### Share more

Try not to get hung up on dry text book explanations or knowing names; they are just labels for what they are. If we are trying to get children to reconnect with nature, then as a facilitator/teacher try and lead by sharing your own experience or feelings when out on the heathlands. If we can personalise their relationship with the environment then there is a chance that people might care about the environment and maybe take steps to protect it, which is one of the aims of natural history education. If you as the adult can model and communicate an awe and respect for the natural world, not only will it encourage the child to tap into their own feelings but also create a mutual dialogue with a shared connection.



## Be Open

As the activities progress, ensure that what the children share with you is met with an open receptivity that encourages and stimulates further enquiry. It is as if the teacher, too, becomes excited by and curious about the findings, almost childlike. Make every quotation, every comment and every gleeful exclamation an opportunity to communicate that energy and respect. Let them feel that their findings are interesting to you too.

Remember that at every moment nature will be moving around you, so be alert to change and any exciting or interesting events that may occur minute by minute. Try to get the atmosphere of the outing right from the start. Involve everyone with questions or point out interesting sights and sounds.

We hope this education pack will give you ideas and inspiration to use Scilly's wonderful natural environment as an outdoor classroom. Be open to what is going on in the natural environment and a number of teaching objectives may be met during a single outing.

## Teachers' Notes

### The Wildlife Trusts

The Wildlife Trusts cover the whole of the UK and this partnership stretches from Scotland all the way down to the island of Alderney and includes Wales, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man. There are currently 47 local Wildlife Trusts whose vision is 'for an environment rich in wildlife for everyone'. The local Wildlife Trusts are supported by The Wildlife Trusts' office in Newark.

### Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust

Staff are available to assist you with your visit to Trust land and can help with risk assessments, identify the best site for your activity and give advice about grazing livestock.

The Trust manages around 60% of the landmass of Scilly; this includes most of the coastline, down to the lowest tide level and all of the uninhabited islands. It also includes Higher and Lower Moors nature trails.

It is important to contact the Trust before a visit or get permission from the tenant for your activity - for further information please see page 20.

### Health & Safety

When planning a visit it is important to carry out a preliminary visit to complete a risk assessment. School and local authority safety policies should be consulted and teachers should familiarise themselves with Health & Safety Executive Guidelines about farms. Another useful source of information can be found on the FACE website [www.face-online.org.uk](http://www.face-online.org.uk).

Always think about what could go wrong during an outside visit, how likely it is to happen, how it can be avoided and how much harm would be caused. It is very important to write down this risk assessment and let other adults in your group see it.

It is also good to involve children in deciding on the hazards of an activity that you are running and how to avoid them, this will give the children some ownership of guidelines and warnings that you may give. Children also love acting out scenarios and this can help things to run smoothly if an accident does happen.

### First Aid

Under Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981, it is a legal requirement to have an 'appointed person' whose main duty is to take charge of a situation if there is a serious injury or illness, take responsibility for the first-aid kit and make sure that someone calls the emergency services.

### Beaches

Please note that Scilly's beaches do not have a lifeguard service in operation.



## What to wear

Most children love being outdoors in any weather. Whilst you may restrict outdoor trips to only the best of weather, so long as children have proper outdoor clothing and a change of clothes to hand, they gain just as much from wet and windy days as sunny and dry days. The outdoors is a classroom and playground and it is important to teach children how to treat their natural environment with respect, safely.

Always ensure that your group is properly dressed for the outdoors. This includes appropriate footwear and warm clothes in the winter. A hat and waterproofs not only to keep out the wet but also the wind, which can cause people to get cold. In the summer, sunhats are advised and children should cover up as well as applying high factor sunscreen.

## Emergency numbers

In an emergency call 999 for emergency services and ask for the coastguard. Not all mobile phone networks work on the islands and there are areas where you cannot get a signal. You should be aware of where the nearest landline may be.

## Mobile phones

The best coverage is Vodafone and O2. Orange has limited coverage on the islands. There are spots on all the islands where a mobile phone signal is unavailable. Make a note of the nearest buildings where there may be a landline and ensure that your phone battery is fully charged.

## Diseases and nasty plants

Diseases can be picked up anywhere but some can be linked to the countryside. It is important that good hygiene is maintained and that everyone washes their hands properly before eating or drinking and encourage children not to touch their faces or bite nails. Explain that their hands may look clean but germs cannot be seen and washing hands thoroughly gets rid of them. As a leader do not rush hand washing and allow plenty of time.

