

Site Notified to the Secretary of State on 22 December 1986

County: Somerset **Site Name:** Blue Anchor to Lilstock Coast

District: West Somerset

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

Local Planning Authority: Somerset County Council, West Somerset District Council

National Grid Reference: ST 033435
ST 195462 Area: 742.8 (ha) 1835.5 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 181 1:10,000: ST 04 SW,SE
ST 14 NE,SE,SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1971 **Date of Last Revision:**

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Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1986 **Date of Last Revision:**

Other Information: The Eastern part of the site lies within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
A Geological Conservation Review Site

Description and Reasons for Notification:

1. Blue Anchor - Lilstock Coast (Hettangian - Pliensbachian)

An outstanding series of sections through the Lower Lias, spanning the Hettangian and Lower Pliensbachian Stages. This sequence and the good Rhaetian succession beneath are repeatedly affected by faulting, making many sections available in comparison to the same interval on the Glamorgan and Dorset casts. In a British context the Watchet coast is the thickest succession for this interval. This makes it of international significance, for Britain's Lias sequences are arguably the best in N.W. Europe. In addition it has been proposed that this coast be accepted as the standard for the base of the Hettangian Stage, and thus by definition the Jurassic as a whole. An internationally important stratigraphic locality.

2. Blue Anchor Point - (Rhaetian)

A site showing the complete Rhaetian succession developed locally, from the Grey Marls to the Blue Lias. The Sully Beds are noteworthy for their fish, reptiles and coprolites, and the early mammal *Hypsoprymnopsis*. Abundant ostracode occur in the Cotham Beds. Sully, Westbury. Cotham, Langport, Watches and Pre-*planorbis* Beds are all represented in these classic late Triassic sections.

3. **Doniford - (Pleistocene of Somerset)**

This classic site shows Pleistocene sediments, including a fine example of alluvial sediments formed in a cold-stage river valley, superbly exposed in the low sea cliffs. Mid-Acheulian and Late Upper Paleolithic implements as well as bones and tusks of *Elephas primigenius* have been found in the deposits, together with a wide range of fluvial and cryoturbation structures. The stratigraphy of the deposits has, however, only been described in very general terms, and is long overdue for re-description. This site is of great importance as one of the best localities in the country for periglacial phenomena and cold-stage river valley sediments and it has considerable regional stratigraphic significance.

4. **St Audries Bay - (Rhaetian)**

A site showing a complete Rhaetian section from the Grey Marls to the Pre-*planorbis* Beds. The Grey Marl sequence (including the Sully Beds) is very thick, approaching twenty-six metres. First recorded in the mid-1800's the section here still has great potential for future research, and with the Blue Anchor section affords the best available Rhaetian exposures on the classic Watchet coast.

5. **Blue Anchor - Watchet - Lilstock (Coastal Geomorphology)**

Blue Anchor - Watchet - Lilstock is important for coastal geomorphology. it demonstrates a particularly well-developed series of intertidal shore platforms varying in width from about 200-600m. The platforms are veneered in part by shingle, sand and mud and in details of form reflect the variable resistance to erosion of the Rhaetic and Lower Lias bedrock. A key feature of the platforms is their development in a macro-tidal environment, and they are among the best examples of such coastal features in Britain.