

**Nature Conservation, Appendix D**

Status	Designation	Number in SC MAREA	Designation Information		Site Characteristics	
			Site Name	Component Sites (if applicable)	General Site Character	Qualifying Features
International	Special Area of Conservation (SAC) with marine components	3	Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons		<p>Tidal rivers. Estuaries. Mud flats. Sand flats. Lagoons (including saltwork basins) (91.7%);</p> <p>Salt marshes. Salt pastures. Salt steppes (8.3%).</p>	<p><b>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</b></p> <p><u>Coastal lagoons * Priority feature</u></p> <p>The Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC site encompasses a number of lagoons in the marshes in the Keyhaven – Pennington area, at Farlington Marshes in Chichester Harbour, behind the sea-wall at Bembridge Harbour and at Gilkicker, near Gosport.</p> <p>The coastal lagoons support a range of salinities and substrates, ranging from soft mud to muddy sand with a high proportion of shingle. The nationally rare foxtail stonewort <i>Lamprothamnium papulosum</i>, the nationally scarce lagoon sand shrimp <i>Gammarus insensibilis</i>, and the nationally scarce starlet sea anemone <i>Nematostella vectensis</i> are found within the lagoonal environment.</p> <p>The lagoons in Keyhaven – Pennington Marshes are part of a network of ditches and ponds within the saltmarsh behind a sea-wall. Farlington Marshes is an isolated lagoon in marsh pasture that, although separated from the sea by a sea-wall, receives sea water during spring tides. The lagoon holds a well-developed low-medium salinity insect-dominated fauna. Gilkicker Lagoon is a sluiced lagoon with marked seasonal salinity fluctuation and supports a high species diversity. The lagoons at Bembridge Harbour have formed in a depression behind the sea-wall and sea water enters by percolation. Species diversity in these lagoons is high and the fauna includes very high densities of <i>N. vectensis</i>.</p> <p><b>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site:</b> N/A</p> <p><b>Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</b> N/A</p> <p><b>Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection:</b> N/A</p>
			Solent Maritime		<p>Marine areas. Sea inlets (14%);</p> <p>Tidal rivers. Estuaries. Mud flats. Sand flats. Lagoons (including saltwork basins) (59%);</p> <p>Salt marshes. Salt pastures. Salt steppes (23%);</p> <p>Coastal sand dunes. Sand beaches. Machair (0.5%);</p> <p>Shingle. Sea cliffs. Islets (3%);</p> <p>Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (0.5%).</p>	<p><b>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</b></p> <p><u>Estuaries</u></p> <p>The Solent encompasses a major estuarine system with four coastal plain estuaries (the Yar, Medina, King’s Quay Shore, and Hamble) and four bar-built estuaries (Newtown Harbour, Beaulieu, Langstone Harbour and Chichester Harbour). The Solent and its inlets are unique in Britain and Europe for their hydrographic regime of four tides each day, and for the complexity of the marine and estuarine habitats present within the area. Sediment habitats within the estuaries include extensive estuarine flats, often with intertidal areas supporting eelgrass <i>Zostera</i> spp. and green algae, sand and shingle spits, and natural shoreline transitions. The mudflats range from low and variable salinity in the upper reaches of the estuaries to very sheltered almost fully marine muds in Chichester and Langstone Harbours. Unusual features include the presence of very rare sponges in the Yar estuary and a sandy ‘reef’ of the polychaete <i>Sabellaria spinulosa</i> on the steep eastern side of the entrance to Chichester Harbour.</p> <p><u>Spartina swards (<i>Spartinion maritimae</i>)</u></p> <p>The Solent Maritime SAC is the only site for smooth cord-grass <i>Spartina alterniflora</i> in the UK and is one of only two sites where significant amounts of small cord-grass <i>S. maritima</i> are found. It is also one of the few remaining sites for Townsend’s cord-grass <i>S. x townsendii</i> and holds extensive areas of common cord-grass <i>Spartina anglica</i>, all four taxa thus occurring here in close proximity. It has additional historical and scientific interest as the site where <i>S. alterniflora</i> was first recorded in the UK (1829) and where <i>S. x townsendii</i> and later, <i>S. anglica</i> first occurred.</p> <p><u>Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>)</u></p> <p>The Solent contains the second-largest aggregation of Atlantic salt meadows in south and south-west England. Solent Maritime is a composite site composed of a large number of separate areas of saltmarsh. In contrast to the Severn estuary, the salt meadows at this site are notable as being representative of the ungrazed type and support a different range of communities dominated by sea-purslane <i>Atriplex portulacoides</i>, common sea-lavender <i>Limonium vulgare</i> and thrift <i>Armeria maritima</i>. As a whole the site is less truncated by man-made features than other parts of the south coast and shows rare and unusual transitions to freshwater reed swamp and alluvial woodland as well as coastal grassland. Typical Atlantic salt meadow is still widespread in this site, despite a long history of colonisation by cord-grass <i>Spartina</i> spp.</p> <p><b>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site:</b></p> <p><u>Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time</u></p> <p><u>Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide</u></p> <p><u>Coastal lagoons</u></p> <p><u>Annual vegetation of drift lines</u></p>

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			Site Name	Component Sites (if applicable)	General Site Character	Qualifying Features
						<p><u>Perennial vegetation of stony banks</u></p> <p><u>Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand</u></p> <p><u>Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> ('white dunes')</u></p> <p><b>Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</b> N/A</p> <p><b>Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection:</b></p> <p><u>Desmoulins whorl snail <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i></u></p>
			South Wight Maritime		<p>Marine areas. Sea inlets (96%); Coastal sand dunes. Sand beaches. Machair (0.5%); Shingle. Sea cliffs. Islets (1%); Heath. Scrub. Maquis and garrigue. Phygrana (1%); Dry grassland. Steppes (1%); Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (0.5%).</p>	<p><b>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</b></p> <p><u>Reefs</u></p> <p>The southern shore of the Isle of Wight off the coast of southern England includes a number of subtidal reefs that extend into the intertidal zone. This site is selected on account of its variety of reef types and associated communities, including chalk, limestone and sandstone reefs. To the west and south-west some of the most important subtidal British chalk reefs occur, representing over 5% of Europe's coastal chalk exposures, including the extensive tide-swept reef off the Needles and examples at Culver Cliff and Freshwater Bay. These support a diverse range of species in both the subtidal and intertidal.</p> <p>Other reef habitats within the site include areas of large boulders off the coast around Ventnor. There is a large reef of harder limestone off Bembridge and Whitecliff Bay, where the horizontal and vertical faces and crevices provide a range of habitats. The bedrock is extensively bored by bivalves. Their presence, together with the holes they create, give shelter to other species, which adds further to habitat diversity. Intertidal pools support a diverse marine life, including a number of rare or unusual seaweeds, such as the shepherd's purse seaweed <i>Gracilaria bursa-pastoris</i>. A number of other species reach their eastern limit of distribution along the English Channel at the Isle of Wight.</p> <p><u>Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts</u></p> <p>South Wight Maritime SAC represents contrasting Cretaceous hard cliffs, semi-stable soft cliffs and mobile soft cliffs. The western and eastern extremities of the site consist of high chalk cliffs with species-rich calcareous grassland vegetation, the former exposed to maritime influence and the latter comparatively sheltered. At the western end, the site adjoins the Isle of Wight Downs, providing an unusual combination of maritime and chalk grassland. The most exposed chalk cliff tops support important assemblages of nationally rare lichens, including <i>Fulgensia fulgens</i>. The longest section is composed of slumping acidic sandstones and neutral clays with an exposed south-westerly aspect. The vegetation communities are a mixture of acidic and mesotrophic grasslands with some scrub and a greater element of maritime species, such as thrift <i>Armeria maritima</i>, than is usual on soft cliffs. This section supports the Glanville fritillary butterfly <i>Melitaea cinxia</i> in its main English stronghold. A small, separate section of the site on clays has a range of successional stages, including woodland, influenced by landslips. These cliffs are minimally affected by sea defence works, which elsewhere disrupt ecological processes linked to coastal erosion, and together they form one of the longest lengths of naturally-developing soft cliffs on the UK coastline.</p> <p><u>Submerged or partially submerged sea caves</u></p> <p>The southern shore of the Isle of Wight, off the coast of southern England, includes a number of either submerged or partially submerged sea caves. The exposure of the south coast of the island to high wave energy has allowed the erosion of the Cretaceous calcareous hard cliffs to form sea caves. Examples of this habitat can be found from the Needles along the south-west coast of the Island to Watcombe Bay, and also in Culver Cliff on the south-east coast of the Island. This site also contains the only known location of subtidal chalk caves in the UK. The large littoral caves in the chalk cliffs are of ecological importance, with many hosting rare algal species, which are restricted to this type of habitat. The fauna of these sea caves includes a range of mollusc species such as limpets <i>Patella</i> spp. and the horseshoe worm <i>Phoronis hippocrepia</i>.</p> <p><b>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site:</b> N/A</p> <p><b>Annex II species that are a primer reason for selection of this site:</b> N/A</p> <p><b>Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection:</b> N/A</p>
	Special Area of Conservation (SAC) encompassing coastal features	5	St Albans Head to Durlston Head		<p>Shingle. Sea cliffs. Islets (5%); Heath. Scrub. Maquis and garrigue. Phygrana (20%); Dry grassland. Steppes (72%); Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places,</p>	<p><b>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</b></p> <p><u>Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts</u></p> <p>St Albans Head to Durlston Head, with Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs, form a single unit of cliffed coastline s approx. 40 km in length. The cliffs are formed of hard limestones, with chalk at the eastern end, interspersed with slumped sections of soft cliff of sand and clays. The cliffs support species-rich calcareous grassland with species that are rare in the UK, such as wild cabbage <i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>oleracea</i>, early spider-orchid <i>Ophrys sphegodes</i> and Nottingham catchfly <i>Silene nutans</i>.</p> <p><u>Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (important orchid sites)</u> * Priority feature</p>

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					mines, industrial sites) (3%).	<p>This site contains extensive species-rich examples of <i>Brachypodium pinnatum</i> calcareous grassland. The site holds the largest UK population of early spider-orchid <i>Ophrys sphegodes</i>. This species has declined very dramatically in the UK since the 1950s, in both population size and range.</p> <p><b>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site:</b> N/A</p> <p><b>Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</b></p> <p><u>Early gentian <i>Gentianella anglica</i></u></p> <p>The St Albans Head to Durlston Head SAC site on the Dorset coast, together with Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs, supports important long-standing populations of early gentian <i>Gentianella anglica</i> numbering several thousands of plants in floristically-rich calcareous grassland.</p> <p><b>Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection:</b></p> <p><u>Greater horseshoe bat <i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i></u></p>
			Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs		Shingle. Sea cliffs. Islets (40%); Heath. Scrub. Maquis and garrigue. Phygrana (5%); Dry grassland. Steppes (55%).	<p><b>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</b></p> <p><u>Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts</u></p> <p>The Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs including the detached peninsula of Portland, with St Albans Head to Durlston Head, forms a single unit of cliffed coastline roughly 40 km in length. The cliffs are formed of hard limestones, with chalk at the eastern end, interspersed with slumped sections of soft cliff of sand and clays. The cliffs support species-rich calcareous grassland with species that are rare in the UK, such as wild cabbage <i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>oleracea</i>, early spider-orchid <i>Ophrys sphegodes</i> and Nottingham catchfly <i>Silene nutans</i>. The Portland peninsula, extending 8 km south of the mainland, demonstrates very clearly the contrast between the exposed western and southern coasts, with sheer rock faces and sparse maritime vegetation, and the sheltered eastern side, with sloping cliffs supporting scrub communities, where wood spurge <i>Euphorbia amygdaloides</i> grows in grassland.</p> <p><u>Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>)</u></p> <p>Semi-natural dry grassland occurs at the St Albans Head to Durlston Head site in both inland and coastal situations on both chalk and Jurassic limestone. The site contains extensive species-rich examples of <i>Brachypodium pinnatum</i> grassland in the southern part of its UK range. Smaller areas of <i>Festuca ovina</i> – <i>Avenula pratensis</i> grassland occur on shallow soils on steeper slopes. Transitions from calcareous grassland to both chalk heath and acid grassland are also present. The site has well-developed terricolous and saxicolous lichen and bryophyte communities associated with open turf, chalk rock and pebbles, and flinty soils.</p> <p><b>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site:</b></p> <p><u>Annual vegetation of drift lines</u></p> <p><b>Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</b></p> <p><u>Early gentian <i>Gentianella anglica</i></u></p> <p>The St Albans Head to Durlston Head SAC together with St Albans Head to Durlston Head, supports important long-standing populations of early gentian <i>Gentianella anglica</i> numbering several thousands of plants in floristically-rich calcareous grassland.</p> <p><b>Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection:</b> N/A</p>
			Dorset Heaths (Purbeck and Wareham) and Studland Dunes		Coastal sand dunes. Sand beaches. Machair (5%); Inland water bodies (standing water, running water) (4%); Bogs. Marshes. Water fringed vegetation. Fens (8%); Heath. Scrub. Maquis and garrigue. Phygrana (79%); Dry grassland. Steppes (1%); Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (1%); Coniferous woodland (1%);	<p><b>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</b></p> <p><u>Embryonic shifting dunes</u></p> <p>Embryonic shifting dunes initiate the very clear successional sequence of dune communities at Studland Dunes, which are representative of the habitat type in southern England. This is a part of the UK where this habitat type is rare, partly owing to intensive recreational use of the coast. The site is also of interest in that there are well-developed examples of both sand couch <i>Elytrigia juncea</i> and lyme-grass <i>Leymus arenarius</i>-dominated communities. The former occurs discontinuously along the whole shoreline, while the latter is locally abundant in disturbed locations at the northern end of the site.</p> <p><u>Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> ('white dunes')</u></p> <p>Studland Dunes shifting dunes form one part of the very well-marked successional sequences. The seaward dune ridge supports marram <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> vegetation mainly of NVC type <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> mobile dune, <i>Festuca rubra</i> sub-community, though three other types are represented. There are transitions to embryonic dunes, which are rare on the south coast partly because of intense recreational pressure, and extensive transitions to decalcified fixed dunes and dune heath.</p>

