

# CORNWALL AND ISLES OF SCILLY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER STUDY



## Landscape Character Area Description

LCA - North Coast- Reskeage Downs

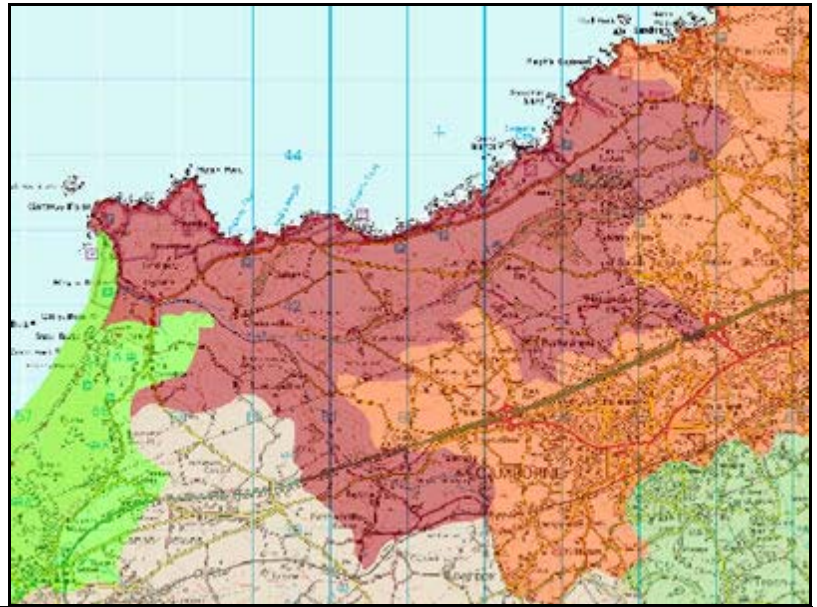
LCA No

CA28

JCA

Constituent LDUs

Total 4: 79, 119, 120, 169



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**Location** Northern coastal strip north and west of Camborne.

**Designations** 1 LDU is fully within the AONB and Heritage Coast and 2 are partly included; LDU 169 has WHS; All LDUs have SSSIs; All LDUs have SMs and 2 LDUs have CGS.

### Description

The area is an exposed and dramatic coastline of unstable slate cliffs behind which is the catchment of the Red River with sheltered incised valleys, some of which run parallel to the coast. The coastal fringe is heath and rough ground while the hinterland is used for mixed farming- with recently enclosed land on the coast and smaller ancient enclosed land inland and to the west. Through the coastal rough ground runs the South West Coast Path with spectacular views, cliff scenery, steep slopes and sheer drops into small coves. Tehidy Country Park occupies a sheltered valley. Much of the coastal land is owned and managed by the National Trust and has many visitors each year. Vegetated dunes lie to the west at Godrevy. The area is distinguished by the lack of disturbance from mining which has so strongly influenced the landscape character of the adjacent areas although there is an active sand and gravel operation in the Red River valley. There are no significant settlements.

### Key Landscape Characteristics

High north facing soft slate cliffs culminating in Navax Point.

Inland valley running parallel to the coast formed by the Red River and its tributaries which run to St Ives Bay.

Coastal Lowland Heathland strip.

Recently enclosed land predominates especially on the coast but there is ancient enclosed land with Cornish hedges to the west and inland.

Vegetated Coastal Sand Dunes by Godrevy.

Unspoilt landscape with limited and sparse settlement pattern.

Significant visitor pressure along cliff tops and in car parks.

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Historic features including barrows and other prehistoric monuments, the ornamental landscape around Tehidy and historic mansion, and important industrial remains in the Red River valley.

Country Park and wind sculpted Ancient Woodland at Tehidy.

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### Geology and soils

The geology consists of middle and undifferentiated Devonian slates, greywackes and siltstones. These are exhibited to dramatic effect in the unstable, soft and gritty slate coastal cliffs. The soils are shallow hard rock soils.

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### Topography and drainage

The area rises to 87m AOD to the east and maintains this height approximately along the coastal strip with high, north facing cliffs. This is broken only once by the Carvannel valley. Behind this, the plateau slopes away from the coast and is incised by the Red River and its tributaries which run parallel to the coast and run westward, draining into St Ives Bay. Dunes/ towans lie to the west at Godrevy.

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### Biodiversity

Most of the area is a mixture of improved grassland and arable, with permanent pasture and horticulture to the west. The coastal strip has an almost continuous band of Lowland Heathland, a remnant of a once more extensive area of heath and rough ground to the north of Camborne/Redruth. Though these coastal heaths are now more fragmented, areas of scrub, bracken and unimproved grassland between them along the maritime cliff make it a valuable wildlife corridor (part of the Godrevy Head - St. Agnes SSSI), with a rich maritime flora and fauna. At the western part of the LCA an extensive area of blown sand over the rocky cliff has formed high dunes, Coastal Sand Dunes, with a small area of Lowland Calcareous Grassland habitat at Godrevy. The LCA is exposed and open and any sizeable areas of woodland are at Tehidy, which within the broadleaved woodland has an area of replanted Ancient Woodland with some Upland Oakwood. An area of woodland tucked in the valley north of Gwealavellan has been identified as Upland Mixed Ashwoods. Any other areas of woodland are largely confined to the lower catchment of the Red River valley. This valley has been modified in the past by the extensive mining activity in the area, and along the river and its tributaries narrow strips of broadleaved woodland and fragments of bracken, heath, unimproved grassland and wetland have developed after, or are remnants from before the industrial activity.