*Leptospirosis (Weils' disease)* – spread by contact with infected animal urine. Many different animals can be affected including rats, cattle and dogs.

*Lyme disease* – this infection is spread by ticks, check the area that you are visiting by asking site managers and take appropriate precautions such as wearing long trousers, long socks and long sleeves.

*Tetanus* – tetanus spores lurk in dirt; ensure that everyone is up to date with their vaccinations.

*E Coli O157* – can be found in all animals and birds, it can survive for long periods outside an animal or bird so you can pick up the bug from touching animals, soil and poo.

*Toxocara* – a roundworm found in cat and dog poo. The eggs can remain dormant for up to 2 years.

Many plants can be poisonous or cause skin irritation. Do not allow children to eat plants unless you have specialist knowledge and if you are unsure about what plants cause irritation, seek advice. Some activities in this pack encourage children to take caterpillar bite pieces of plants; these can be changed to observation if required.

Some umbellifer plants can cause skin irritation. This is mainly by contact with sap but in Scilly hogweed is best avoided. When you brush against it and the skin is exposed to sunlight it causes burns, these can be quite severe. Advise children not to touch and wear long trousers and long sleeves. If you know that the plant has been touched, then washing with water helps dilute the strength of the plant's chemicals on the skin.

Even small children, if taught, can learn which plants to avoid; do this in a fun way, the environment is there to explore not to be avoided or scared of. Teach and encourage basic hygiene.

## Insurance

Check that your insurance covers your group outing and the activities that you are doing. If it does not, please contact the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust for advice or if on the mainland the site manager.

## Keeping the group together

Whilst children need space to explore, you do not want to lose anyone and it is important to keep them within sight and know where they are at all times. Tell the children to always be in sight of a leader and you may want to introduce a buddy system where they go around in pairs.

To help you keep sight of them you can get them to wear bright badges or hats. Throughout your outing throw in random games that get the group together again. A good activity for this is 'frog legs' and every time you shout 'frog legs' get the children form a circle and bend their legs like a frog with their knees touching the person next to them. You can then ensure that everyone is present and stop the group from spreading out too far.

## Livestock & electric fencing

Livestock graze on some Wildlife Trust sites and it is best not to carry out activities in these areas, as the animals will be very inquisitive about a group of people and may crowd around you. This may scare children and the animals will cause a nuisance. These animals are not pets and whilst they may appear friendly, they may not take kindly to being touched and could bite or kick in return; please encourage children not to touch.

Animals grazing Wildlife Trust land are usually kept behind electric fencing. It is advisable not to touch the fence wire as you may get a shock. An electric fence works by a pulse of electricity being sent through the wire and if anything touches the wire and the ground, electricity will pass through it. That is why you will get a shock but birds do not as they are not touching the ground. This electricity is not a danger to health but is unpleasant. You may hear the fence clicking; this is the pulse of electricity, with the fence grounding on something and is not a cause for concern.

Access through an electric fence is either by stile or an electric gate with plastic insulated handles, allowing you to open the gate and not get a shock. Warning signs and grazing signs giving advice are located on the fence.

*Remember to wash hands thoroughly after outside activities.*



## Top Tips for walking through livestock

*Do not feed or touch cattle or ponies* – they are not pets! – feeding and touching will encourage animals to come up to people and this can lead to problems.

If you stop and look at the ponies and cattle and open bags close to them, they may think you are going to feed them – better to do this out of view or from the other side of the fence. It is best not to have a picnic in these areas.

*Make sure that the animals know you are there* - if you are coming up from behind the animals and they haven't noticed you, calmly whistle or talk to them to let them know that you are there.

*If cattle or ponies are blocking your way* - clap your hands firmly and they should move out of your way. If necessary leave the path and go around the animals.

*Do not run!* – The animals may think that this is a wonderful idea and may decide to join you – cattle and ponies are more likely to ignore you if you walk quietly past them or away from them, even if you have startled them.

*The animals may feel excited or threatened by large groups of people.* Try to keep the group quiet when passing close to animals.

*Avoid getting between the cows and their calves* - do not try to pet young animals no matter how cute and cuddly they look; the mother may disapprove and feel threatened.

*Keep small children close to you* - children may unintentionally startle an animal.

*Do not leave bags or pushchairs unattended* - animals are naturally inquisitive and may rummage in a bag or pushchair. This may cause injury to an animal or scare a child. There is also a risk that an unattended pushchair is knocked over.