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					Mixed woodland (1%).	<p><u>Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (Calluno-Ulicetea) * Priority feature</u></p> <p>Studland Dunes comprises the only large dune heath site in the south and south-west of Britain. The heathland occupies a series of dune ridges, which have developed over a period of several hundred years. Structure and function of the dune heath communities are therefore well-conserved. The dry open heath is an important habitat for rare reptiles such as sand lizard <i>Lacerta agilis</i>. At the western margin of the dune ridges the dry dune heath grades into wet heath in which cross-leaved heath <i>Erica tetralix</i> is prominent, while at the northern end it grades into the southern heathland types of inland Dorset.</p> <p><u>Humid dune slacks</u></p> <p>The dune building processes of the large acidic Studland Dunes system are still active, which have resulted in the formation of acidic humid dune slack communities with a high water table, located in the parallel hollows between the dune ridges. In these slacks, acidic fen and reedbeds have developed. Some areas are dominated by grey willow <i>Salix cinerea</i> and birch <i>Betula sp. carr</i> with the very local royal fern <i>Osmunda regalis</i> a conspicuous element. The dune slacks are linked to an area of open fresh water known as the Little Sea.</p> <p><u>Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (Littorelletalia uniflorae)</u></p> <p>The Little Sea is a shallow lake at Studland Dunes. It is of recent origin (&lt;500 years old), formed as a large body of seawater became landlocked by the growing sand dunes (hence the name Little Sea). This water is now fresh and is replenished by acidic, oligotrophic water draining off the adjacent heathland, which then flows through the dune slacks and into the sea. The submerged vegetation is characterised by communities of alternate water-milfoil <i>Myriophyllum alterniflorum</i>, shoreweed <i>Littorella uniflora</i> and spring quillwort <i>Isoetes echinospora</i>, together with bladderwort <i>Utricularia australis</i> and less frequently six-stamened waterwort <i>Elatine hexandra</i>.</p> <p><u>Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix</u></p> <p>The two Dorset Heaths SACs (together with the New Forest) contain a large proportion of the total UK resource of lowland northern Atlantic wet heaths. The habitat is of the <i>Erica tetralix</i> – <i>Sphagnum compactum</i> wet heath type and occurs as well-developed transitions between dry heath and valley bog. This habitat type is important for rare plants, such as marsh gentian <i>Gentiana pneumonanthe</i>, brown beak-sedge <i>Rhynchospora fusca</i> and great sundew <i>Drosera anglica</i>. The wet heaths and mires are also important for scarce Odonata, such as small red damselfly <i>Ceragrion tenellum</i> and the Annex II species Southern damselfly <i>Coenagrion mercuriale</i>. The sites are an important transitional area between the more oceanic heathlands of the south-west peninsula and the semi-continental heathlands of eastern England.</p> <p><u>Temperate Atlantic wet heaths with Erica ciliaris and Erica tetralix * Priority feature</u></p> <p>The greatest concentration of Dorset heath <i>Erica ciliaris</i> in the UK is in Dorset on the heaths south of Poole Harbour, with outlying stands elsewhere in Dorset. Dorset Heaths (Purbeck and Wareham) and Studland Dunes has therefore been selected as it contains a high proportion of the total UK population of <i>E. ciliaris</i>.</p> <p><u>European dry heaths</u></p> <p>The Dorset Heaths site has extensive stands of lowland dry heath vegetation. The types include <i>Calluna vulgaris</i> – <i>Ulex</i> minor heath, <i>Ulex</i> minor – <i>Agrostis curtisii</i> heath and some areas of <i>Ulex gallii</i> – <i>Agrostis curtisii</i> heath. The communities are dominated by heather <i>Calluna vulgaris</i> growing in association with bell heather <i>Erica cinerea</i> and one of the dwarf gorse species – dwarf gorse <i>Ulex minor</i> or western gorse <i>U. gallii</i>. The heaths are rich in rare plants, invertebrates, birds and reptiles. The Dorset Heath and the New Forest SACs are selected because together they contain a high proportion of all the lowland European dry heaths in the UK. There are, however, significant differences in the ecology of the two areas, associated with more oceanic conditions in Dorset and the continuous history of grazing in the New Forest.</p> <p><u>Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion</u></p> <p>The two Dorset Heaths SACs (together with the New Forest), support a large proportion of the resource of Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion within England. The habitat is widespread on the Dorset Heaths, both in bog pools of valley mires and in flushes. There are numerous valley mires within the Dorset Heaths, and the habitat type is most extensively represented here as part of a habitat mosaic. This location shows extensive representation of brown-beak sedge <i>Rhynchospora fusca</i> and is also important for great sundew <i>Drosera anglica</i> and bog orchid <i>Hammarbya paludosa</i>.</p> <p><u>Bog woodland * Priority feature</u></p> <p>The Dorset Heaths contain small pockets of wet woodland within valley mires but most of these appear to be of recent origin. However, at Morden Bog a Bog woodland stand is of ancient origin, as shown by its pollen record and old maps. The woodland is dominated by downy birch <i>Betula pubescens</i> with a ground flora consisting of greater tussock sedge <i>Carex paniculata</i> and purple moor-grass <i>Molinia caerulea</i>. There is a rich epiphytic lichen assemblage, again indicating the persistence of this area of bog woodland.</p> <p><b>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site:</b></p> <p><u>Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae)</u></p>

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						<p><u>Calcareous fens with Cladium mariscus and species of the Caricion davallianae</u> * Priority feature</p> <p><u>Alkaline fens</u></p> <p><u>Old acidophilous oak woods with Quercus robur on sandy plains</u></p> <p><b>Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</b></p> <p><u>Southern damselfly Coenagrion mercuriale</u></p> <p>The Dorset Heaths represent the Dorset stronghold of southern damselfly <i>Coenagrion mercuriale</i>. The large size of the two SACs, and a long history of records indicating well-established populations, should ensure the future viability of the small populations that occur here.</p> <p><b>Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection:</b></p> <p><u>Great crested newt Triturus cristatus</u></p>
			Isle of Wight Downs		<p>Shingle. Sea cliffs. Islets (4%); Heath. Scrub. Maquis and garrigue. Phygrana (10%); Dry grassland. Steppes (70%); Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (16%).</p>	<p><b>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</b></p> <p><u>Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts</u></p> <p>The Isle of Wight Downs represents one of the best examples of chalk grassland in the south of England under maritime influence. The exposed and weathered cliff tops provide a range of sheltered and exposed conditions. The most exposed chalk cliff tops support important assemblages of nationally rare lichens, including <i>Fulgensia fulgens</i>. The western end of the site adjoins the cliffs of the South Wight Maritime SAC. The instability and maritime influence has altered the chalk grassland vegetation to include maritime species such as yellow horned-poppy <i>Glaucium flavum</i>, rock samphire <i>Crithmum maritimum</i>, wild cabbage <i>Brassica oleracea</i>, and buck's-horn plantain <i>Plantago coronopus</i>, together with calcareous grassland species such as common restharrow <i>Ononis repens</i>, wild carrot <i>Daucus carota</i>, carline thistle <i>Carlina vulgaris</i> and lesser hawkbit <i>Leontodon saxatilis</i>. This site represents an uncommon transition from chalk grassland species to sea cliff vegetation, which can include the Annex II species.</p> <p><u>Early gentian Gentianella anglica</u></p> <p><u>European dry heaths</u></p> <p>This site comprises tracts of Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<u>Festuco-Brometalia</u>). The dry heath supports small breeding populations of Dartford warbler <i>Sylvia undata</i> and a wide range of invertebrates and plants. There are also some stands of the rare chalk heath (with features intermediate between <u>Festuca ovina – Avenula pratensis</u> grassland and <u>Calluna - Ulex</u> heath. Heathland on deep gravel overlying chalk is an unusual biological feature in the UK.</p> <p><u>Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia)</u></p> <p>The Isle of Wight Downs complex consists of large areas of semi-natural dry grassland on chalk at the southern extremity of its UK range. It provides extensive examples of <i>Festuca ovina – Avenula pratensis</i> grassland in both inland and coastal situations on a variety of aspects and slope gradients. Locally, the <i>Festuca – Avenula</i> grassland grades into <i>Festuca ovina – Carlina vulgaris</i> grassland, particularly on south-facing slopes on the coast. This open, stony grassland contains one of the most important examples of lichen-rich maritime chalk grassland in the UK. Smaller areas of <i>Bromus erectus</i> grassland occur on the eastern parts of the chalk outcrop. Semi-natural dry grassland is locally replaced by European dry heaths where superficial deposits overlie the chalk.</p> <p><b>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site:</b> N/A</p> <p><b>Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</b></p> <p><u>Early gentian Gentianella anglica</u></p> <p>Chalk grasslands on the southern coast of the Isle of Wight support very large populations of early gentian <i>Gentianella anglica</i>, numbering hundreds of thousands of plants, although these populations have varied in size from year to year. Compton Down supports the largest populations.</p> <p><b>Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection:</b> N/A</p>
			Briddlesford Copses		<p>Tidal rivers. Estuaries. Mud flats. Sand flats. Lagoons (including saltwork basins) (1%); Salt marshes. Salt pastures. Salt steppes (4%); Broad-leaved deciduous</p>	<p><b>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</b> N/A</p> <p><b>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site:</b> N/A</p> <p><b>Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</b></p> <p><u>Buckstein's bat Myotis bechsteinii</u></p> <p>The Briddlesford Copse complex of woodlands represents the most varied, structurally diverse and species-rich cluster of ancient broadleaved woodland on the Isle of Wight and supports an</p>

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			Site Name	Component Sites (if applicable)	General Site Character	Qualifying Features
					woodland (90%); Mixed woodland (5%).	important breeding population of the rare Bechstein's bat <i>Myotis bechsteinii</i> . The bats use holes and crevices in mature trees for roosting and the interconnecting woodlands for feeding. <b>Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection: N/A</b>
	Special Protection Area (SPA) with marine components	5	Solent and Southampton Water	SSSIs/ASSIs Brading Marshes to St. Helen's Ledges; Eling and Bury Marshes; Hurst Castle and Lymington River Estuary; Hythe to Calshot Marshes; King's Quay Shore; Lee-on-The-Solent to Itchen Estuary; Lincegrove and Hackett's Marshes; Lower Test Valley; Lymington River Reedbeds; Medina Estuary; Newtown Harbour; North Solent; Ryde Sands and Wootton Creek; Sowley Pond; Thorness Bay; Titchfield Haven; Upper Hamble Estuary and Woods; Whitecliff Bay and Bembridge Ledges; Yar Estuary.	Estuaries and harbours with extensive mud-flats and saltmarshes; Coastal habitats including saline lagoons, shingle beaches, reed beds, damp woodland and grazing marsh.  The mud-flats support beds of <i>Enteromorpha</i> spp. and <i>Zostera</i> spp.	<p><b>Qualifying species:</b></p> <p>This site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I of the Directive:</p> <p><u>During the breeding season</u></p> <p>Common Tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i>, 267 pairs representing at least 2.2% of the breeding population in Great Britain (5 year peak mean, 1993-1997)</p> <p>Little Tern <i>Sterna albifrons</i>, 49 pairs representing at least 2.0% of the breeding population in Great Britain (5 year peak mean, 1993-1997)</p> <p>Mediterranean Gull <i>Larus melanocephalus</i>, 2 pairs representing at least 20.0% of the breeding population in Great Britain (5 year peak mean, 1994-1998)</p> <p>Roseate Tern <i>Sterna dougallii</i>, 2 pairs representing at least 3.3% of the breeding population in Great Britain (5 year peak mean, 1993-1997)</p> <p>Sandwich Tern <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>, 231 pairs representing at least 1.7% of the breeding population in Great Britain (5 year peak mean, 1993-1997)</p> <p>This site also qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following migratory species:</p> <p><u>Over winter</u></p> <p>Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>, 1,125 individuals representing at least 1.6% of the wintering Iceland - breeding population (5 year peak mean, 1992/3-1996/7)</p> <p>Dark-bellied Brent Goose <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>, 7,506 individuals representing at least 2.5% of the wintering Western Siberia/Western Europe population (5 year peak mean, 1992/3-1996/7)</p> <p>Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>, 552 individuals representing at least 1.1% of the wintering Europe/Northern Africa - wintering population (5 year peak mean, 1992/3-1996/7)</p> <p>Teal <i>Anas crecca</i>, 4,400 individuals representing at least 1.1% of the wintering Northwestern Europe population (5 year peak mean, 1992/3-1996/7)</p> <p><b>Assemblage qualification: A wetland of international importance</b></p> <p>The area qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) by regularly supporting at least 20,000 waterfowl (see Ornithology Appendix for full species list).</p>
			Portsmouth Harbour		Estuaries and harbours with extensive mud-flats and saltmarshes; Portsmouth Harbour is a large industrialised estuary and includes one of the four largest expanses of mud-flats and tidal creeks on the south coast of Britain; The mud-flats support large beds of Narrow-leaved Eelgrass <i>Zostera angustifolia</i> , Dwarf Eelgrass <i>Z. noltii</i> and	<p><b>Qualifying species:</b></p> <p>This site qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following migratory species:</p> <p><u>Over winter</u></p> <p>Dark-bellied Brent Goose <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>, 2,847 individuals representing at least 0.9% of the wintering Western Siberia/Western Europe population (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)</p>

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					extensive green algae beds mainly Enteromorpha species and Sea Lettuce <i>Ulva lactuca</i> .	
			Chichester and Langstone Harbours		Sheltered estuarine basins comprising extensive sand- and mud-flats exposed at low tide; The mud-flats are rich in invertebrates and also support extensive beds of algae, Enteromorpha species, and eelgrasses <i>Zostera</i> spp.	<p><b>Qualifying species:</b></p> <p>This site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I of the Directive:</p> <p><u>During the breeding season</u></p> <p>Little Tern <i>Sterna albifrons</i>, 100 pairs representing up to 4.2% of the breeding population in Great Britain (5 year mean, 1992-1996)</p> <p>Sandwich Tern <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>, 158 pairs representing up to 1.1% of the breeding population in Great Britain (1998)</p> <p><u>On passage</u></p> <p>Little Egret <i>Egretta garzetta</i>, 137 individuals representing up to 17.1% of the population in Great Britain (Count as at 1998)</p> <p><u>Over winter</u></p> <p>Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i>, 1,692 individuals representing up to 3.2% of the wintering population in Great Britain (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)</p> <p>Little Egret <i>Egretta garzetta</i>, 100 individuals representing up to 20.0% of the wintering population in Great Britain (Count as at 1998)</p> <p>This site also qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following migratory species:</p> <p><u>On passage</u></p> <p>Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>, 2,471 individuals representing up to 4.9% of the Europe/Northern Africa - wintering population (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)</p> <p><u>Over winter</u></p> <p>Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>, 1,003 individuals representing up to 1.4% of the wintering Iceland - breeding population (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)</p> <p>Dark-bellied Brent Goose <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>, 17,119 individuals representing up to 5.7% of the wintering Western Siberia/Western Europe population (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)</p> <p>Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>, 44,294 individuals representing up to 3.2% of the wintering Northern Siberia/Europe/Western Africa population (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)</p> <p>Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>, 3,825 individuals representing up to 2.5% of the wintering Eastern Atlantic - wintering population (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)</p> <p>Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>, 1,788 individuals representing up to 1.2% of the wintering Eastern Atlantic - wintering population (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)</p> <p>Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>, 846 individuals representing up to 1.7% of the wintering Europe/Northern Africa - wintering population (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)</p> <p><b>Assemblage qualification: A wetland of international importance.</b></p> <p>The area qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by regularly supporting at least 20,000 waterfowl (see Ornithology Appendix for full species list).</p>
			Poole Harbour	SSSIs/ASSIs Arne; Holton and Sandford Heaths; Poole Harbour; Studland and Godlingston Heaths; The Moors; Wareham Meadows.	Bar-built estuary with an unusual micro-tidal regime (a significant body of water is retained throughout the tidal cycle) resulting in Portsmouth Harbour exhibiting many of the characteristics of a lagoon. Extensive intertidal mud-flats; Grazing marshes important to wintering waterbirds; Saltmarsh. Reedbed, valley mire and heath habitats.	<p><b>Qualifying species:</b></p> <p>This site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I of the Directive:</p> <p><u>During the breeding season</u></p> <p>Common Tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i>, 155 pairs representing at least 1.3% of the breeding population in Great Britain (5 year mean 1993-1997)</p> <p>Mediterranean Gull <i>Larus melanocephalus</i>, 5 pairs representing at least 50.0% of the breeding population in Great Britain (5 year mean 1993-1997)</p> <p><u>On passage</u></p> <p>Aquatic Warbler <i>Acrocephalus paludicola</i>, 11 individuals representing at least 16.4% of the population in Great Britain (Count as at 1997)</p> <p>Little Egret <i>Egretta garzetta</i>, 107 individuals representing at least 13.4% of the population in Great Britain (Count as at 1998)</p> <p><u>Over winter</u></p> <p>Avocet <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>, 459 individuals representing at least 36.1% of the wintering population in Great Britain (5 year peak mean 1992/3-1996/7)</p> <p>Little Egret <i>Egretta garzetta</i>, 83 individuals representing at least 16.6% of the wintering population in Great Britain (Count as at 1998)</p>

