COUNTY: LINCOLNSHIRE SITE NAME: GIBRALTAR POINT

DISTRICT: EAST LINDSEY

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

Local Planning Authority: EAST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

National Grid Reference: SK 562595 Area: 581.3 (ha.) 1436.4 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 122 1:10,000: SK 55 NE, 56 SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1951 Date of Last Revision: 1981

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1988 Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:
The majority of the site is a National Nature Reserve and is managed by the Lincolnshire and South Humberside Trust for Nature Conservation. Part of the site is also a local Nature Reserve. Gibraltar Point, together with the Wash, which lies adjacent, is described in 'A Nature Conservation Review'.

Description and Reasons for Notification:
This is a nationally important site due to its sand dunes and other coastal habitats, and associated fauna, notably invertebrates and passage and breeding birds. Gibraltar Point is also of great importance for its coastal geomorphology.

Biology
The dune and saltmarsh habitats present at Gibraltar Point show all the stages in the colonization and stabilization of sand and mud by plants.

The seaward-most dunes have been colonized by sea-rocket *Cakile maritima*, prickly saltwort *Salsola kali* subsp *kali* and sand couch *Elymus farctus*, while further inland the dunes are more stable and are dominated by marram grass *Ammophila arenaria*, associated with lyme-grass *Leymus arenarius*, sand sedge *Carex arenaria* and the sand dune form of red fescue *Festuca rubra*. Pyramidal orchid *Anacamptis pyramidalis* is common on the mature lime-rich dunes which are locally dominated by sea-buckthorn *Hippophae rhamnoides*. Notable plants which occur in the dune system include sea-holly *Eryngium maritimum*, sea bindweed *Calystegia soldanella* and sea campion *Silene maritima*.

Glassworts *Salicornia* spp. characterize the youngest saltmarsh which rapidly gives way to extensive marshes dominated by common saltmarsh grass *Puccinellia maritima*, sea-purslane *Halimione portulacoides* and common sea-lavender *Limonium vulgare*. The highest marshes, reached only by exceptionally high tides, support sea couch *Elymus pycnanthus*, sea wormwood *Artemisia maritima* and sea-milkwort *Glaux maritima* in addition to sea-heath *Frankenia laevis*, which is at its northern-most station in Great Britain.

Sandwiched between two arms of dunes and protected from the sea by Bulldog Bank is a fine example of freshwater marsh which is grazed by cattle. Sedges *Carex* spp. and rushes *Juncus* spp. are common in a rich sward which includes adder's tongue fern *Ophioglossum vulgatum*. Areas of open water fringed by common reed *Phragmites australis* with marsh-mallow *Althaea officinalis* support the nationally rare brackish water-crowfoot *Ranunculus baudotii*.

Gibraltar Point supports important communities of invertebrates, notably Lepidoptera, Diptera and Coleoptera, including 12 species which are nationally rare. The diversity of coastal habitats present supports a good variety of breeding birds such as mallard, shelduck ringed plover, little tern, oystercatcher and redshank. Gibraltar Point is also an important site for wintering and passage waders. Numbers of oystercatcher, grey plover, knot, sanderling and bar-tailed godwit are of international significance, and the area is of national importance for its numbers of ringed plover.

Geology
Gibraltar Point is a key site for studies of coastal geomorphology. It covers a wide range of types of coastal accretion on a low, macrotidal coast in a relatively sheltered environment. It has been studied in detail over several decades and illustrates very clearly the interaction of tidal and other coastal processes in a complex and actively developing environment. Key features include tidal sandbanks offshore, a well-developed ridge and runnel foreshore, a spit, sand dunes and saltmarshes in various stages of evolution. Gibraltar Point is particularly important for the dynamism of the coastal environment and also the relationships that can be studied over different timescales between landforms and the processes responsible for their evolution.

Date Notified: 29 July 1988