*Keep dogs under control* - Dogs do not need to be on a lead if properly controlled but please do not allow your dog to chase livestock. This causes distress to livestock and may result in injuries. If you and your dog receive unwanted attention from the animals it is best to let your dog run away and re-join you further on, the animals will be more interested in your dog than you.

## Please follow the Countryside Code:

- Be safe – plan ahead and follow any signs.
- Leave gates and property as you find them.
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home.
- Keep dogs under close control.
- Consider other people.



## Plants

In Great Britain it is illegal to dig up wild plants or to pick some wild flower species. In general it is acceptable to allow children to pick safe, common weeds. Some plants are toxic and others can irritate the skin or cause dermatitis. Children should never be encouraged to pick mushrooms or toadstools.

You should teach children to:

- Avoid touching their face especially the eyes.
- Never to taste a plant unless it is certain that it is safe to do so.
- Wash hands thoroughly after outside activities.

## Using live and preserved plant and animal specimens

Anyone involved in delivering environmental education and raising public awareness of conservation issues will find times when it may be appropriate to use live or preserved animal and plant specimens.



The Wildlife Trusts have developed guidelines to assist education staff and others in knowing when and how specimens should be used, and when we will support the use of these specimens by others. The guidelines are also intended to ensure that our work is legal, humane and does not damage or conflict with our conservation objectives.

The guidelines refer to using live and preserved plants and animals in various circumstances including:

- Educational and visitor centre activity.
- Demonstrations and talks.
- Field work and practical conservation management.
- Public relations and media activity.

In using live and preserved plant (including fungi) and animals/specimens, there are a number of underlying principles that are important.

- By providing a consistent message and following guidelines, live and preserved plant and animal specimens can be used whilst still discouraging illegal, unnecessary or indiscriminate collection of specimens from the wild.
- By having appropriate first hand contact with wildlife, people can help deliver the work of the Wildlife Trusts.
- By demonstrating and sharing best practice to members of the public and others, we can influence what others do and promote a conservation message.

The main principles for using live and preserved plant and animal specimens:

- Must only be used to promote a wildlife conservation message.
- Must follow the law, including keeping and displaying legally required records.
- Must be humane to ensure that there are no welfare concerns.
- Must follow health and safety guidelines to ensure safety of staff, volunteers and others.
- Use by other bodies will only be supported by the Wildlife Trusts where it follows our guidelines.

## Plants

Selective use of plants and plant material is acceptable (e.g. for identification purposes) and must be accompanied by an explanation of provenance (where it is from, how it came to be here). Where appropriate, the use of plants should also be accompanied by an explanation of the law, the reasons for it and discouragement from indiscriminate picking/collecting.

## Animal specimens

Selective use of certain animal specimens is acceptable (e.g. skins, stuffed animals, nests etc.) and must be accompanied by an explanation of provenance. Care must be taken to ensure that there are no misunderstandings over the source of the item. For example, only obviously hatched or predated birds' eggs should be used, or specimens should be clearly part of legitimate collections (e.g. museum specimens). Where appropriate, specimens should be clearly part of legitimate collections (e.g. museum specimens). Where appropriate, use of these specimens should also be accompanied by an explanation of the law, the reasons for it and discouragement from individual collecting.

## Live animals – invertebrates

Live invertebrates may be kept in suitably located and designed accommodation, provided they are properly looked after and tangible benefits from their captivity can be demonstrated.

Pond dipping and minibeast hunting activities, which may be followed by short-term indoor studies, are fine as long as they are done in such a way as to minimise damage to both animals and their habitats. Encourage children to be gentle and return them to their natural environments as soon as possible.

## Live animals – vertebrates

In this part 'wild' refers to animals that have been caught in the wild and can be released back to their place of capture. 'Captive' refers to animals that have originated in the wild or been bred in captivity, and are currently being held in captivity.

Use of live wild vertebrates is acceptable (e.g. in field demonstrations, bird ringing) provided they are handled by those with suitable experience, appropriately housed and cared for whilst in captivity, and are released as soon as possible.

Note:- Protected species (such as bats and Scilly Shrews) may only be handled by a licensed person

Use of live captive vertebrates is only acceptable under exceptional circumstances. It is based on the merits of each case, taking account of welfare issues (e.g. an animal unfit for release that is being cared for). In these cases, care should be taken to explain the source of the animal, the reason for its presence and the associated conservation message.