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						<p>This site also qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following migratory species:</p> <p><u>Over winter</u></p> <p>Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>, 1,576 individuals representing at least 2.3% of the wintering Iceland - breeding population (5 year peak mean 1992/3-1996/7)</p> <p>Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>, 3,569 individuals representing at least 1.2% of the wintering Northwestern Europe population (4 year peak mean 1993/4-1996/7)</p> <p><b>Assemblage qualification: A wetland of international importance:</b></p> <p>The area qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by regularly supporting at least 20,000 waterfowl(see Ornithology Appendix for full species list).</p>
			Pagham Harbour	Pagham Harbour	<p>Estuarine basin that comprising an extensive central area of saltmarsh and intertidal mud-flats, surrounded by lagoons, shingle, open water, reed swamp and wet permanent grassland;</p> <p>Lower saltmarsh dominated by Common Cord-grass <i>Spartina anglica</i>, with patches of Glasswort <i>Salicornia</i> spp.</p>	<p><b>Qualifying species:</b></p> <p>This site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I of the Directive:</p> <p><u>During the breeding season</u></p> <p>Little Tern <i>Sterna albifrons</i>, 12 pairs representing 0.5% of the breeding population in Great Britain (Count as at 1995)</p> <p><u>Over winter</u></p> <p>Ruff <i>Philomachus pugnax</i>, 160 individuals representing at least 22.9% of the wintering population in Great Britain</p> <p>This site also qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following migratory species:</p> <p><u>Over winter</u></p> <p>Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i>, 628 individuals representing at least 1.0% of the wintering Northwestern Europe population (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)</p>
	Special Protection Area (SPA) encompassing coastal elements	1	New Forest		<p>Extensive wet and dry heaths with rich valley mires and associated wet and dry grasslands;</p> <p>Ancient pasture woodlands and inclosure woodlands;</p> <p>Network of clean rivers and streams and frequent permanent and temporary ponds.</p>	<p><b>Qualifying species:</b></p> <p>This site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I of the Directive:</p> <p><u>During the breeding season</u></p> <p>Dartford Warbler <i>Sylvia undata</i>, 538 pairs representing at least 33.6% of the breeding population in Great Britain</p> <p>Honey Buzzard <i>Pernis apivorus</i>, 2 pairs representing at least 10.0% of the breeding population in Great Britain</p> <p>Nightjar <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>, 300 pairs representing at least 8.8% of the breeding population in Great Britain</p> <p>Woodlark <i>Lullula arborea</i>, 184 pairs representing at least 12.3% of the breeding population in Great Britain (Count as at 1997)</p> <p><u>Over winter</u></p> <p>Hen Harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i>, 15 individuals representing at least 2.0% of the wintering population in Great Britain</p>
	RAMSAR	8	Dorset Heathlands		<p>Extensive and fragmented heathland areas centred around the estuary of Poole Harbour and adjacent to the urban conurbation of Bournemouth and Poole;</p> <p>The heathland contains numerous examples of wet heath and acid valley mire habitats, restricted to the Atlantic fringe of Europe. These heath wetlands are among the best of their type in</p>	<p>The site supports the following features, qualifying under the respective RAMSAR criterion:</p> <p><b>Ramsar criterion 1:</b></p> <p>Contains particularly good examples of (i) northern Atlantic wet heaths with cross-leaved heath <i>Erica tetralix</i> and (ii) acid mire with Rhynchosporion.</p> <p>Contains largest example in Britain of southern Atlantic wet heaths with Dorset heath <i>Erica ciliaris</i> and cross-leaved heath <i>Erica tetralix</i>.</p> <p><b>Ramsar criterion 2:</b></p> <p>Supports 1 nationally rare and 13 nationally scarce wetland plant species, and at least 28 nationally rare wetland invertebrate species.</p> <p><b>Ramsar criterion 3:</b></p> <p>Has a high species richness and high ecological diversity of wetland habitat types and transitions, and lies in one of the most biologically-rich wetland areas of lowland Britain, being continuous with three other Ramsar sites: Poole Harbour, Avon Valley and The New Forest.</p>

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					lowland Britain.	
			Poole Harbour		<p>Bar-built estuary occupying a shallow depression in the acidic, tertiary deposits towards the south-western extremity of the Hampshire Basin which has been formed over the last 5000 years by a rise in sea level;</p> <p>An unusual micro-tidal regime means that a significant body of water is retained throughout the tidal cycle and the site exhibits many of the characteristics of a lagoon;</p> <p>Extensive intertidal mudflats, fringed on the landward side by saltmarshes or reed beds;</p> <p>The river valleys of the lower Frome and Piddle support grazing marsh;</p> <p>Internationally important Dorset heathlands along the western and southern shores with an unusual transition from saltmarsh to valley mire.</p>	<p>The site supports the following features, qualifying under the respective RAMSAR criterion:</p> <p><b>Ramsar criterion 1:</b></p> <p>The site is the best and largest example of a bar-built estuary with lagoonal characteristics (a natural harbour) in Britain.</p> <p><b>Ramsar criterion 2:</b></p> <p>The site supports two species of nationally rare plant and one nationally rare alga. There are at least three British Red data book invertebrate species.</p> <p><b>Ramsar criterion 3:</b></p> <p>The site includes examples of natural habitat types of community interest - Mediterranean and thermo Atlantic halophilous scrubs, in this case dominated by <i>Suaeda vera</i>, as well as calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i>. Transitions from saltmarsh through to peatland mires are of exceptional conservation importance as few such examples remain in Britain.</p> <p>The site supports nationally important populations of breeding waterfowl including Common tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i> and Mediterranean gull <i>Larus melanocephalus</i>. Over winter the site also supports a nationally important population of Avocet <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>.</p> <p><b>Ramsar criterion 5:</b></p> <p><u>Assemblages of international importance:</u></p> <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <p>24709 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003)</p> <p><b>Ramsar criterion 6: Species/populations occurring at levels of international importance.</b></p> <p><u>Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation):</u></p> <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <p>Common shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>, NW Europe 2120 individuals, representing an average of 2.7% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)</p> <p>Black-tailed godwit <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>, Iceland/W Europe 1724 individuals, representing an average of 4.9% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)</p> <p><u>Species/populations identified subsequent to designation for possible future consideration under criterion:</u></p> <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <p>Pied avocet , <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>, Europe/Northwest Africa 1260 individuals, representing an average of 1.7% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)</p>
			Avon Valley		<p>The site encompasses the lower reaches of the River Avon and its floodplain between Bickton and Christchurch;</p> <p>The River Avon displays wide fluctuations in water level and parts of the valley are regularly flooded in winter;</p> <p>The valley includes one of the largest expanses of unimproved floodplain grassland in Britain, including extensive areas managed as</p>	<p>The site supports the following features, qualifying under the respective RAMSAR criterion:</p> <p><b>Ramsar criterion 1:</b></p> <p>The site shows a greater range of habitats than any other chalk river in Britain, including fen, mire, lowland wet grassland and small areas of woodland.</p> <p><b>Ramsar criterion 2:</b></p> <p>The site supports a diverse assemblage of wetland flora and fauna including several nationally-rare species.</p> <p><b>Ramsar criterion 6: Species/populations occurring at levels of international importance.</b></p> <p><u>Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation):</u></p> <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <p>Gadwall <i>Anas strepera strepera</i>, NW Europe 537 individuals, representing an average of 3.1% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9- 2002/3)</p> <p><u>Species/populations identified subsequent to designation for possible future consideration under criterion 6:</u></p> <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <p>Northern pintail <i>Anas acuta</i>, NW Europe 715 individuals, representing an average of 1.1% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)</p>

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					hay meadow.	Black-tailed godwit <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i> , Iceland/W Europe 1142 individuals, representing an average of 3.2% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
			New Forest		<p>The New Forest is an area of semi-natural vegetation supporting valley mires, fens and wet heath within catchments whose uncultivated and undeveloped state buffer the mires against adverse ecological change;</p> <p>The site supports wetland habitats including several mainly acidic ephemeral ponds and a network of small streams which have no lowland equivalent in the UK;</p> <p>In the most nutrient-poor zones, Sphagnum bog-mosses, cross-leaved heath, bog asphodel, common cottongrass and similar species predominate.</p>	<p>The site supports the following features, qualifying under the respective RAMSAR criterion:</p> <p><b>Ramsar criterion 1:</b></p> <p>Valley mires and wet heaths are found throughout the site and are of outstanding scientific interest. The mires and heaths are within catchments whose uncultivated and undeveloped state buffer the mires against adverse ecological change. This is the largest concentration of intact valley mires of their type in Britain.</p> <p><b>Ramsar criterion 2:</b></p> <p>The site supports a diverse assemblage of wetland plants and animals including several nationally rare species. Seven species of nationally rare plant are found on the site, as are at least 65 British Red Data Book species of invertebrate.</p> <p><b>Ramsar criterion 3:</b></p> <p>The mire habitats are of high ecological quality and diversity and have undisturbed transition zones. The invertebrate fauna of the site is important due to the concentration of rare and scarce wetland species. The whole site complex, with its examples of semi-natural habitats is essential to the genetic and ecological diversity of southern England.</p>
			Solent and Southampton Water		<p>The area covered extends from Hurst Spit to Gilkicker Point along the south coast of Hampshire and along the north coast of the Isle of Wight;</p> <p>Estuarine and adjacent coastal habitats including intertidal flats, saline lagoons, shingle beaches, saltmarsh, reed beds, damp woodland, and grazing marsh.</p>	<p>The site supports the following features, qualifying under the respective RAMSAR criterion:</p> <p><b>Ramsar criterion 1:</b></p> <p>The site is one of the few major sheltered channels between a substantial island and mainland in European waters, exhibiting an unusual strong double tidal flow and has long periods of slack water at high and low tide. It includes many wetland habitats characteristic of the biogeographic region: saline lagoons, saltmarshes, estuaries, intertidal flats, shallow coastal waters, grazing marshes, reed beds, coastal woodland and rocky boulder reefs.</p> <p><b>Ramsar criterion 2:</b></p> <p>The site supports an important assemblage of rare plants and invertebrates. At least 33 British Red Data Book invertebrates and at least eight British Red Data Book plants are represented on site.</p> <p><b>Ramsar criterion 5:</b></p> <p><u>Assemblages of international importance:</u></p> <p><i>Species with peak counts in winter:</i></p> <p>51343 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003)</p> <p><b>Ramsar criterion 6: Species/populations occurring at levels of international importance:</b></p> <p><u>Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation):</u></p> <p><i>Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:</i></p> <p>Ringed plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>, Europe/Northwest Africa 397 individuals, representing an average of 1.2% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9- 2002/3)</p> <p><i>Species with peak counts in winter:</i></p> <p>Dark-bellied brent goose, <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>, 6456 individuals, representing an average of 3% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9- 2002/3)</p> <p>Eurasian teal <i>Anas crecca</i>, NW Europe 5514 individuals, representing an average of 1.3% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)</p>

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						Black-tailed godwit <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i> , Iceland/W Europe 1240 individuals, representing an average of 3.5% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
			Portsmouth Harbour		<p>Large expanses of mudflats supporting large beds of narrow leaved and dwarf eelgrass, extensive green alga and sea lettuce;</p> <p>The harbour has only a narrow connection to the sea via the Solent, and receives comparatively little freshwater, thus giving it an unusual hydrology.</p>	<p>The site supports the following features, qualifying under the respective RAMSAR criterion:</p> <p><b>Ramsar criterion 3:</b></p> <p><i>The intertidal mudflat areas possess extensive beds of eelgrass Zostera angustifolia and Zostera noltei which support the grazing dark-bellied brent geese populations. The mud-snail Hydrobia ulvae is found at extremely high densities, which helps to support the wading bird interest of the site.</i></p> <p>Common cord-grass <i>Spartina anglica</i> dominates large areas of the saltmarsh and there are also extensive areas of green algae Enteromorpha spp. and sea lettuce <i>Ulva lactuca</i>. More locally the saltmarsh is dominated by sea purslane <i>Halimione portulacoides</i> which gradates to more varied communities at the higher shore levels. The site also includes a number of saline lagoons hosting nationally important species.</p> <p><b>Ramsar criterion 6: Species/populations occurring at levels of international importance:</b></p> <p><u>Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation):</u></p> <p><i>Species with peak counts in winter:</i></p> <p>Dark-bellied brent goose, <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>, 2105 individuals, representing an average of 2.1% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)</p>
			Chichester and Langstone Harbour		<p>Large, sheltered estuarine basins comprising extensive mud and sand flats exposed at low tide;</p> <p>Chichester and Langstone Harbour is of particular significance for over-wintering wildfowl and waders and also a wide range of coastal and transitional habitats supporting important plant and animal communities.</p>	<p>The site supports the following features, qualifying under the respective RAMSAR criterion:</p> <p><b>Ramsar criterion 1:</b></p> <p>Two large estuarine basins linked by the channel which divides Hayling Island from the main Hampshire coastline. The site includes intertidal mudflats, saltmarsh, sand and shingle spits and sand dunes.</p> <p><b>Ramsar criterion 5:</b></p> <p><u>Assemblages of international importance:</u></p> <p><i>Species with peak counts in winter:</i></p> <p>76480 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003)</p> <p><b>Ramsar criterion 6: Species/populations occurring at levels of international importance.</b></p> <p><u>Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation):</u></p> <p><i>Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:</i></p> <p>Ringed plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>, Europe/Northwest Africa 853 individuals, representing an average of 1.1% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9- 2002/3)</p> <p>Black-tailed godwit <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>, Iceland/W Europe 906 individuals, representing an average of 2.5% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9- 2002/3)</p> <p>Common redshank <i>Tringa totanus totanus</i>, 2577 individuals, representing an average of 1% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9- 2002/3)</p> <p><i>Species with peak counts in winter:</i></p> <p>Dark-bellied brent goose <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>, 12987 individuals, representing an average of 6% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9- 2002/3)</p> <p>Common shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>, NW Europe 1468 individuals, representing an average of 1.8% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)</p> <p>Grey plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>, E Atlantic/W Africa –wintering 3043 individuals, representing an average of 1.2% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)</p> <p>Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>, W Siberia/W Europe 33436 individuals, representing an average of 2.5% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)</p> <p><u>Species/populations identified subsequent to designation for possible future consideration under criterion 6:</u></p> <p><i>Species regularly supported during the breeding season:</i></p> <p>Little tern <i>Sterna albifrons albifrons</i>, W Europe 130 apparently occupied nests, representing an average of 1.1% of the breeding population (Seabird 2000 Census)</p>
			Pagham Harbour		Extensive saltmarsh and tidal mudflats with surrounding	The site supports the following features, qualifying under the respective RAMSAR criteria:

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					habitats including lagoons, shingle, open water, reed swamp and wet permanent grassland; Lower saltmarsh dominated by common cord-grass but also includes patches of glasswort. The perennial sea-purslane is abundant at higher levels.	<p><b>Ramsar criterion 6: Species/populations occurring at levels of international importance:</b></p> <p><u>Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation):</u></p> <p><i>Species with peak counts in winter:</i> Dark-bellied brent goose <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>, 2512 individuals, representing an average of 1.1% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)</p> <p><u>Species/populations identified subsequent to designation for possible future consideration under criterion 6:</u></p> <p><i>Species with peak counts in winter:</i> Black-tailed godwit <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>, Iceland/W Europe 377 individuals, representing an average of 1% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9- 2002/3)</p>
	OSPAR	2	Solent Maritime	Solent Maritime SAC	Please see <i>Special Area of Conservation (SAC) with marine components: Solent Maritime SAC.</i>	Please see <i>Special Area of Conservation (SAC) with marine components: Solent Maritime SAC</i> Relevant OSPAR ecological selection criteria (threatened and declining species or habitat; ecological significance and representativity): i) Threatened and declining species or habitat and iii) Representativity
			South Wight Maritime	South Wight Maritime SAC	Please see <i>Special Area of Conservation (SAC) with marine components: South Wight Maritime SAC.</i>	Please see <i>Special Area of Conservation (SAC) with marine components: South Wight Maritime SAC</i> Relevant OSPAR ecological selection criteria (threatened and declining species or habitat; ecological significance and representativity): i) Threatened and declining species or habitat and iii) Representativity
	World Heritage Sites	1	Dorset and East Devon Coast (between Orcombe Rocks, East Devon to the geological boundary between the Cretaceous and Tertiary in Studland Bay, Dorset).		The Dorset and East Devon Coast fulfils criterion (viii) of the 'Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention'. This is the main instrument used by the World Heritage Commission to implement the World heritage Convention; Criterion viii) to be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features.	The coastal exposures within the site provide an almost continuous sequence of Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous rock formations spanning the Mesozoic Era and document approximately 185 million years of Earth history. The area's important fossil sites and classic coastal geomorphologic features have contributed to the study of earth sciences for over 300 years. The site includes a range of internationally important fossil localities, vertebrate and invertebrate, marine and terrestrial - which have produced well preserved and diverse evidence of life during Mesozoic times.
National	Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	31	Hurst Castle and Lymington River Estuary SSSI		Littoral sediment; Neutral Grassland; Coastal lagoon; Lowland fen, marsh and swamp.	This site extends along nine kilometres of the north-west Solent shore and embraces a wide range of coastal habitats of limited distribution on the south coast. The SSSI below the seawall comprises the estuaries of three substantial streams, intertidal muds, cord-grass <i>Spartina anglica</i> marshes and high level mixed saltmarsh whilst behind the sea wall is a belt of fresh and brackish marsh including a series of fresh to saline lagoons.  The south-west boundary of the site is formed by a well developed shingle spit known Hurst Spit which has terminal recurved shingle ridges. The outer margins of the <i>Spartina</i> marshes, which occupy much of the intertidal area, are marked by numerous further ridges of shells and small pebbles. These together with the saltmarsh provide nesting sites for nationally important breeding populations

