

COUNTY: DEVON SITE NAME: SALTERN COVE

DISTRICT: TORBAY

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Local Planning Authority: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL, Torbay Borough Council

National Grid Reference: SX 895585 Area: 13.1 (ha.) 32.4 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 202 1:10,000: SX 85 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1952 Date of Last Revision: 1976

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1985 Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

The site incorporates part of Sugar Loaf Hill and Saltern Cove Local Nature Reserve. The site boundary has been amended.

Statement of Interest

Saltern Cove is an important geological locality. It also supports a diverse intertidal flora and fauna including communities characteristic of both sediment and rocky shores.

The Saltern Cove area, including the north end of Shell Cove and the south end of Waterside Cove, displays an extensive section through the Upper Devonian, including interesting structures, and the richly fossiliferous Saltern Cove Goniatite Bed. The Lower Devonian beds exposed in Waterside Cove are a good example of the Staddon facies of the Meadfoot Group and are richly fossiliferous. Waterside Cove also displays well the unconformable contact between the Lower Devonian and the overlying Permian beds and is one of the most important Upper Devonian stratigraphic localities in Britain. Saltern Cove provides exposure of coarse Permian fluvial breccias resting unconformably on Devonian slates. The unconformity surface is very clearly seen as a cast on the base of the breccias. These contain much locally-derived material and are arranged in poorly organized, fining-upwards sedimentary sequences. The coarsest Permian beds occur immediately above the unconformity.

The rocky coastline at Saltern Cove supports diverse communities of intertidal plants and animals. Along the lower shore the coarse grained rocks are partly covered by brown seaweeds such as Flat Wrack *Fucus spiralis* and Knotted Wrack *Ascophyllum nodosum*, while pools and crevices in the rocks provide shelter for a wide variety of algal species, such as the red seaweed *Corallina officinalis*. Animals include the Snakelocks Anemone *Anemonia sulcata*, the Spotted Goby *Gobius ruthensparri*, Periwinkles *Littorina* spp. and the Squat Lobster *Galathea strigosa*.

At low tide, sandy areas are exposed between the rocks and these support a fauna characteristic of sediment shores including Common Starfish *Asterias rubens* and

burrowing animals such as the Razor Shell *Ennis arcuata*, the Thin Tellin *Tellina fabula* and the Sea Potato *Echinocardium cordatum*.