**Useful contacts:****AONB Unit – 01720 424355**

There is an Isles of Scilly AONB education pack and the Unit may be able to assist with environmental activities and beach cleaning if booked in advance.

**Isles of Scilly Museum – 01720 422337**

An excellent museum and worth a visit to learn about the history of the islands. Topics covered include archaeology, geology, shipwrecks and natural history. There are many exhibits including a Victorian kitchen, a sword and mirror that were found on Bryher, and collections from the Romano-British settlement on Nornour. Please phone in advance to book a school visit.

**Longstone Heritage Centre – 01720 423770/423549**

Have a tearoom, picnic area, toilets and some exhibits. There is a large field for activities and if booked in advance, owners Sonia and Mick Scott may be able to assist with moth trapping and other environmental activities. Evening meals can be arranged if booked in advance.

**Useful websites:**

There are many websites that give information on the natural environment and education. Here are a few that you may find useful.

[www.wildlifetrusts.org.uk](http://www.wildlifetrusts.org.uk)  
[www.ios-aonb.info](http://www.ios-aonb.info)  
[www.iosmuseum.org](http://www.iosmuseum.org)  
[www.scilly.gov.uk](http://www.scilly.gov.uk)  
[www.simplyscilly.co.uk](http://www.simplyscilly.co.uk)  
[www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)  
[www.face-online.org.uk](http://www.face-online.org.uk)  
[www.naturedetectives.org.uk](http://www.naturedetectives.org.uk)  
[www.dartmoorponytrust.com](http://www.dartmoorponytrust.com)  
[www.dartmoorponysociety.com](http://www.dartmoorponysociety.com)  
[www.redrubydevon.co.uk](http://www.redrubydevon.co.uk)  
[www.aonb.org.uk](http://www.aonb.org.uk)  
[www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)  
[www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)

**Equipment**

The Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust has equipment that you can borrow to study the heathlands. We have clip boards, map cases and compasses, 2 play parachutes (one is suitable for 8 people and a larger one suitable for 16 people). We have a net for catching insects, bug pots, pooters, binoculars and various microscopes and magnifiers. The Trust has a digital voice recorder that can be used for recording pieces for Radio. If you would like to do a piece for Radio Scilly, it could be used on the Trust's weekly show, if suitable.

Please contact the office for further advice and information:

Julie Love, Volunteer & Education Manager

Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust

Carn Thomas

St. Mary's

Isles of Scilly

TR21 0PT

Tel/Fax: 01720 422153

[www.ios-wildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.ios-wildlifetrust.org.uk)

[enquiries@ios-wildlifetrust.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ios-wildlifetrust.org.uk) or [julielove@ios-wildlifetrust.org.uk](mailto:julielove@ios-wildlifetrust.org.uk)

The Council of the Isles of Scilly, Early Years Office also has equipment available for hire, Please contact the office on 01720 424303 for information on what is available.

## Background to heathlands

Before embarking on our adventure in the heathlands we need to know a little about them. For the teacher there is a need for some background knowledge and understanding so that the activities can be grounded in a real context. Children may come to the heathland with little or no experience of its unique environment, range of habitats, wildlife and management needs and it is the purpose of the activities in this education pack to draw out a real learning experience with the heathlands that will stay long after their visit. Included in this education pack are several leaflets giving a background to the heathlands of Scilly and what can be found.

### *Heathland definitions*

The following descriptions try to reflect the cultural, geological and climatic factors that produce heaths and properly represent the impressive variation of flora and fauna that are found on the lowland heaths of the UK.

‘Oxford English Dictionary’ (via N Webb):

‘Open, uncultivated land; a bare, more or less flat tract of land, naturally covered with low herbage and dwarf shrubs, especially heather or ling’

‘Heathlands’ New Naturalist series, Nigel Webb, 1986:

From the author’s preface:

“...I have confined my text to the heathlands of southern Britain. That is to say dwarf shrub communities dominated by Ling (*Calluna vulgaris*) growing in sandy mineral soils.”

From chapter 1:

“In this book we will confine ourselves to the so-called heathlands of lowland Britain – areas of ericaceous dwarf-shrubs growing at low altitudes, below 250m (800 ft), in acidic, nutrient-poor, mineral soils – and as we are considering entire communities – will include wet heath and valley mires. This type of vegetation is more-or-less confined to the lowlands of southern Britain,....