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						<p>of terns and black-headed gulls <i>Larus ridibundus</i>.</p> <p>The belt of brackish and fresh marsh on reclaimed tidal silt is one of the most extensive areas of this habitat on the south coast. The marshes were formerly salterns converted to grazing land with the decline of the salt industry in the early 19th century. They include saline, brackish and freshwater lagoons and ponds, saltmarsh, reed <i>Phragmites australis</i> beds, grassland dominated by creeping bentgrass <i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>, and areas of scrub. <i>The invertebrate fauna is rich and includes large populations of the bush crickets Conocephalus dorsalis and C. discolor.</i> The marshes are important feeding grounds for waders, ducks and dark-bellied Brent goose <i>Branta bernicla</i>.</p> <p>The series of lagoons immediately inland of the Lymington - Keyhaven sea walls are internationally important for the assemblage of brackish water organisms they support. This assemblage includes a large population of the vulnerable starlet sea anemone <i>Nematostella vectensis</i> (Red Data Book 3), which is otherwise restricted to five localities in Britain and a few in North America. Other nationally rare species include the polychaete worm <i>Armandia cirrhosa</i> at its only known location in Britain, and the rare amphipod crustacean <i>Gammarus insensibilis</i> which is listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Both these species are here at the northern limits of their distributions. The nationally rare foxtail stonewort <i>Lamprothamnium papulosum</i>, otherwise known from only three sites in Britain, is also abundant.</p> <p>The recurved shingle ridges of Hurst Spit are of particular botanical importance. Though partially obscured with shingle, the substrate is clay and the ridges and intervening lows support an especially rich saltmarsh community in which sea purslane <i>Halimione portulacoides</i>, glasswort <i>Salicornia</i> species, nationally scarce golden samphire <i>Inula crithmoides</i> and seablite <i>Suaeda maritima</i> are codominant. The golden samphire population is amongst the largest on the south coast.</p>
			North Solent SSSI	<p>Coastal mudflats, saltmarshes, shingle beaches and spits;</p> <p>Fresh and brackish marshland and pools;</p> <p>Maritime grassland, neutral and acidic grassland;</p> <p>Mire, heathland and ancient semi-natural woodlands.</p>	<p>The North Solent Site of Special Scientific Interest extends along approximately 13km of the north shoreline of the West Solent and includes the parallel valleys of the Beaulieu River, Dark Water and the Stanswood Valley.</p> <p>The Beaulieu River's estuary is fringed by extensive areas of <i>Spartina anglica</i> saltmarsh covering approximately 132 hectares. The <i>Spartina</i> saltmarsh forms part of a welldefined saltmarsh zonation extending from a narrow band of brackish marsh near high water mark through mixed saltmarsh dominated by sea-purslane <i>Halimione portulacoides</i> and sealavender <i>Limonium vulgare</i> which forms a mosaic with the more abundant <i>Spartina</i> marsh to a low level sea glasswort <i>Salicornia</i> species marsh adjacent to the river channel. The range of saltmarsh types contains rare plant species such as the lax flowered sea-lavender <i>Limonium humile</i> and marsh sow-thistle <i>Sonchus palustris</i>.</p> <p>The estuary is guarded by two parallel shingle spits which have arisen from the eastward accretion of material across the estuary mouth. Shingle beaches extend eastwards and westwards from the estuary mouth along The Solent shore. These support a rich flora including many rare and uncommon species specifically adapted to this harsh environment. Most obvious is the abundance of sea-kale <i>Crambe maritima</i>; in places the very rare little robin <i>Geranium purpureum fosteri</i> also occurs. In Britain this sub-species is now confined to the Solent.</p> <p>The shingle spits and associated shell banks and saltmarshes support extremely important breeding populations of terns, gulls and waders. The number of breeding terns has fluctuated owing to local movements in breeding colonies, but the SSSI generally supports the largest colonies of sandwich tern and common tern on the south coast, and up to 7% of the British population of breeding little tern. In addition there is a very large black-headed gull colony which is considered to be the largest in Britain. The estuary also supports important populations of breeding waders whose range and numbers are restricted or have declined elsewhere on the south coast. The saltmarshes in the estuary support the highest recorded density of wading birds in this habitat in Britain, whilst the estuary also supports nationally important populations of breeding ringed plover and regionally important numbers of breeding redshank and oyster-catcher.</p> <p>The area of intertidal mudland in the estuary is relatively small, but nevertheless supports substantial populations of over-wintering and migratory birds with numbers of dark-bellied Brent geese, teal, ringed plover, grey plover, dunlin, blacktailed godwit and spotted redshank reaching national importance. Outside of the estuary the intertidal areas of the Solent shore also attract considerable numbers of over-wintering waders and wildfowl including turnstone, ringed plover, oystercatcher and Brent geese.</p>	
			Calshot to Hythe Marshes SSSI	Saltmarsh and mudflats.	<p>The Hythe to Calshot Marshes SSSI is the most extensive remaining areas of saltmarsh and mudflats in Southampton Water. The upper shore levels within the SSSI comprise saltmarshes, which grade from monospecific cord-grass <i>Spartina anglica</i> swards upshore to mixed marsh in which the dominant species are generally sea purslane <i>Halimione portulacoides</i>, saltmarsh grass <i>Puccinellia maritime</i> and <i>Spartina</i>. The marshes near Hythe are the location in which hybrids between the indigenous cord-grass <i>Spartina maritime</i> and the introduced north American species <i>S. alterniflora</i> were found in the 1860s.</p> <p>The SSSI retains a wide range of genetic material including <i>S. maritima</i>, <i>S. alterniflora</i>, <i>S. x townsendii</i>, <i>S. anglica</i> and back-crosses, an assemblage of plants which is probably unique to the SSSI and which is of great scientific importance.</p> <p>In places the outer margins of the marshes are masked by shell and shingle banks which support an interesting strandline flora and are important high water roosting sites for the waders which feed in the intertidal zone. At the uppermost marsh levels, the sea purslane saltmarsh grass-<i>Spartina</i> plant community is replaced locally by sea club rush <i>Scirpus maritimus</i> and common reed <i>Phragmites australis</i> with fringing oaks, sallows and gorse just above high water mark of spring tides.</p>	
			Dibden Bay SSSI	Neutral grassland.	Dibden Bay supports breeding lapwings and is included in the Calshot to Hythe Marshes SSSI.	

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						<p>With the exception of a small area known as Westcliff Marsh, the Dibden Bay SSSI was formed between the 1930s and early 1970s by the deposition of marine dredgings over a complex of coastal habitats. This infilled area (often referred to as the Reclaim) was allowed to colonise naturally with plants, and now supports wet and dry grassland together with saltmarsh vegetation, salt pans, swamp, reedbed, scrub and open water.</p> <p>The predominant vegetation type is dominated by the grass creeping bent <i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>, often with patches of saltmarsh rush <i>Juncus gerardii</i>. The lowest lying areas of the site, including Westcliff Marsh, have areas of "salt pans" supporting a type of saltmarsh characterised by lesser sea-spurrey <i>Spergularia marina</i> and reflexed saltmarshgrass <i>Puccinellia distans</i>.</p> <p>The site supports a significant number of rare invertebrates. Altogether a total of 21 nationally-rare species have been recorded and a further 67 nationally-scarce species. Seven of these nationally-rare species and 20 of the nationally-scarce ones have not been recorded in southern Hampshire for at least 30 years (EN, 2002).</p> <p>The Dibden Bay SSSI is of importance for nesting lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>. Other breeding birds include a few pairs of oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>, redshank <i>Tringa tetanus</i>, Dartford warbler <i>Sylvia undata</i>, and numerous skylarks <i>Alauda arvensis</i> and reed warblers <i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>. During the winter numerous waterfowl (wildfowl and waders) use the site for feeding, particularly at night. At peak times, the site attracts 18% of all the wigeon using the Solent (including Southampton Water), 5% of the pintail and 5% of the teal.</p> <p>Five nationally-scarce plants have been recorded within the site, the <i>Carex divisa</i>, sea barley <i>Hordeum marinum</i>, annual beard-grass <i>Polypogon monspeliensis</i>, Borrer's saltmarshgrass <i>Puccinella fasciculata</i> and stiff saltmarsh-grass <i>Puccinella rupestris</i>. The population of annual beard-grass <i>Polypogon monspeliensis</i> is believed to be the largest in Britain.</p>
			Eling and Bury Marshes SSSI		<p>Littoral sediment ; Lowland broadleaved; Mixed and yew woodland .</p>	<p>The Eling and Bury Marshes SSSI encompasses two dissimilar saltmarshes and their intervening intertidal mudflats at the head of Southampton Water. Eling Great Marsh is a grazed saltmarsh with a close sward of Saltmarsh-grass <i>Puccinellia maritime</i> with creeping bent <i>Agrostis stolonifera</i> and red fescue <i>Festuca rubra</i> sub-dominant. The marsh margins have in places been colonised by cord-grass <i>Spartina anglica</i>. Eling Great Marsh is the only <i>Puccinellia</i> saltmarsh on the central south coast.</p> <p>Bury Marsh is an ungrazed <i>Puccinellia</i> marsh which in consequence supports a more mixed saltmarsh community, with <i>Halimione</i> dominating drainage channel edges and extensive <i>Spartina</i> invasion. It is probably the only remaining locality for the American smooth cordgrass <i>Spartina alterniflora</i> in Britain apart from deliberate plantings. This population covers an extensive area and is genetically important as one of the parent species of the successful <i>Spartina</i> hybrids (and subsequently the fertile <i>Spartina anglica</i>) which colonised large areas of intertidal land in the late 19th and 20th centuries. At high water mark of spring tides there is an abrupt transition to oak/hazel woodland of apparently ancient origin.</p> <p>The Southampton Water estuary is nationally important for its wader populations. The saltmarshes and associated mudflats of the SSSI are considered to be vital feeding and roosting areas for the autumn and winter populations of waders, ducks and grey herons <i>Ardea cinerea</i>.</p>
			Lower Test Valley SSSI		<p>Littoral sediment; Lowland fen, marsh and swamp; Lowland neutral grassland.</p>	<p>The whole of the River Test is a SSSI from its source near Overton to the point at which it enters the sea in Southampton Water. The Lower Test Valley SSSI encompasses salt marsh, reed bed and swamp communities.</p>
			Lee-on-the-Solent to Itchen Estuary SSSI		<p>Littoral sediment; Lowland neutral grassland; Lowland broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland; Lowland dwarf shrub heath.</p>	<p>The Lee-on-the-Solent to Itchen Estuary SSSI comprises extensive intertidal muds with a littoral fringe of vegetated shingle, saltmarsh, reedbed, marshy grasslands and deciduous woodland on alluvium, valley gravels (Hamble Common), and Bracklesham Beds (Hook Links).</p> <p>The intertidal flats support high densities of benthic invertebrates (molluscs, crustacea, marine worms, etc.), including probably the largest remaining British population of the introduced hard shell clam <i>Mercenaria mercenaria</i>. On the lower shore, east of the Hamble, there are extensive beds of the eelgrasses <i>Zostera angustifolia</i> and <i>Z. noltii</i>, both of which are nationally scarce species. Green algae, mainly <i>Enteromorpha</i> and <i>Ulva lactuca</i>, are widespread in the intertidal zone.</p> <p>At low water the intertidal flats comprise major feeding grounds for waders and dark-bellied Brent geese. Total numbers of waders in Southampton Water in winter normally exceed 10,000, which is considered to be the qualifying level for national importance. The SSSI provides important feeding areas for black-tailed godwit, dunlin, grey plover, ringed plover, redshank, curlew and turnstone. The Brent geese feed on green algae and eelgrass on the intertidal flats early in the winter, but later also exploit farmland outside the SSSI and the Hook Links grazing marsh within it. At high tide the very shallow water over the flats between the Hamble and Hillhead is an important feeding and roosting area for great-crested grebes, red-breasted mergansers and other marine birds; the numbers of great-crested grebes here can exceed 200 and are of national importance.</p> <p>Vegetated shingle, a nationally restricted habitat, is found fronting the reedbed at Beach Close, at Hook Spit, and on the well-developed shingle ridges at Hook Links, where ringed plover nest. Typical plant species adapted to the relatively harsh environmental conditions found, include the nationally scarce sea-kale <i>Crambe maritime</i> together with sea beet <i>Beta vulgaris</i>, sea rocket <i>Cakile maritima</i>, sea bindweed <i>Calystegia soldanella</i>, yellow-horned poppy <i>Glaucium flavum</i>, sand couch <i>Elymus farctus</i>, sticky ragwort <i>Senecio viscosus</i> and sea campion <i>Silene maritima</i>. On the more stable substratum on the landward-most shingle ridge, additional species are found including thrift <i>Armeria maritime</i> subspecies <i>maritima</i>, sea wormwood <i>Artemisia maritima</i>, buck's-horn plantain <i>Plantago coronopus</i>, sea pearlwort <i>Sagina maritima</i>, biting stonecrop <i>Sedum acre</i> and spring vetch <i>Vicia lathyroides</i>.</p>

