

Area of LDU within AONB: 1020.0 hectares

% of LDU within AONB: 25%



Date surveyed: 2 March 2010

Survey points: 367235, SS369232, SS408260, SS410264

Summary of landscape character

This forms the northern section of a larger inland LDU, following the coast in an arc from east of Clovelly in the south-west to Westward Ho and the Torridge estuary in the north-east. It is a strongly rolling coastal landscape with extensive views from summits through gaps in hedgebanks. Pasture predominates within a mix of large modern fields and medium-scale medieval patterns, with localised arable also a notable presence. Small hamlets and farmstead groups are scattered over ridgelines, with woodland largely confined to ridge bottoms and occasional blocks. Holiday development is a notable feature in the west, while large modern farm buildings are prominent throughout. Levels of tranquillity are generally high, although development to the north has affected this to some extent.

LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTION

LANDFORM / TOPOGRAPHY			
Landform description	Strongly rolling landform with prominent ridgelines and summits.		
LAND USE AND PATTERNS			
Agriculture	<i>Main agricultural land use</i>	<i>Other agricultural land use(s)</i>	
	Pasture	Localised arable	
Field patterns and boundaries	<i>Field patterns and origins</i>	<i>Size (note variations)</i>	<i>Boundary type / description</i>
	Modern enlarged fields with regular patterns predominate, though significant areas of medieval and some post-medieval patterns survive, e.g. around Gilscott and Greencliff. Also distinctive curving	Medium to large (the latter generally reflecting modern enlargement), with some	Devon hedgebanks often with thick thorny hedges, dense and closely cropped, or with hazel and elm (e.g. Abbotsham / Cornborough area)

	boundaries e.g. around Chiddlecombe.	smaller fields surrounding settlements, e.g. Chiddlecombe.	away from the coast), and gappy in places. Post-and-wire fencing is occasionally used in front of hedgebanks.
Other land uses (e.g. recreation)	Bideford Bay Holiday Park and Steart Farm campground are located in the west of the LDU.		

WOODLAND AND SEMI-NATURAL HABITATS

Trees / woodland cover	<i>Size and distribution within landscape</i>	<i>Type and species(broadleaved / conifer)</i>
	Woodland is generally confined to valley bottoms and occasional ridgeline copses. Some larger blocks occur near the centre by the A39, e.g. Cockington plantations, whilst there is an area of woodland to the north around Cornborough and to the south surrounding Bideford Bay Holiday Park.	Predominantly broadleaved, with stands of conifers associated with settlement. Cockington Plantations is a large area of coppice woodland, with an area of mixed/coniferous plantation to its east.
Semi-natural habitats	<i>Description and location within landscape</i>	
	Abbotsham and Cornborough Cliffs County Wildlife Sites (including Kipling Tors) represent areas of unimproved grassland in the north of the LDU near to the coast. Elsewhere, semi-natural habitats are generally limited to woodlands and hedgerows. Along the coastline in the north, Mermaid's Pool to Rowden Gut SSSI is designated for its geological interest.	

SETTLEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Settlement pattern	<i>Settlement size, type, density and relationship to landscape</i>		
	Predominantly scattered hamlets/farmsteads situated on ridgelines.		
Transport pattern (including Public Rights of Way)	<i>Road pattern, character and relationship to settlement / landscape</i>		
	The A39 forms much of the LDU's southern boundary, with minor lanes radiating north to link farmsteads and hamlets. In the north, Kipling Tors represents a small area of open access land owned by the National Trust, whilst the South West Coast Path runs along the LDU's northern coastline.		
Local vernacular styles and materials	<i>Predominant traditional building materials</i>	<i>Any local variations</i>	<i>Other built features reflecting vernacular</i>
	White rendered walls with slate roofs	Stone with red brick windows and door frames	
Modern development	Large-scale modern farm buildings, plus holiday home development in the		

styles / materials	west at Bideford Bay Holiday Park.		
HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT			
Key historic features visible in the landscape	<i>Description</i>		
	The earthwork east of Buck's Mills is a Scheduled Monument, lying on the boundary of the LDU in the west.		
VIEWS / PERCEPTUAL QUALITIES			
Views	<i>Key views / landmark features</i>	<i>Intervisibility with LDUs</i>	
		<i>From this LDU</i>	<i>To this LDU</i>
	Views are afforded out to sea and along the coast from ridgelines and summits. The settlement edges of Westward Ho!, Northam and Bideford are prominent in views to the northeast, whilst Croyde and Saunton are visible further north beyond the Taw-Torridge estuary. Views west along the coast include Blackchurch Rock, while to the southwest Buck's Cross sits upon a ridgeline just outside the AONB.	693 (coast) 686 (west) 835, 836 (Westward Ho) 360, 362, 358 (Saunton Sands & Braunton Burrows) 382 (Saunton) 897, 384 (Croyde)	897 686 835, 836 360, 362, 358 382 897, 384
Perceptual qualities (description)	A predominantly tranquil landscape, with a well-settled perception provided by views to the villages and towns on surrounding ridgelines.		

LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS

Designation	Number	% of LDU land area that is within the AONB
NATURE CONSERVATION		
SAC	1	0.31%
SSSI	3	1.25%
County Wildlife Sites	7	4.03%
HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT		
Scheduled Monuments	1	0.08%
Listed Buildings	18 (grade II)	

UK BAP PRIORITY HABITATS

UK BAP Priority Habitat	Area (ha)	% of LDU land area that is within the AONB
Lowland beech and yew woodland	1.62	0.16%
Maritime cliff and slope	12.36	1.21%
Traditional Orchards	0.23	0.02%
Upland oakwoods	1.27	0.12%
Wet woodland	0.58	0.06%

KEY FACTORS INFLUENCING LANDSCAPE CONDITION

Perceptual qualities	Tranquillity is affected by the A39 along the southern boundary.
Views	Views to ridgeline settlement are a common feature, with the nearest settlements having the most impact (e.g. Buck's Cross in the south-west, Westward Ho in the north – especially the housing at Cornborough Road). The wind turbine at Greencliff Farm is also a localised feature of views within the area.
Land use	In the west, land use is dominated by Bideford Bay Holiday Park (though it is well hidden by woodland), with Steart Farm campground next door. Localised arable fields are also a notable presence within the landscape.
Field patterns	Modern field enlargement has occurred throughout, often associated with arable land.
Field boundaries	Field boundaries are often gappy in places, with hedgebanks supplemented by post-and-wire fencing where hedges are low or missing.
Trees and woodland	There is insufficient evidence to accurately assess woodland condition.
Semi-natural habitats	Aside from the County Wildlife Sites in the north, the LDU is generally devoid of significant ecological interest.
Settlement and development	In the north, unsympathetic modern development at Westward Ho! / Buckleigh has encroached up to and into the LDU around Kipling Tors.
Local vernacular	Some farm buildings are neglected, patched with corrugated iron, whilst large scale modern farm sheds are often incongruous in the landscape. Modern building styles occur occasionally along the A39, though in the main farm building conversions have retained the local vernacular (e.g. Northway near Horns Cross, and Rixlade Farm near Abbotsham).