In Britain, as in the remainder of northwest Europe, Common Heather or Ling (*Calluna vulgaris*) is the dominant plant on all heathlands; indeed on many it is almost the only species of plant. Several other commonly-occurring heathland plants also belong to the same family – the Ericaceae, which are all dwarf shrubs adapted to the hostile environment of poor acidic soils – and this imparts character and structure to the vegetation”

The fly-leaf notes for the New Naturalist refers to “...the extraordinary story of how heathlands came to be, the influences of geology, climate, soils and man....”

‘Heathland Ecology’ Professor Charles Gimmingham 1972

‘The lowland heathland management handbook’ C H Gimmingham 1992

“It is not easy to impose a precise definition on the word ‘heathland’, which relates more to a characteristic type of landscape than to its vegetation and fauna. Throughout much of (this) book attention will be concentrated on communities largely dominated by heather or one of its close allies (partly because this type is fast disappearing from the lowlands). The chief plants are low, woody shrubs, while tall shrubs and trees are either completely absent or sparse and scattered.....The term heath as commonly used also extends to other community types, such

as grass heaths on acidic soils, wet heaths, lichen heaths and moss heaths; these will also be discussed. They are all important types, in terms of nature conservation, and in lowland Britain some are now confined to very restricted areas.”

Gimmingham also refers to the importance of management and cultural practice: “Because most heathlands owe their origin and continued existence to traditional forms of land use and management, they are potentially unstable and liable to quite rapid successional change to other vegetation when... that management is abandoned or changed”

‘A practical guide to the restoration and management of lowland heathland’ RSPB (Symes and Day) 2003 “...for the purposes of this book heathland is considered to be:

a landscape of biological and cultural importance that has developed on impoverished, acidic mineral soils in lowland Britain. Vegetation communities have developed that tolerate the impoverished conditions created, in most cases, by thousands of years of human exploitation. These communities are characterised by heathers, coarse grasses and lower plants and sustain specialised and often rare wildlife. They are rarely stable and will develop towards woodland if exploitation or intervention ceases. Such landscapes, because they have always been associated with human activities since earliest history, have an immense cultural and historical importance.”

### *What is biodiversity?*

This word is formed by combining ‘biological’ and ‘diversity’ and biodiversity refers to the existence of a wide range of animals and plants in the natural environment.

### *Why is it important?*

The natural world is important for lots of reasons including our economic, social and spiritual well-being. This is important, as many habitats have been destroyed by farming, housing and industrial development. Pollution and global warming may also decrease the biodiversity of the natural environment. Today there are many schemes, which encourage developers, farmers and the general public to consider the environment in the work that they do and the way that we live. Conservation land managers try to maintain and increase the biodiversity of their sites.

### *How is heathland managed?*

In brief, heathland on the Isles of Scilly is managed in the following way. Large areas of bracken, gorse and bramble scrub are broken up by cutting firebreaks to create a more diverse range of plants. Some areas of bracken are rolled with a Bracken roller, this damages the plant in 3 places and the plant spends its energy repairing this damage instead of putting energy back into its rhizomes. This means that the plant is weakened and less aggressive plants can compete with growing bracken giving a more diverse flora. On areas where large machinery cannot be used, the Trust manages with specialist smaller machinery; work is carried out by hand and some areas are burnt.

This land management work is followed up with grazing livestock that help to keep bracken, gorse and bramble scrub in check. Animals can go where machinery cannot and remove nutrients from the site. Each heathland site is different and managed according to local conditions.

### *Machinery and hand tools*

Much machinery is needed to manage heathlands and this includes:

- Bracken roller, brushcutters, chainsaw, quad bike, pedestrian tractor, tractor.
- Hand tools - bowsaws, loppers, pikes, slashers and scythes.

### *Why graze heathland?*

- It provides disturbance in the vegetation that is important for certain plants, invertebrates, birds and reptiles.
- It produces manure that has ecological value in itself, and grazing is an important element of the nutrient cycles present on heathland.
- It has impact on the succession of the vegetation and is a stressor of competitive plants thus helping to prevent their dominance.
- It helps create physical, species and temporal structure within the vegetation.
- It provides private income to graziers, as well as public goods for society, for example nature conservation benefits, landscape etc.