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			Lincegrove and Hackett's Marshes SSSI		Littoral sediment.	Lincegrove and Hackett's Marshes SSSI is one of the best examples of mature saltmarsh on the south coast. Dominated by sea purslane, common cord grass, saltmarsh grass, sea lavender, thrift, sea aster and sea club rush, as well as providing feeding grounds and high water roosts for waders and geese.
			Browndown SSSI		Littoral rock; Lowland dwarf shrub heath.	Browndown SSSI is an extensive shingle beach comprising a disturbed sequence of apposition ridges supporting three main plant communities. Extensive tracts of ling <i>Calluna vulgaris</i> , bell heather <i>Erica cinerea</i> , dwarf gorse <i>Ulex minor</i> and bristle bent <i>Agrostis setacea</i> are present. This community is remarkably rich in <i>foliose lichens</i> .  The site encompasses open grass heath dominated by bristle bent <i>Agrostis setacea</i> , fine bent <i>A. tenuis</i> , fine-leaved sheep's fescue <i>Festuca tenuifolia</i> , sheep's sorrel <i>Rumex acetosella</i> and Nottingham catchfly <i>Silene nutans</i> . In addition, scrub of gorse <i>Ulex europaeus</i> , oak <i>Quercus</i> species including holme oak <i>Q. ilex</i> , bramble <i>Rubus</i> species and rose <i>Rosa</i> species are found within the Browndown site.
			Gilkicker Lagoon SSSI		Saline lagoon.	The Gilkicker Lagoon SSSI represents a rare habitat in Britain. The Lagoon is linked to the sea by an intake through the shingle beach separating it from the sea. It usually maintains a salinity comparable to that of the sea water in the Solent. The flora of Gilkicker lagoon comprises three species of charophytes (the <i>Lamprothamium populosum</i> being a national rarity), green alga <i>Enteromorpha</i> species, and tassel pondweed <i>Ruppia maritima</i> . The invertebrate fauna includes at least 10 species of molluscs and three species of Coelenterata. This assemblage is relatively rich and includes five national rarities.
			Portsmouth Harbour SSSI		Portsmouth Harbour is the westernmost of three extensive and connected tidal basins of Portsmouth, Langstone and Chichester Harbours which share physical characteristics and in many respects should be seen as a single biological system.	At high water they resemble large, nearly land-locked shallow lagoons. At low water extensive mudflats are exposed which are drained by systems of channels and creeks which unite to form a narrow exit to the Solent through which the tide runs rapidly on the ebb. The harbours have a salinity approximating to that of the sea but they do receive some fresh water from springs arising in the intertidal zone, and from a number of small streams, the largest of which is the River Wallington, which flows into Fareham Creek, the westernmost channel of Portsmouth Harbour.  The intertidal area of Portsmouth Harbour includes 776ha of mudflats and about 173ha of cord-grass <i>Spartina</i> marshes. The muds support an abundant fauna of benthic marine animals, though of a total fauna of about 60 species, only about ten occur in very large numbers. The mud surfaces support extensive beds of eelgrasses <i>Zostera noltii</i> and <i>Z. angustifolia</i> and extensive areas of the mudflats support a high density of green algae, mainly <i>Enteromorpha</i> species and <i>Ulva lactuca</i> in summer. In general terms the eelgrasses and algae are mutually exclusive in distribution on the mudflats. The eelgrass beds are among the most extensive in Britain and Portsmouth Harbour is one of only four intertidal areas on the south coast to support extensive eelgrass beds. The beds have a rich associated benthic and epiphytic fauna and algal fauna and the eelgrass itself is an important food of the Brent goose.  The cord-grass marshes occur on mudflats in the upper part of the tidal range and are dominated by <i>Spartina anglica</i> . At the uppermost levels of the <i>Spartina</i> marshes, <i>Spartina</i> is replaced locally by saltmarsh dominated by sea purslane <i>Halimolobos portulacoides</i> . At their highest levels these marshes grade to tussocky grassland dominated by sea couch <i>Elymus pycnanthus</i> and on Pewit Island this grassland has in turn been colonised by oak and blackthorn scrub. The nationally scarce golden samphire <i>Inula crithmoides</i> occurs at the upper limits of sea purslane marsh and at the toe of some sea walls.  The biological richness and productivity of Portsmouth Harbour is reflected in the numbers of wetland birds, particularly waders and wildfowl, which it supports. A wide range of feeding adaptations are represented among the species occurring in large numbers, which include waders and ducks dependent on the benthic invertebrates of mudflats and shallow waters. Brent geese and wigeon, which feed on eelgrass and algae; and an array of diving birds which depend on small fish, crustaceans and molluscs sought in the channels at low water and in shallow water over the mudflats at high water. Portsmouth Harbour is of national importance for the numbers of three species of waders (grey plover, black-tailed godwit and dunlin) it supports and is of national importance for the numbers of dark-bellied Brent geese which overwinter there. The total numbers of waders and wildfowl present has at times exceeded 20,000.  The SSSI includes two brackish lagoons adjoining Haslar Lake in the south-west of the Harbour. Brackish lagoons in which there is little rise or fall in water levels support a narrow range of species which are, however, highly specialist to lagoonal conditions. The fauna and flora of Little Anglesey Lake (= lagoon) is the most diverse known in lagoons in south-east England. Cockle Pond has a less diverse fauna but includes, in common with Little Anglesey Lake, populations of both the starlet sea anemone <i>Nematostella vectensis</i> and the lagoon sand shrimp <i>Gammarus insensibilis</i> , which are specially protected by Section 9(5) and Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
			Langstone Harbour SSSI		Tidal basin with extensive mudflats and Mixed saltmarsh.	Langstone Harbour is a tidal basin which at high water resembles an almost landlocked lake. At low water extensive mud flats are exposed, drained by three main channels which unite to make a common and narrow exit to the sea. The harbour includes one of the largest areas of mixed saltmarsh on the south coast, and extensive cord-grass <i>Spartina anglica</i> marsh in an advanced state of degeneration. The SSSI Interest including Farlington Marshes, a peninsula of grassland and marsh on reclaimed tidal silt protected by a sea wall; and a similar but much smaller area at Southmoor in the north-east of the harbour.  The harbour is of international importance as a rich intertidal system supporting high densities of intertidal invertebrates and large populations of migrant and overwintering waders and wildfowl, dependent upon them and upon the extensive beds of eelgrass <i>Zostera</i> species. The <i>Zostera angustifolia</i> and <i>Z. noltii</i> beds are among the largest in Britain. The harbour is among the twenty most important intertidal areas in Britain as a summer and autumn assembly ground for waders during the moult (when they require abundant high protein food) and as a post-moult wintering ground. Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i> often exceed 30,000 individuals, or 6% of the British winter population, or 3% of the European and North African wintering population. Grey plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> and

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						<p>black-tailed godwit <i>Limosa limosa</i> achieve numbers which represent 1–2% of the European and North African migration flyway population; and redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i> and ringed plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> do so periodically. At times as many as 20% of the black-tailed godwit, 8% of the ringed plover and 8-10% of the grey plover wintering in Britain are present in the harbour.</p> <p>The total numbers of waders present sometimes exceeds 40,000. Langstone Harbour and the adjoining and connected Portsmouth and Chichester Harbours form a single, coherent ecosystem which is among the ten most important intertidal areas for waders in Britain. In the 1970s and 1980s Langstone Harbour alone has consistently supported in excess of 5,000 wintering dark-bellied geese <i>Branta bernicla</i>, or 5-10% of the world population depending on fluctuating population levels. It has supported up to 2.5% of the European winter population of shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> and regularly supports substantial numbers of other ducks in autumn and winter.</p> <p>Farlington Marshes intrudes into the north-west sector of the harbour. Its vegetation is strongly influenced by drainage water from the chalk and by brackish water infiltration. The marshes embrace a variety of habitats – brackish marsh, fresh marsh, a large lagoon with associated reed <i>Phragmites</i> beds, <i>Agrostis stolonifera</i> grassland and scrub. It is a vital high water wader roost for the Harbour and a major feeding ground for Brent geese after the <i>Zostera</i> beds in the Harbour have been consumed. Few comparable sites have survived agricultural improvement on the south and east coasts of England, where the habitat was formerly common: the grassland flora is especially rich for reclaimed silt, and includes over 50 species of grasses. Southmoor shares these characteristics but is much smaller.</p> <p>Langstone Harbour has been the forum for important ecological research on estuarine eutrophication and the relationship with algal blanketing of the muds, changes in invertebrate communities and changes in the composition of vertebrate predator communities.</p>
			Sinah Common SSSI		Sand dunes and Shingle beaches.	<p>Sinah Common SSSI comprises a complex of maritime habitats which extend for over 2km eastwards from the south-western extremity of Hayling Island, Hampshire. Habitats include extensive sand dunes and vegetated shingle beaches</p> <p>The site is notified for its coastal habitats including the following: pioneer shingle vegetation, maritime shingle grassland which includes dry acid grassland and lichen rich acid grassland, mobile dune, semi-fixed dune, dune heath and an associated small area of saltmarsh. The site is also notified for the chiding pink <i>Petrorhagia nauteuillii</i> an endangered* plant which occurs at just two sites in Britain, and for its outstanding assemblage of nationally scarce** plants including little robin <i>Geranium purpureum</i>, Nottingham catchfly <i>Silene nutans</i>, bulbous meadow-grass <i>Poa bulbosa</i>, bearded fescue <i>Vulpia fasciculata subsp ambigua</i>, dune fescue <i>Vulpia fasciculata</i>, suffocated clover <i>Trifolium suffocatum</i>, smooth cat's-ear <i>Hypochaeris glabra</i>, stiff saltmarsh-grass <i>Puccinella rupestris</i>, mossy stonecrop <i>Crassula tillaea</i>, toothed medick <i>Medicago polymorpha</i> and dotted sedge <i>Carex punctata</i>.</p> <p>* Endangered as given in definitions of IUCN threat categories (IUCN 1994) in British Red Data Book 1 Vascular Plants</p> <p>** Nationally scarce species occur in 16--100 10km squares in Britain as listed in Scarce Plants in Britain, (JNCC,1994)</p>
			Chichester Harbour SSSI		Tidal mudflats; Intertidal areas supporting eelgrass ( <i>Zostera</i> sp) and green algae.	<p>The Chichester Harbour SSSI is designated for a variety of habitats and is of particular importance for its bird populations. In addition to the main SSSI features (tidal mudflats with extensive eelgrass beds) there are numerous smaller designated areas of woodland, freshwater pools, brackish lagoons, meadows and lowland Dwarf shrub heath. Chichester Harbour SSSI supports littoral sediment, supralittoral sediment, lowland fen, marsh and swamp, lowland broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland and neutral grassland.</p>
			Bracklesham Bay SSSI		Salt marsh; Single bank and Reed beds.	<p>Bracklesham Bay SSSI consists of a long stretch of coast with some rough unimproved grazing pastures which are important for the bird populations they support. The coastal habitats include a small area of salt marsh, shingle bank, the rifes (wide flowing ditches) and associated reed beds, together with a long stretch of intertidal exposures of high geological interest.</p> <p>The most important habitat in terms of size and wildlife interest is the area of unimproved pasture subject to seasonal flooding. Grasses such as red fescue <i>Festuca rubra</i>, sea couch <i>Elymus pycnanthus</i>, creeping bent <i>Agrostis stolonifera</i> and sweet vernal-grass <i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i> form a distinctive sward in which a variety of herbs grow, including viper's-bugloss <i>Echium vulgare</i>, lady's bedstraw <i>Galium verum</i> and buck's-horn plantain <i>Plantago coronopus</i>. In the extreme west and east of the pasture and on the banks of the rifes rough grassland is dominated by sea couch, with small amounts of sheep's fescue <i>Festuca ovina</i> and creeping bent grasses and local abundancies of common saltmarsh grass <i>Puccinellia maritime</i> bordering the shingle. A number of saltmarsh and sea plants including sea aster <i>Aster tripolium</i> and sea-purslane <i>Halimione portulacoides</i> occur throughout this rough grassland type. In the north of the pasture some degree of improvement (re-seeding) has occurred where the dominant grass in a lush sward is red fescue, although some crested dog's-tail <i>Cynosurus cristatus</i>, sheep's fescue and cocks foot <i>Dactylis glomerata</i> grasses remain. The major rife is regularly inundated with emergent communities dominated by common reed <i>Phragmites australis</i> and sea club-rush <i>Scirpus maritimus</i>, with reed-grass <i>Glyceria maxima</i> also present. Drainage ditches which dissect the pastures support a rather depauperate flora due to ditch clearance. The shingle bank is not extensively vegetated but common stork's-bill <i>Erodium cicutarium</i>, yellow horned-poppy <i>Glaucium flavum</i>, mayweed <i>Tripleurospermum maritimum</i> and the locally-distributed sea-kale <i>Crambe maritima</i>, all occur in places. A small area of saltmarsh has developed in a depression behind the shingle wall. Here glasswort <i>Salicornia dolichostachya</i> is dominant, whilst in more stable parts of the marsh thrift <i>Armeria maritima</i>, prickly saltwort <i>Salsola kali</i>, common cord-grass <i>Spartina anglica</i> and sea aster form a small but distinct community. The areas of seasonally flooded grassland together with the rife and shingle banks are of considerable ornithological importance for both breeding and overwintering birds. Redshank, ringed plover, snipe and lapwing all breed here; the lapwing population on this site is of considerable significance in Sussex and may represent up to 10% of the total county population. Wintering birds include large flocks of brent geese, ruff and golden plover with smaller numbers of teal, pintail, black-tailed</p>

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						<p>godwits and curlew. In addition this site is probably the most important in Sussex for overwintering short-eared owls and holds up to twelve individuals annually.</p> <p>The geological exposures on the beach between West Wittering and Selsey consist of a complex series of Eocene (Tertiary) age beds with some overlying younger Pleistocene (Quaternary) deposits. The Tertiary exposures are the type locality of the Bracklesham Beds or Group. These were deposited during a number of marine transgressions and regressions which resulted in a strongly cyclical stratigraphy. This 120m section is important in the palaeographic reconstruction during the middle Eocene and is essential to stratigraphic studies in the Hampshire Basin. The beds are highly fossiliferous for the most part and yield a high diversity marine fauna, while some beds contain a brackish-water fauna with strong terrestrial affinities.</p> <p>In addition this is the only site among British Tertiary localities with plant fossils in rocks of the late lower and early middle Eocene, and it affords the only opportunity to study large beds of this age. At least sixteen horizons here are known to yield plant fossils including angiosperm fruits and seeds, coniferous leafy shoots, Nipa palm fruits and sea grass plants. The Nipa bed includes numerous scattered fruits which prove the proximity of the Nipa-dominated coastal mangrove vegetation at this time. The sea grass beds are the only example of their kind in Europe. Both these and other horizons in the site are the subject of current research and have considerable future research potential. This is a critical site for European Tertiary Palaeobotany and coastal palaeoecology.</p> <p>Bracklesham is a historically important Eocene fish site, known since about 1850, from which one hundred and sixty species have so far been described. Because of the long history of collecting at this site it is the type locality for a great many species. Despite being an established and well-known Eocene fish site the locality has great potential for future research with much new and undescribed material still being discovered. This is the only exposure where fish from the Bracklesham Beds may be collected in situ. The beds represent repeated cycles, with evidence of a marine transgression at the base, then sediment indicating shallowing upwards, through to continental beds. The fish occur in the bottom half of a cycle, and each of the rapidly changing facies had its own fauna. By these times the Eocene 'North Sea' had contracted and the beds deposited were sandier and were inter-fingered with continental deposits. This is the only place where this marginal sandy facies of the Eocene sea can be seen.</p> <p>At Earnley there is a highly important Quaternary site with a sequence of marine deposits of middle Pleistocene interglacial age providing a unique record of sea level changes. Evidence from the sediments, and the pollen microfaunas they contain, indicates deposition in an intertidal channel at a time of falling sea level, probably during the late Hoxmian or late Cromerian interglacial.</p> <p>In the south east of the site Selsey West Beach is a key Quaternary site for a sequence of fresh-water and estuarine deposits of Ipswichian interglacial age. Evidence from the sediments here, and the pollen microfaunas they contain, indicates rapid climatic amelioration at the beginning of the interglacial and a marine transgression at about 1.8m OD in zone IIb. Raised beach deposits formed during the high sea levels in the late Ipswichian interglacial overly estuarine deposits and extend up to 7m OD west of Selsey Bill.</p>
			Selsey East Beach SSSI		Sequence of freshwater and estuarine deposits of Ipswichian Interglacial age.	<p>The site at Selsey East Beach should be seen in conjunction with Selsey West Beach (to be included within the Bracklesham Bay SSSI). Together they form a key Quaternary site for a sequence of freshwater and estuarine deposits of Ipswichian Interglacial age. Evidence from the sediments and the pollen and microfaunas they contain, indicates rapid climatic amelioration at the beginning of the interglacial and a marine transgression at about –1.8m OD in pollen zone IIb. At Selsey West Beach raised beach deposits overlying the estuarine sediments extend up to 7m OD.</p> <p>The deposits at Selsey East Beach are of unique importance in providing Pleistocene vertebrate faunas from the very early part of the Ipswichian Interglacial. The faunas include beaver, straight-tusked elephant, an extinct rhinoceros <i>Dicerorhinus hemitoechus</i>, hippopotamus, horse and European pond tortoise. Much potential exists for vertebrate research at this locality particularly with regard to stratigraphy and pollen zonation. This new site will be listed in 'A Geological Conservation Review'.</p>
			Pagham Harbour SSSI		Extensive saltmarsh; Mudflats, and Vegetated shingle	<p>The Pagham Harbour SSSI lies within the South Coast Plain. Pagham Harbour is a proposed Nature Conservation Review (NCR) site, it also contains Pagham Harbour Geological Conservation Review (GCR) site and is part of Bognor Regis (Palaeobotany) GCR site.</p> <p>This site comprises an extensive central area of salt-marsh and tidal mudflats with surrounding habitats including shingle, open water, reed swamp and wet permanent grassland. Pagham Harbour is of national importance for wintering wildfowl and waders and also for breeding birds both within the Harbour and the surrounding grazing pasture. The site supports nationally important communities of plants and invertebrates. Pagham Harbour was reclaimed for agriculture in the late nineteenth century but was flooded again by a storm in the early twentieth century. The extensive intertidal mudflats are rich in algae and invertebrates and provide important feeding areas for birds.</p> <p>Salt-marsh is a habitat threatened nationally through reclamation for agriculture. The lower part of the salt-marsh is dominated by the hybrid common cord-grass <i>Spartina anglica</i> with patches of the glassworts <i>Salicornia</i> spp. Above this zone sea-purslane <i>Halimione portulacoides</i> covers large areas with other species such as sea aster <i>Aster tripolium</i> in the periphery. At one part of the site within a mixed salt-marsh community greater sea-spurrey <i>Spergularia media</i> and sea lavender <i>Limonium vulgare</i> are found. The upper margin of the salt-marsh has developed a narrow strip of grassland dominated by sea couch <i>Elymus pycnanthus</i>.</p> <p>Vegetated shingle is a nationally rare community. At Pagham, the type and extent of plant cover is dictated by the shifting nature of the substrates, the sea defence works, and by its relative exposure to the elements. In sheltered areas a diverse grass sward has developed with herbs such as early forget-me-not <i>Myosotis ramosissima</i>, biting stonecrop <i>Sedum acre</i> and the nationally endangered childing pink <i>Petrorhagia nanteuilli</i>.</p> <p>This contrasts with the sparse vegetation of the shingle ridge where the uncommon sea-kale <i>Crambe maritime</i> and yellow-vetch <i>Vicia lutea</i> are found.</p>