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### Land Cover

Most of the area is mixed improved ley/pasture and arable, permanent pasture and horticulture to the west. Along the coast is a narrow strip of coastal rough ground, once much broader but now diminished by enclosure and coastal erosion. Dunes lie to the far west by Godrevy. Woodland and tree cover is mostly at Tehidy and along the Red River valley and its tributaries.

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### Land Use

The area is used primarily for mixed arable and pastoral farming with some horticulture to the west. Informal recreation is important in the coastal strip. There is sand extraction at Gwithian and old workings in the valley. There is a country park at Tehidy.

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### Field and woodland pattern

A substantial part of this area, mostly along the strip behind the coastal cliffs north of the Red River valley, is Recently Enclosed Land, taken in from former rough ground in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The large rectangular fields of the open exposed landscape contain a mixture of arable, ley/improved pasture and permanent pasture. The extensive field pattern gives a broad and expansive

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scale to the landscape interrupted by low stone hedges with occasional wind-pruned hawthorn and blackthorn bushes. This landscape pattern contrasts with the smaller-scale field pattern of Anciently Enclosed Land seen inland and towards the western end of the Red River, and with the more enclosed nature of mixed and oak woodland found on the Tehidy estate, now a country park. This ornamental landscape developed by the Bassets still survives, although there is a golf course on the parkland. Other small patches of woodland, mainly willow scrub, line the small valley of the Red River which runs from Tehidy to Godrevy Towans, dissecting the area. There are significant areas of unenclosed duneland and coastal rough ground.

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### Settlement pattern

This Landscape Character Area is sparsely populated with very few buildings; isolated farmsteads occur on small lanes and tracks and there are clusters of housing in the valley. Tehidy House is now a substantial complex of new housing and adjoins the Tehidy Country Park. It was previously a hospital, TB sanatorium and house for the Basset family- an influential mining family. The area is fringed by developments connected with Camborne and South Tehidy.

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### Transport pattern

The busy A30 crosses the most southerly valleys of the Landscape Character area affecting the tranquillity here. The B3301 coastal road provides access to numerous cliff top car parks and the South West Coast path.

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### Historic features

This area is particularly rich in archaeological sites, including barrows along the clifftops, excavated settlements of the Bronze Age, Roman and early medieval periods at Gwithian, an Iron Age cliff castle at Crane Castle and Cornwall's only known Roman villa at Magor. Tehidy is a substantial mansion on a site occupied by the Basset family since the medieval period and its ornamental grounds of the Basset family now form Tehidy Country Park and Tehidy Golf Course. The house has been divided into apartments. The Red River valley has been a focus for industrial activity since at least the medieval period, probably earlier, including unusual operations to reclaim tin ore from deposits washed downstream from mining operations elsewhere.

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### Condition

Coastal heath is deteriorating in places. Pastoral land is in good condition generally. The Red River valley is deteriorating with lack of management.

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### Pressures

- Visitor pressure on the coastal strip including car parks, erosion and litter/dumping.
  - Development pressure around Camborne, South Tehidy and Illogan.
  - Lack of management results in bracken encroachment on coastal heath.
  - Intensification of land use including horticulture and other agricultural improvement.
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### Aesthetic and sensory

The coastal part of the area is generally an unspoilt rural landscape strongly influenced by the sea and displaying vivid colours along the cliffs: blue sea, reddish cliff-faces and colourful heath and grassland vegetation. This is broken in places by the cliff top car parks. Views are extensive both out to sea and inland to Carn Brea or up the coast to the promontory of St Agnes Head. The valleys are relatively sheltered and enclosed- particularly around Tehidy Country Park, and the Roseworthy stream.

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### Distinctive features

Wide views of sea and coast; the dunes by Godrevy and the nearby medieval field pattern. Salt-pruned

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woodland at Tehidy is a feature.

### Visions and objectives

This is a relatively undeveloped landscape with sparse settlement, a rural landscape character and wild exposed coastline. The objective must be to maintain this landscape character by conserving the cliff land, encouraging the use of agri-environmental schemes and managing the Country Park and Red River valley to a high level.

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## Planning and Land Management Guidelines

Develop a land management scheme for the area to maintain the coast, the dune system, the country park and the Red River Valley.

Support the use of agri-environmental Schemes.

Develop guidelines for development and design of new property.

Enhance cliff-top car parks where possible and keep them in good condition.