### *How did we choose the livestock used?*

The livestock was chosen for a number of reasons. Animals needed to be placid to ensure a calm temperament around people and to be able to cope with dogs being a nuisance. The animals are traditional breeds and can keep good condition on poor grazing. The animals do not need lush grass and if fed on this would become fat. We have chosen Red Ruby Devon Cattle also known as North Devon Cattle and Dartmoor ponies that are part of the Dartmoor pony scheme. We also have Shetland cross ponies. All the animals are fairly small and this means that they are less intimidating than larger animals.

## **A sense of Place**

Places that are recognised as locally, regionally, nationally or internationally important primarily for wildlife may be identified through a series of names or designations. Some of these have legal status aiming to protect sites from destruction or damage as well as to promote appropriate management. In other cases a named status may simply serve as a management tool; making it more likely that a site will be looked after in a way that preserves its wildlife value, and not destroyed through ignorance. Additionally laws relating to a named species or to planning, aim to protect wildlife wherever it occurs.

Below is a quick guide to some of the terms you might come across relating to the protected status of different bits of land primarily for wildlife value.

## **European Statutory Protected Sites**

### *Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)*

Purpose – To protect significant areas containing habitats and species (excluding birds) that have been identified as most in need of conservation across Europe. All SACs are also designated SSSIs under domestic law.

### *Special Protection Areas*

Purpose – To protect significant areas of the most important European habitat for rare and migratory birds. All SPAs are also designated SSSIs under domestic law.

### *Natura 2000*

This is the term given to the European network of important sites for conservation which comprises all SACs and SPAs.

## **National Statutory Protected Sites**

### *Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)*

Purpose – to protect and manage a suite of sites that represent the best examples of the UK's animals, plants, habitats, geological features and landforms. As these are only a representative sample of sites, many sites of SSSI quality will instead be covered by non-statutory designations.

### *Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)*

This designation is applied to an area of countryside by the government. The purpose of this designation is to conserve and enhance that area's natural beauty, which includes protecting flora, fauna and geological as well as landscape features. Local authorities take special care when considering development proposals within AONBs and attempt to safeguard our most important landscapes. In addition AONBs provide local communities with opportunities to promote and celebrate some of our finest landscapes.

## **Local (non-statutory) Sites**

### *Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGs)*

Purpose – to protect the most important places for geology and geomorphology outside the statutory protected SSSIs. Most RIGs are selected by local voluntary partnerships using criteria to measure their value for education, scientific study, historical significance and aesthetic qualities.

### *Heritage Coasts*

This is a non-statutory landscape designation that covers the most unspoilt areas of undeveloped coastline around England and Wales. The designation has a similar purpose to the AONB but puts greater emphasis on recreation and management.

## Do you need permission?

The Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust asks that permission be sought before carrying out play activities, educational visits, field studies and scientific research on its land. This is for several reasons:

- to ensure that wildlife is protected and important areas are not damaged.
- to ensure that groups are properly organised and have their own insurance.
- we can advise on site management taking place for example where grazing livestock are, habitat management work or surveys.
- it may be possible for the Trust to provide background information for your study topic.
- information on who is using Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust land for educational purposes is required by the Trust for its own records including our insurance provider, for grants and when seeking funding.

The Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust cares for the wildlife sites that make up 60% of the landmass of Scilly and includes all of the uninhabited islands, islets and rocks and most of the coastal fringes on the inhabited islands of St. Mary's, St. Agnes, Bryher and St. Martin's. This includes beaches down to the lowest tide level (please note that there is no lifeguard service) and includes Higher and Lower Moors nature trails and Doiley Woods on St. Mary's.

If you use a site regularly you do not need to let us know every time you do a visit but it does help us to know what activities are taking place. We also welcome feedback on how we can help you get the most from your visits e.g. background information, vegetation clearance required, infrastructure, access to equipment.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

## We are going on an outing

Name of School/Nursery/Group:

Address:

Postcode:

Tel No:

Best time to phone:

Email:

Location of visit:

Number of Children:

Number of Adults:

Age range:

Activity taking place:

Study topic:

Do you have insurance to cover this visit: Y / N Please send a copy of the policy

Signed:

Name:

Date:

Please complete this form and return it to: Julie Love, Volunteer & Education Manager, Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust, Carn Thomas, St. Mary's, Isles of Scilly TR21 0PT  
Tel/fax: 01720 422153 email: [julielove@ios-wildlifetrust.org.uk](mailto:julielove@ios-wildlifetrust.org.uk).





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[www.ios-wildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.ios-wildlifetrust.org.uk)