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						<p>Pagham Harbour has a wide variety of wetland habitats. Brackish drainage ditches dissect the land where common reed <i>Phragmites australis</i> dominates. This forms fairly extensive swamps in some areas including the Severals to the west of the Harbour which are important for breeding and migrating reed and sedge warblers. Sidlesham ferry to the north-west provides high water feeding and roosting areas for waders while Pagham Lagoon in the east is a stormy weather sheltering site for sea duck. Here may also be found the nationally endangered starlet sea anemone <i>Nematostella vectensis</i>.</p> <p>The small amount of woodland at Pagham Harbour is dominated by willow and oak. One of these areas supports a small heronry. In contrast, the ancient woodland at Norton Priory is drier with oak standards and a rich ground flora. Scrub is found both in the form of hedges and as more extensive patches with hawthorn <i>Crataegus monogyna</i> and gorse <i>Ulex europaeus</i> being the main constituents. The damp unimproved grassland surrounding the Harbour is used as a major wader roost and is grazed by large numbers of Brent Geese. Some fields of improved grassland are included in the site as they too, support nationally important populations of birds. Pagham Harbour is an overwintering area for over 120 species of bird. The numbers of wintering pintail, ringed and grey plover and black-tailed godwit regularly reach 1% of British populations and the site is of international importance for wintering ruff and Brent Geese. The mudflats also provide food for a diverse breeding community of birds including oystercatcher, shelduck and redshank.</p> <p>Notable invertebrates include the sand dart <i>Agrotis ripae</i>, Matthew's wainscot moth <i>Mythimna favicolor</i> and the long-winged conehead grasshopper <i>Conocephalus discolor</i>.</p> <p>Geology: Pagham Harbour is a key site for coastal geomorphology. It is significant both as a classic shingle spit landform and for the links that have been demonstrated between the coastal near shore and offshore forms and sediments. The shingle spit system comprises a series of sub-parallel ridges and recurves, marking different phases of extension and frontal accretion. Shingle reaches the beach via the intertidal zone, and the so-called "Pagham delta" and the behaviour of the spits and delta are intimately linked with water and sediment circulation around the Selsey peninsula. The area also provides an excellent example of the role of weed rafting of shingle in coastal sediment budgets.</p> <p>This site also includes, at the north-eastern end, part of a key site for plant fossils from the London Clay (divisions B and B ). It is the only locality in the Hampshire Basin to yield abundant London Clay plants and the only site 1 2 known to have yielded plants from the B division of this formation. The site has yielded examples of some one 2 hundred and thirty species (representing seventy families), including numerous type specimens. Dominant families include the Vitaceae, Menispermaceae and Burseraceae. The genera Bognoria and Aldwichia are only found here, as are some thirty species. An outstanding palaeobotanical site of great importance to studies of Tertiary floras.</p>
			Bonchurch Landslips SSSI		Vegetated marine cliffs and Littoral sediments	<p>The south coast of the Isle of Wight contains extensive areas of undercliff, stretching between Blackgang and Bonchurch. Undercliff provides a more sheltered environment that develops between the outer sea-washed cliffs and an inner cliff line which forms the rear wall of this landslipped zone.</p> <p>The Bonchurch Landslips SSSI encompasses ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> woodland on Gault clay landslips immediately below the Upper Greensand escarpment. Oak <i>Quercus robur</i> and beech <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> are also present and both the old trees and the abundant Greensand boulders on the woodland floor support a rich bryophyte and epiphytic lichen flora. The lichen flora includes the rare <i>Gyalectina carneolutea</i>, confined in Britain to the southern coast of England.</p> <p>The lower slopes of the landslips support calcareous grassland, supporting such species as pyramidal orchid <i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i> and bee orchid <i>Ophrys apifera</i>; calcareous scrub; basic flushes; and acid heathland. Geomorphologically, the site is of great interest for its complex of mass-movement features, including the Undercliff itself and the coastal landslips and mud flows beneath it.</p>
			Compton Chine To Steephill Cove SSSI		Vegetated marine cliffs; Chalk grassland; Littoral sediments and Coastal geomorphology.	<p>This site is notified for its vegetated maritime cliffs and slopes, species-rich unimproved chalk grassland, nationally rare plant species, an assemblage of nationally scarce plants, an outstanding assemblage of nationally rare and scarce invertebrates, exposed and moderately exposed rocky shores (littoral rock) and nationally important coastal geomorphology. In addition the cliffs and foreshore between Hanover Point to St Catherine's Point are a nationally important geological site for successions of the Wealden Group and the overlying Lower Greensand Group. The Wealden Group is of international importance for the diverse fauna of early Cretaceous dinosaurs that it has yielded, and also contains important elements of the flora present at the time these reptiles were alive.</p> <p>The relevant National Vegetation Classification (NVC) communities of the vegetated maritime cliffs and slopes are <i>Armeria maritima</i> - <i>Cerastium diffusum</i> ssp. <i>diffusum</i> maritime therophyte community (NVC MC5); <i>Festuca rubra</i> - <i>Armeria maritima</i> maritime grassland (NVC MC8); <i>Festuca rubra</i> - <i>Holcus lanatus</i> maritime grassland (NVC MC9) and <i>Festuca rubra</i> - <i>Daucus carota</i> ssp. <i>gummifer</i> maritime grassland (NVC MC11). The communities for the species rich unimproved calcareous grassland are <i>Festuca ovina</i> - <i>Carlina vulgaris</i> grassland (NVC CG1), <i>Festuca ovina</i> - <i>Avenula pratensis</i> grassland (NVC CG2), <i>Bromus erectus</i> grassland (NVC CG3), <i>Brachypodium pinnatum</i> grassland (NVC CG4) and <i>Bromus erectus</i> - <i>Brachypodium pinnatum</i> grassland (NVC CG5).</p> <p>The extension to the former Hanover Point to St Catherine's Point SSSI includes the Undercliff Site of Importance for Nature Conservation. The coastline between Hanover Point and St Catherine's Point is a GCR Site. Compton Chine To Steephill Cove SSSI forms part of the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.</p> <p>* Endangered as defined in British Book Red Data Book: Vol 1 Vascular Plants 3rd edition (IUCN 1994).</p> <p>** Nationally scarce species occur in 16-100 km squares in Britain as listed as Scarce Plants in Britain, (JNCC, 1994)</p> <p>*** Nationally rare species as listed in the British Red Data Book 2: Insects (Nature Conservancy Council, 1987).</p>

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			Compton Down SSSI		UK's best example of chalk grassland under maritime influence.	<p>Compton Down SSSI occupies 4.5 km of the east–west chalk anticline of the Isle of Wight and includes both the south and north facing slopes and crest of the ridge. It is probably the best example in Britain of chalk grassland under maritime influence. On the south facing slopes, notably at Afton Down, insolation and exposure, combined with patchy rabbit grazing have produced an unusual grassland structure comprising a mosaic of relatively tall and very short grassland, with frequent areas of exposed, weathered chalk rubble. The flora here is extremely species-rich with an unusual abundance of horseshoe vetch <i>Hippocrepis comosa</i>, kidney vetch <i>Anthyllis vulneraria</i> and saw-wort <i>Serratula tinctoria</i>. A number of orchids are also common including green-winged <i>Orchis morio</i>, early purple <i>O. mascula</i>, bee <i>Ophrys apifera</i> and pyramidal <i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i>. These slopes also support very large populations of the very rare early gentian <i>Gentianella anglica</i> and several bushes of juniper <i>Juniperus communis</i>, the only Isle of Wight site. By contrast, the north facing slopes of the downs have a rather taller grassland structure containing abundant cowslips <i>Primula veris</i> and locally frog orchids <i>Coeloglossum viride</i> on the thinner soils and scattered gorse <i>Ulex europaeus</i> and bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> on pockets of deeper soils on superficial drift. Superficial Tertiary material covers irregular, broad patches across the crest of the downs and these, too, are dominated by gorse, bramble and locally, hawthorn <i>Crataegus monogyna</i>. The site includes a golf course which extends along the crest of the Downs at their western end. This area is included in the SSSI because the greater part of it remains species-rich chalk grassland modified only by the mowing of fairways.</p> <p>At their western end the downs terminate in impressive chalk sea cliffs with stacks and caves. These cliffs, and also an adjacent road cutting support plant communities which include a number of rare southern rock crevice species such as wild cabbage <i>Brassica oleracea</i>, rock samphire <i>Crithmum maritimum</i>, yellow horned poppy <i>Glaucium flavum</i> and the very rare hoary stock <i>Matthiola incana</i> in probably its major native location.</p> <p>The entire downland complex is of great entomological importance, notably for its very large populations of chalk grassland butterflies such as chalkhill, Adonis and small blues, and for its Orthoptera.</p> <p>The coastline of the SSSI is a key stratigraphic site for the Isle of Wight Chalk, providing a reference section from the excellently exposed Glauconitic Marl of the Lower Chalk through the Middle Chalk of the lower Upper Chalk. As elsewhere on the Isle of Wight, the Middle Chalk is remarkably condensed, much of the middle Turonian being absent. Excellent exposures are seen of the famous Spurious Chalk Rock hardground, and the underlying Black Marl Band and Siliceous Nodule Beds. This is the type locality for the <i>Bicavea rotiformis</i> Bed, an important marker horizon, which, like the Spurious Chalk Rock, is only developed in the Isle of Wight, Hampshire and Dorset. An essential site for studies of Chalk stratigraphy and depositional events.</p>
			Headon Warren and West High Down SSSI		Chalk and neutral grasslands and one of two areas of lowland heath on the Isle of Wight.	<p>Headon Warren and West High Down SSSI is mostly owned by the National Trust and comprises parallel Tertiary and chalk ridges. The former, Headon Warren, supports mainly acid, heath vegetation, and the latter species-rich chalk grassland. The cliffs of Alum Bay to Totland Bay are geologically important as a classic section of the Lower Tertiary (Eocene and Oligocene) strata. The chalk ridge terminates in the chalk stacks known as The Needles and the eroded chalk foundations here are of great geomorphological interest.</p> <p>Tennyson Down and West High Down are one of a series of chalk and neutral grasslands extending along the main east-west chalk ridge of the Isle of Wight. Collectively and individually they are of great scientific and nature conservation importance for the richness of their chalk grassland plant communities and the juxtaposition of a neutral to acid flora on the superficial drift deposits which cap the ridge. This site includes examples of scrub, grassland and chalk heath, the species composition of which is influenced by maritime conditions. It supports nine species of orchids and large populations of such rare plants as the Early Gentian <i>Gentianella anglica</i> and Tufted Centaury <i>Centaureum capitatum</i>. Both scrub and grassland areas include interesting gradations between base-rich and base-poor communities, related to the occurrence of thin superficial drift deposits.</p> <p>The cliffs of Main Bench, Highdown Cliffs, Scratchell's Bay and The Needles support colonies of Herring Gulls <i>Larus argentatus</i>, Cormorants <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>, Fulmars <i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>, Kittiwakes <i>Rissa tridactyla</i>, Shags <i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i> and small populations of Guillemots <i>Uria aalge</i>, Razorbills <i>Alca torda</i> and Puffins <i>Fratercula arctica</i>.</p> <p>Peregrine falcons <i>Falco peregrinus</i> recolonised the cliffs in the 1980's. The cliffs and cliff top grassland support a number of rare and local sea cliff plants including the hoary stock <i>Matthiola incana</i> and rock samphire <i>Crithmum maritimum</i>.</p> <p>Headon Warren is one of only two areas of lowland heath in the Isle of Wight. The vegetation is dominated by a heather <i>Calluna vulgaris</i>/bell-heather <i>Erica cinerea</i>/Dwarf Gorse <i>Ulex minor</i> association, with extensive gorse <i>U. europaeus</i>, supporting a wide range of heathland plants and invertebrates one of two small breeding populations of Dartford warblers <i>Sylvia undata</i> in the Island.</p> <p>The coastal section from Alum Bay to Totland Bay is one of the most well-known geological localities in Britain and has been studied by geologists for over 170 years. It is of great importance in understanding the geological evolution of the Isle of Wight and the Hampshire Basin, and is complementary to the sites at Whitecliff Bay and Hordle. Within the site is a complete sequence of rocks from the Chalk to the Bembridge Limestone, containing important faunas of fossil mammals and reptiles; important fossil floras occur at many levels.</p> <p>The rock sequence provides a complete section from the Reading Clay, which rests unconformably upon the Chalk, up through the Oldhaven Formation, London Clay, Alum Bay Sands, Barton Clay, Barton Sand, Headon Hill Formation and into the Bembridge Limestone Formation. Study of these sediments reveals the continually changing sequence of environments which existed in the western Isle of Wight during Eocene times, and significant environmental differences between this section and sections of similar age at Whitecliff Bay and Hordle can be recognised.</p> <p>The rocks of the Headon to Bembridge interval are an important source of fossil mammals, 46 species having been recorded so far from five different levels; this is one of the most important localities for fossil mammals in the Tertiary rocks of Europe. The Lower Headon Beds are an important source of fossil reptiles, including turtles, crocodiles, lizards and snakes, and this is therefore an</p>

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						<p>important site for the smaller types of Tertiary reptile. Fossil plants occur at several horizons within the site, and the flora assemblage which occur are important for reconstructing the vegetation history of the Hampshire Basin during Eocene times. Of particular note is the unique British occurrence of the plant <i>Celtis</i>, a form common in Tertiary floras elsewhere in the world, but only found here in Britain; important floras also occur in the Osborne Beds, the Headon Beds and the Barton Sands. The Headon Hills lignite, seen here, is the only extensive organic-rich deposit of this age in Britain.</p>
			Whitecliff Bay and Bembridge Ledges SSSI	<p>Intertidal rock and shingle and This site is geologically important due to the famous and well-exposed rock sequence from the Chalk to the Bembridge Marls.</p>	<p>The Whitecliff Bay and Bembridge Ledges SSSI comprises extensive areas of intertidal sand, rock and shingle and includes a series of actively eroding cliffs. Collectively these features comprise the coastline of a broad heathland at the eastern extremity of the Isle of Wight. This site is geologically important because of the famous and well-exposed rock sequence from the Chalk to the Bembridge Marls which is seen here, and also because of the important fossil mammal faunas and fossil plant floras which occur at certain horizons.</p> <p>Whitecliff Bay provides probably the most continuous exposures of Palaeogene sediments in western Europe, with a near-complete series of Upper Palaeocene to Lower Oligocene strata exposed. The bay provides stratotype sections for certain parts of the Eocene succession and exposes rock sections of importance for comparative purposes throughout the Hampshire Basin. Whitecliff Bay is the best exposure of the dominantly marine facies of the Bracklesham Formation, which dominates the eastern portion of the Hampshire Basin; these rocks yield a fossil fauna that enables important stratigraphic correlations with the continent to be made.</p> <p>The entire section is of particular interest in that it clearly illustrates both the strongly cyclical nature of sedimentation in the Hampshire Basin and also the general change from dominantly marine to brackish and freshwater environments during the Eocene. Within the Headon Hill Formation and the Bembridge Marls occur two important faunas of fossil mammals, from which 21 species have been identified. Only one other locality in Europe yields mammal faunas from rocks of this age, and has a much less diverse fauna than Whitecliff. This is therefore a key site for the study of mammal faunas at horizons close to the Eocene- Oligocene boundary. Fossil plant material may be collected from several levels throughout the Sequence, of late Palaeocene to early Oligocene age, and a unique late Eocene lignite band occurs within the Bracklesham Group. An important series of charophyte (algal) floras occurs at several limits within the sequence, and are of great value in correlation. This site has great potential for future research in palaeobotany.</p> <p>Ecologically the great diversity of intertidal habitats is reflected in an abundant and rich algal flora including many rare species. With the nearby St Helens Ledges Site of Special Scientific Interest the diversity of the algal community is thought to be unique in Britain, whilst the ledges provide the best examples of a rock shore fauna on the south coast east of Poole Harbour.</p> <p>The actively eroding cliffs support a variety of plant communities ranging from pioneers on freshly exposed cliff faces to woodland on the most mature cliff slumps. The most recent slumps are largely unvegetated except for scattered coltsfoot <i>Tussilago farfara</i>, bristly oxtongue <i>Picris echioides</i> and grass species of which creeping bent <i>Agrostis stolonifera</i> is most common. As the cliff slump matures grass species tend to predominate with red fescue <i>Festuca rubra</i> being most abundant, with in association a variety of plants of calcareous soils such as yellow-wort <i>Blackstonia perfoliata</i>, restharrow <i>Ononis repens</i>, birds-foot trefoil <i>Lotus corniculatus</i> and wild carrot <i>Daucus carota</i>. The rare yellow bartsia <i>Parentucellia viscosa</i> was also rediscovered in this habitat in 1984 after last having been recorded on the Isle of Wight from this location in 1860. In wetter areas giant horsetail <i>Equisetum telmateia</i>, pendulous sedge <i>Carex pendula</i> and common reed <i>Phragmites australis</i> occur. The grassy cliff faces in turn give way to dense scrub of blackthorn, hawthorn and bramble with gorse <i>Ulex europaeus</i> being common on the sandy soils around Whitecliff Bay and willow in wetter areas. The most mature slumps have developed into woodland dominated by pedunculate oak <i>Quercus robur</i>, occasionally with suckering English elm <i>Ulmus procera</i>. The ground flora is generally poor but includes stinking iris <i>Iris foetidissima</i>, primrose <i>Primula vulgaris</i>, harts-tongue fern <i>Phyllitis scolopendrium</i> and male fern <i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>. The presence of these successional vegetation types on these cliffs is of considerable scientific interest.</p> <p>The intertidal seashore consists of a series of rocky, Bembridge Limestone platforms or ledges with intervening lagoons of sand and shingle. The ledges have eroded into a complex of roughly rectangular crevices characteristic of limestone pavements. The ledges on the upper shore are dominated by scattered bladder wrack <i>Fucus vesiculosus</i>. This gives way in the middle and lower shore to extensive mats of sea wrack <i>Fucus serratus</i>, punctuated by pools in the wider rock crevices, in which rare algal species such as <i>Padina pavonia</i> and <i>Gracilaria bursa-pastoris</i> occur. The rocky shore fauna includes many species in the easterly limit of their range such as the limpet <i>Patella aspera</i> and the snake-locks anemone <i>Anemonia sulcata</i>. The ten species of macro-crustacean recorded also include lobster <i>Homarus gammarus</i>, squat lobster <i>Galathea squamifera</i>, hermit crab <i>Eupagurus bernhardus</i>, edible crab <i>Cancer pagurus</i> and long clawed porcelain crab <i>Porcellaria longicornis</i>; many of these species being rare or uncommon on the south coast. The outer edge of the limestone ledges is fringed by a dense growth of oar-weed <i>Laminaria</i> species.</p> <p>The sheltered lagoons support large beds of eelgrass <i>Zostera marina</i> and <i>Zostera angustifolia</i>. The <i>Z. marina</i> exhibits a wide range of morphological variation dependent on position in the tidal range and on water depth, and is also one of the largest beds of this species on the south coast. The lagoons also support dense, and probably competing, growths of Japanese seaweed <i>Sargassum muticum</i>, first recorded in Britain from this site in the early 1970s.</p>	
			Bembridge Down SSSI	<p>Geologically important chalk cliffs.</p>	<p>Bembridge Down SSSI includes the 85m vertical face of Culver Cliff which forms the eastern-most limit of the chalk ridge on the Isle of Wight. To the east and south of the chalk ridge a geologically important, continuous succession from the Wealden Beds to the Upper Greensand occurs in the cliff section. This includes the entire Cretaceous succession found on the Isle of Wight.</p> <p>The chalk cliffs support a breeding colony of Herring Gulls <i>Larus argentatus</i> and a small number of breeding shags <i>Phalacrocorax aristofelis</i>. Peregrine Falcons <i>Falco peregrinus</i> also bred regularly on these cliffs until the late 1950's. The terrestrial, cliff top grassland is composed mainly of species-rich chalk grassland. This contains locally abundant Bee Orchids <i>Ophrys apifera</i>, Pyramidal Orchids</p>	

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						<p><i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i> and the rare Early Gentian <i>Gentianella anglica</i>. Yellow Horned Poppy <i>Glaucium flavum</i> also occurs along the cliff edge. At the junction between chalk and Upper Greensand the grassland becomes more neutral in character. Here the rare Purple Broomrape <i>Orobancha purpurea</i> is commonly found on the cliff top as well as Portland Spurge <i>Euphorbia portlandica</i> on the cliff face, in its only Isle of Wight locality. Still further east a dry sandy grassland has developed on the Lower Greensand where Subterranean Trefoil <i>Trifolium subterraneum</i> and Sand Sedge <i>Carex arenaria</i> are important components of the vegetation.</p> <p>The geological importance of the site resides in two sections of cliff; the Red Cliff, Yaverland; and the Culver headland (the White cliff). The former contains exposures from the Wealden Group through to the Chalk, and the latter contains exposures of the upper part of the Chalk. The Yaverland D Red Cliff site provides a complete section through the Wealden Group, Gault and Upper Greensand, together with the basal part of the Chalk. The Wealden Group, exposed at Yaverland, has been known as a source of large fossil dinosaur bones since 1829, and 11 genera of turtles, crocodiles, dinosaurs and plesiosaurs have been described. The most important find has been the typespecimen of the dinosaur <i>Yaverlandia bitholus</i>, the oldest known pachycephalosaur in the world belonging to a group of dinosaurs best known from the last Cretaceous rocks of North America and Mongolia. Yaverland is an important dinosaur site with good potential for future finds.</p> <p>A complete sequence through the lower Greensand Group is exposed in Red Cliff and the section is vital in completing the group of four exposures that demonstrate in full the stratigraphy of the Lower Greensand on the Isle of Wight. The Atherfield Clay here is an important source of ammonites. Red Cliff is a key palaeontological and stratigraphic locality. Whitecliff is an important and well-exposed locality cut in steeply-dipping Chalk belonging to the Coniacian, Santonian and Campanian Stages. This is one of the few British Chalk sites which provides exposures well into the Campanian Stage and is of great research interest because of this and the near-complete accessibility of the whole sequence. The site is six closely-spaced mineralised hardgrounds which are typical of the condensed sequence seen in the Chalk of the eastern Isle of Wight.</p>
			Ryde Sands and Wootton Creek SSSI	<p>Extensive sandflats;</p> <p>Ancient semi-natural woodland;</p> <p>Shingle bank;</p> <p>Marshy grasslands and brackish lagoons</p>	<p>The Ryde Sands and Wootton Creek SSSI extends some 10 kilometres along the sheltered north-eastern shore of the Isle of Wight between Fishbourne and Horestone Point. At low water a particularly wide range of intertidal sediments are exposed over this stretch of coastline, grading from the fine estuarine muds of Wootton Creek, through cobbles and boulders at Pelhamfield to the extensive sandflats at Ryde which reach a maximum width of almost 2 kilometres. These sandflats are the most extensive in the Solent and support the richest assemblage of sandy shore marine flora and fauna on the central south coast of Britain. Ryde Sands, and the adjacent St. Helens and Bembridge Ledges, comprise a shoreline of great diversity and of national importance to marine nature conservation. The intertidal area is an important component of the Solent estuarine system which supports internationally important over-wintering populations of wildfowl and waders, and important breeding populations of waders, gulls and terns.</p> <p>The SSSI also includes ancient semi-natural woodland, shingle banks, marshy grasslands and brackish lagoons. Many of these show interesting transitions from saline to freshwater influence. The wide range of coastal habitats represented in the site support a rich and varied flora, including many plants which have a restricted distribution and are nationally scarce. Ryde Sands support extensive beds of the three nationally scarce species of eelgrass. Beds of the dwarf and narrow-leaved eelgrasses <i>Zostera noltii</i> and <i>Z. angustifolia</i> extend to approximately 20 hectares in area on the upper shore of Ryde East Sands, and beds of common eelgrass <i>Z. marina</i> are additionally found at low water. The eelgrass beds are an important intertidal food resource and contribute greatly to the diversity of the sandflats by trapping and accumulating sediment, thus modifying the intertidal profile. Within the beds, high densities of amphipods and polychaete worms are found, of which the sand mason <i>Lanice conchilega</i> occurs in particular abundance in association with the eelgrass roots. The intertidal sands support a particularly diverse invertebrate fauna; 57 macrofaunal species have been recorded from the sandflats, of which the bivalve mollusc <i>Loripes lucinalis</i> is notable as it is usually confined to the sublittoral zone. The intertidal habitat is diversified by localised brackish water run-off from Ryde which favours the mud snail <i>Hydrobia ulvae</i> and the ragworm <i>Nereis diversicolor</i>, and rock exposures at Nettlestone Point and Pelham field which permit the growth of large green and brown algae including egg-wrack <i>Ascophyllum nodosum</i>, and support a typical rocky shore fauna.</p> <p>The SSSI provides important feeding grounds for migratory and over-wintering bird populations. The sandflats regularly attract nationally important numbers of sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i> and more than 90% of bar-tailed godwits <i>Limosa lapponica</i> to be found on the Isle of Wight coast. The eelgrass beds are the favoured food of dark-bellied Brent geese <i>Branta bernicla</i> which can be present in flocks in excess of 200 individuals. Wading birds such as curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i>, redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>, grey plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> and ringed plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>, and teal <i>Anas crecca</i> regularly feed on the mudflats exposed within Wootton Creek and at Quarr. Fishbourne Copse consists of ancient coppice-with-standards oak <i>Quercus robur</i> woodland on Osborne Beds and Bembridge Marls which are eroded at the shoreline to expose low clay cliffs. The oak canopy is locally replaced by ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>, hornbeam <i>Carpinus betulus</i> and wild service tree <i>Sorbus torminalis</i>. The continuity of woodland cover and longevity of many specimen trees has enabled development of a rich lichen flora; in all, 53 species of lichen flora have been recorded from the copse. Coppice management of the predominantly hazel <i>Corylus avellana</i> understorey has given rise to diverse shrub layer including dogwood <i>Cornus sanguinea</i>, butchers broom <i>Ruscus aculeatus</i>, spindle <i>Euonymus europaeus</i> and guelder rose.</p> <p><i>Viburnum opulus</i>, and a rich ground flora including goldenrod <i>Solidago virgaurea</i>, wild daffodil <i>Narcissus pseudonarcissus</i> and the nationally scarce narrow-leaved lungwort <i>Pulmonaria longifolia</i> which in Britain is confined to ancient woodland around the Solent and its tributaries. Mown woodland rides with devils-bit scabious <i>Succisa pratensis</i> and saw-wort <i>Serratula tinctoria</i>, together with the series of landslips within the woodland, typically colonised by great horsetail <i>Equisetum telmateia</i>, add diversity to this rare example of ancient coastal woodland. Field maple <i>Acer campestre</i> is an additional component of the otherwise similar copse to the east, protected from erosion by an accreting shingle bank vegetated by sea sandwort <i>Honkenya peploides</i> and halberd-leaved orache <i>Atriplex hastata</i>. The same shingle bank has caused embayment of a small brackish lagoon which is fringed by tall stands of common reed <i>Phragmites australis</i> with sea club-rush <i>Scirpus maritima</i>,</p>	

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						and grades into mixed marsh with silverweed <i>Potentilla anserina</i> , marsh arrowgrass <i>Triglochin palustris</i> , false foxs edge <i>Carex otrubae</i> and the nationally scarce divided sedge <i>Carex divisa</i> . The Duver at Seaview includes several brackish lagoons which were developed as salt works during the late 18th century and which are now connected to the sea via a sluice and culvert beneath the sea wall. The nationally rare foxtail stonewort <i>Lamprothamnium papulosum</i> has been recorded from these lagoons. The pasture to the south of the lagoons grades from common bent <i>Agrostis capillaris</i> dominated grassland along the raised trackways to the lowlying brackish marshy grassland supporting the nationally scarce bulbous foxtail grass <i>Alopecurus bulbosus</i> and extensive patches of divided sedge.
			South Dorset Coast SSSI		Coastal cliffs of international geological importance through exposure of a complete section through the Upper Jurassic and Cretaceous rock succession.	<p>Formerly notified as Bowleaze Cove to Peveril Point SSSI. The South Dorset Coast SSSI is within an A.O.N.B. and part of the Dorset Heritage Coast. Parts are owned by the National Trust. The coastal cliffs are of international geological importance and expose a complete section through the Upper Jurassic and Cretaceous rock succession. The site includes the type localities for the Kimmeridge Clay, the Kimmeridgian Stage, the base of the Portlandian Stage and the Purbeck Beds as well as the standard reference section for the Oxfordian of southern England. Numerous features of great importance for studies of Palaeontology, sedimentology, stratigraphy and environments of rock formation are present and have been studied by geologists for well over 150 years. The site is also of national importance for its physiographic interest.</p> <p>Most of the rock units are very fossiliferous and a number are of international significance for the assemblages of fossil vertebrates which they contain. In particular the Purbeck Beds of Durlston Bay are of special note since they have yielded one of the most important collections of Mesozoic mammals from anywhere in the world. Durlston is also the most important Late Jurassic/Early Cretaceous fossil insect site in Europe. Internationally important sites for fossil reptiles also occur in the Kimmeridge Clay at Gaultier Gap to Broad Bench and between Swyre Head and Chapmans Pool and in the Oxford Clay at Furzy Cliff. The great range of rock types has given rise to a varied coastline of vertical cliffs, undercliffs and landslips which support an outstanding array of local and maritime species. Among the rare plants which occur here are the Carrot Broomrape <i>Orobancha maritima</i> and the strongest national populations of Wild Cabbage <i>Brassica oleracea</i>.</p> <p>The majority of unimproved limestone grassland in Dorset falls within this site which also includes one of the main areas of unimproved chalk grassland in the county. The character of these calcareous grasslands is strongly influenced by their maritime location and also very locally there is 'chalk heath' on clay with flints over the chalk. Among the many scarce and localised plants and animals of the chalk and limestone are the largest national populations of two rare species -- Early Spider Orchid <i>Ophrys sphegodes</i>* and Lulworth Skipper butterfly <i>Thymelicus acteon</i>.</p> <p>Unimproved grassland, scrub and woodland typical of more neutral soils are found on the clays and sands of the Wealden, the Kimmeridge, Oxford and Gault Clays and the Reading Beds. Of the woodlands, those of the Tyneham Valley are especially notable for their lichen communities which include several rare species.</p> <p>*This species is given special protection under Section 13 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.</p>
			Studland and Godlingston Heaths SSSI		Heathland; Prograding sand beaches, and Valley mires and bog pools.	<p>South Haven Peninsula provides an excellent example of progradation of a sandy beach which has been very well documented in historical records and by more recent field surveys. Three main ridges occur, each with dunes fronted by a seaward slope extending beneath alluvial deposits. There are few prograding sand beaches in southern Britain and South Haven Peninsula is a key member of the national network of soft coastal sites. It is extensively used as an educational site as the links between geomorphological process and ecological succession are especially well exemplified. Underlying the south and west of this site are the Bagshot Beds against which sand dunes have built up over the past 3 or 4 centuries forming a large part of the South Haven Peninsula and enclosing a lake, termed the 'Little Sea'. In addition to the importance of the peninsula as a key site for coastal geomorphology, the range of habitats on Studland and Godlingston Heaths, including a fine expanse of heathland with many rare animals, makes this area of outstanding importance for nature conservation.</p> <p>The fore dunes have Sea Lyme Grass <i>Leymus arenarius</i> and Sand Couch <i>Elymus farctus</i> on the seaward edge, giving way quickly to the dominant cover of Marram Grass <i>Ammophila arenaria</i>. Sand sedge <i>Carex arenaria</i> and the herbs Sea Bindweed <i>Calystegia soldanella</i> and Sheep's Bit <i>Jasione montana</i> are frequent and the uncommon Dune Fescue <i>Vulpia membranacea</i> also occurs. The dune system is composed of highly acidic sand and behind the fore dunes stable dune vegetation is entirely heathland. The former dune ridges are covered by dry heathland vegetation in which Ling <i>Calluna vulgaris</i> is dominant. There is a very important heathland lichen community. The intervening dune slacks with a high water table are dominated by Common Sallow <i>Salix cinerea</i> and birch <i>Betula</i> sp. carr in which the very local Royal fern <i>Osmunda regalis</i> is a conspicuous element. In open areas in the low-lying slacks there is wet heath with bog pools and here the rare Marsh Clubmoss <i>Lycopodiella inundata</i> occurs locally. The dune slacks run northwards from Little Sea, a substantial freshwater lake fringed by reedswamp containing Common Reed <i>Phragmites australis</i> and Greater Reedmace <i>Typha latifolia</i>. The lake is low in plant nutrients and acid in character. The submerged flora includes several rare species such as Six-stamened Waterwort <i>Elatine hexandra</i> and Spring Quillwort <i>Isoetes echinospora</i>. To the north, south and west of Little Sea the acidic sands and gravels of the Bagshot Beds support varied heathland comprising one of the larger expanses of this habitat left in Dorset.</p> <p>The higher ground of Godlingston Heath is marked by sharp relief and the occurrence of many fragments and boulders of ironstone. Such well-drained slopes support dry heathland dominated by Ling with Bell Heather <i>Erica cinerea</i>, Bristle Bent <i>Agrostis curtisii</i>, Dwarf Gorse <i>Ulex minor</i> and stands of Common Gorse <i>U. europaeus</i>. Near the Agglestone Rock D the largest of the ironstone boulders Bilberry <i>Vaccinium myrtillus</i> occurs, a scarce plant in Dorset heathland. Level ground with impeded drainage supports damp and wet heathland dominated by Ling, Crossleaved Heath <i>Erica tetralix</i> and Purple Moor Grass <i>Molinia caerulea</i>, with abundant lichens. The rare Dorset Heath <i>Erica ciliaris</i> occurs locally and Marsh Gentian <i>Gentiana pneumonanthe</i> is frequent. Valley mires with bog pools are a notable feature and support a rich variety of bog mosses Sphagnum spp. including <i>S. pulchrum</i>. Bog Asphodel <i>Narthecium ossifragum</i> and Common Cottongrass <i>Eriophorum</i></p>

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						<p><i>angustifolium</i> are widespread; Black Bog-rush <i>Schoenus nigricans</i> and Long-Leaved Sundew <i>Drosera intermedia</i> are abundant in places and the rare Brown Beak D Sedge <i>Rhynchospora fusca</i> and the scarce Great Sundew <i>Drosera anglica</i> occur locally. The heathland grades into the saltmarshes of Poole Harbour to the north and deciduous woodland of birch, Pedunculate Oak <i>Quercus robur</i> and Hazel <i>Corylus avellana</i> with willow and Aspen <i>Populus tremula</i> south of Little Sea. There are several stands of self-sown Scots Pine <i>Pinus sylvestris</i>. In the south of the site there is further habitat diversity with heathy grassland of high floristic interest fringing the golf course.</p> <p>The range of habitats and their transitions support a very rich invertebrate fauna. The site is of great importance for dragonflies with 22 species occurring, including uncommon species such as Small Red Damselfly <i>Ceriatagrion tenellum</i> and Hairy Dragonfly <i>Brachytron pratense</i>; and for grasshoppers and crickets which include the rare Heath Grasshopper <i>Chorthippus vagans</i>, Large Marsh Grasshopper <i>Stethophyma grossum</i> and Woodland Grasshopper <i>Omocestus rufipes</i>. A great diversity of dipteran flies, moths and beetles has been recorded including a number of very restricted distribution such as the Weevil <i>Strophosomus curvipes</i>.</p> <p>Butterflies are well recorded and include the restricted heathland species Silver-studded Blue <i>Plebejus argus</i>. All six British reptiles are present including strong populations of the rare Sand Lizard <i>Lacerta agilis</i> and Smooth Snake <i>Coronella austriaca</i>. This heathland is one of the most important breeding sites in the country for the rare Dartford Warbler <i>Sylvia undata</i>. Other heathland birds breeding here include Nightjar <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i> and Stonechat <i>Saxicola torquata</i> and the many swamps and pools support several pairs of Water Rail <i>Rallus aquaticus</i>. Outside of the breeding season Little Sea is important for wildfowl, with notable concentrations of Pochard <i>Athya ferina</i>, Scaup <i>A. marila</i>, Gadwall <i>Anas strepera</i> and Goldeneye <i>Bucephala clangula</i> amongst the species regularly present.</p>
			Poole Harbour SSSI	Extensive intertidal marshes; Extensive intertidal mudflats; Heathland, and Grassland	Extensive intertidal marshes; Extensive intertidal mudflats; Heathland, and Grassland	<p>Poole Harbour is one of the largest natural harbours in the world, a very high proportion of its area comprising intertidal marshes and mudflats. These, together with the permanent channels, support large numbers of wintering wildfowl and waders, for which Poole Harbour has national and international significance. Fringing habitats of heathland, grassland and the islands provide additional interests, in turn supporting further scarce and restricted flora and fauna. Several rare marine invertebrates also occur within the harbour. Covering an area of nearly 4,000 ha., Poole Harbour occupies a shallow depression in the acidic, Tertiary deposits towards the south-western extremity of the Hampshire Basin and has been formed over the past 5,000 years by a rising sea level. The 4 main islands represent high ground between former river valleys and these now have fringing marshes and in places cliffs cut in the underlying sands and clays. A relatively low volume of freshwater from several small rivers enters the Harbour and this, together with a narrow entrance and shallow form, provide poor flushing characteristics, giving rise to extensive intertidal mudflats and saltmarshes. Tides are variable but of low vertical range and with a 'double high' phenomenon causing water to be held at or above mean level for 16 out of 24 hours. The original heathland landscape in which the Harbour is set has been severely modified by human activity, particularly in the past 200 years, but some remaining natural transitions from saltmarsh to bog and heathland still occur.</p> <p>Grazing marshes and fragments of fen and carr woodland also persist, with extensive reedswamp fringes. The north-eastern shores are mostly urbanized to high water mark. Deep water channels maintained by natural scour supplemented by dredging are restricted: some 80% of the Harbour area comprises inter-tidal, fine-grained mud, sandflats and marshes. The variety of inter-tidal and sub-tidal habitats reflects the range of substrate types and degree of exposure. Most marine invertebrate species are of widespread distribution but, especially in the case of the sheltered intertidal bays, often are in very large numbers. Associated with subtidal fine sands of the central Harbour are species-rich communities dominated by beds of the tube worm <i>Sabella pavonina</i>: such extensive beds represent a habitat not so well developed elsewhere. Whilst species diversity is generally low, Poole Harbour is notable in supporting several rare and restricted marine invertebrates. The sponge <i>Suberites massa</i>, rarely recorded in British waters, is locally abundant on suitable substrates together with an interesting community of Sea squirts, Ascidians and Sea mats, Bryozoans. Among these <i>Anguinella palmate</i> and <i>Farella repens</i> are also rare. The Starlet Sea Anemone <i>Nematostella vectensis</i> is a rare species found only in a few similar lagoonal situations and the mollusc <i>Aeolidiella sanguinea</i> is otherwise only recorded from western Ireland.</p> <p>The mud and sandflats are mostly fringed on their landward sides by saltmarshes or stands of Common Reed <i>Phragmites australis</i>. Much of the saltmarsh is dominated by Common Cord Grass <i>Spartina anglica</i> which arose as a hybrid and rapidly colonized several south coast estuaries earlier this century. Some retreat or 'die-back' is now occurring across its range in southern Britain. The mid and higher level saltmarshes are characterised by more diverse communities with many typical saltmarsh species present. The local Shrubby Seablite <i>Suaeda vera</i> occurs in places, towards the western limit of its distribution in Britain. These fringes of saltmarsh or reed are important for several nesting birds such as Bearded Tit <i>Panurus biarmicus</i> associated with reed stands and a particularly high density of nesting Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i> on some of the marshes. The small colonies of Blackheaded Gulls <i>Larus ridibundus</i> mostly on the islands sometimes shelter a pair of Mediterranean Gulls <i>L. melanocephalus</i> and on Brownsea locally important colonies of Sandwich and Common Terns <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i> and <i>S. hirundo</i>. The expanse of intertidal flats with large populations of invertebrates is of great importance as a feeding resource for large numbers of wading birds and wildfowl in winter. These wintering birds have been recorded in Poole Harbour over the past 3 decades and at least 14 species regularly attain levels in excess of 1% of their British populations. Two species, Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa</i> and Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>, also regularly occur at internationally significant levels, with an excess of 1% of their western European populations present. In addition to the intertidal feeding areas, adjoining grasslands, notably at Keyworth and in the Lower Frome Valley, are important as feeding sites and high water roosts.</p> <p>Poole Harbour SSSI adjoins a number of other SSSIs, notably heathland on its southern and western margins, but does include some areas of these fringing habitats, particularly at Lytchett Bay. The reedswamp merges with acidic bog communities which then grade into wet and dry heathland. There is also dry heathland of the Heather <i>Calluna vulgaris</i>/Western Gorse <i>Ulex gallii</i> type on the</p>

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						<p>islands, though this has been reduced in extent through tree planting and invasion. The open dry heathland at Brownsea is particularly notable for its lichen assemblage which is of national importance. Some areas of heathland on the islands are regularly mown as lawns, modifying the vegetation to acidic grassland with heath species and a high moss content.</p> <p>Wetter grasslands occur on the Harbour shores with neutral, herb-rich swards at Lytchett and more extensive brackish grazing marshes at Keysworth, the latter dominated by Creeping Bent <i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>, with frequent Strawberry Clover <i>Trifolium fragiferum</i> and Narrow-leaved Bird's-foot-trefoil <i>Lotus tenuis</i>. Wet woodlands of Birch and Sallow adjoin these areas, whilst particularly on the islands, stands of Scots and Maritime Pines <i>Pinus sylvestris</i> and <i>P. maritime</i> dominate the drier soils. Here there are populations of the rare and protected Red Squirrel <i>Sciurus vulgaris</i> and also on Brownsea the largest colony of nesting Grey Heron <i>Ardea cinerea</i> in Dorset with about 100 pairs present. This range of habitats and their continuity with one another supports several scarce and restricted species. The nationally scarce Hairy Dragonfly <i>Brachytron pratense</i> and Small Red Damselfly <i>Ceragrion tenellum</i> are recorded from heathland in the site, as is the Silver-studded Blue Butterfly <i>Plebejus argus</i>. The rare shore bug <i>Saldula setulosa</i> is recorded only from Poole Harbour, on sandy areas near high water mark and the rare and endangered ground beetle <i>Drypta dentata</i> occurs on Brownsea.</p>
			Climping Beach SSSI		Vegetated shingle beach and Sand dunes.	<p>Climping Beach SSSI is a stretch of coast with a vegetated shingle beach, behind which is a sand dune system. The intertidal zone supports important populations of wintering birds and the numbers of wintering sanderling, in particular, are of European significance. Vegetated shingle beaches are a nationally uncommon habitat. The beach at Climping is broad in the west but narrows to the east. Plant communities are mainly restricted to sheltered areas behind the main shingle bank and include yellow horned poppy <i>Gaucium flavum</i>, sea dale <i>Crambe maritima</i>, sea beet <i>Beta vulgaris</i>, curled dock <i>Rumex crispus</i> and sea holly <i>Eryngium maritimum</i>. Scrub of tamarisk <i>Tamarix gallica</i> and hawthorn <i>Crataegus monogyna</i> has developed in a few places behind the shingle.</p> <p>Sand dunes are fragile systems, susceptible to erosion and often unstable. Stabilised parts of these dunes are dominated by marram-grass <i>Ammophila arenaria</i>. Other plants which are present include dune fescue grass <i>Vulpia membranacea</i>, red fescue grass <i>Festuca rubra</i>, sand catchfly <i>Silene conica</i>, sand sedge <i>Carex arenaria</i>, viper's bugloss <i>Echium vulgare</i> and a locally uncommon plant, Nottingham catchfly <i>Silene nutans</i>. The intertidal zone consists of soft muds and sands which support large populations of marine invertebrates. The invertebrates are an important food source for wintering birds. In particular up to 300 sanderling have been recorded from this site in winter; a figure which represents 1% of the West European population of this bird which breeds in the high Arctic but flies south to winter on sandy coasts and estuaries. Other wintering birds include grey plover and oystercatcher.</p>
			Adur Estuary SSSI		Extensive intertidal mudflats and Extensive intertidal saltflats	<p>The Adur Estuary, together with Rye Harbour further to the east, represent the only significant areas of saltmarsh between Chichester and Pagham Harbours in West Sussex. The estuarine plant communities are unusual due to the relative scarcity of cord-grass, <i>Spartina</i> spp. The large areas of intertidal mudflats within the estuary are important for a variety of wading birds. Saltmarsh plants fringe most of the estuary and in places have colonised large areas of mudflats. Sea purslane <i>Halimione portaculoides</i> dominates most of the areas above mean high water mark, and annual seablight <i>Suaeda maritima</i> is also extremely frequent in these areas. Towards the mean low water mark, glasswort <i>Salicornia</i> sp. is dominant and sea aster <i>Aster tripolium</i> becomes more abundant. Other species are scattered throughout the saltmarsh community, including common sea lavender <i>Limonium vulgare</i>, thrift <i>Armeria maritima</i>, sea plantain <i>Plantago maritima</i> and sea poa grass, <i>Puccinella maritima</i>. Cord grass <i>Spartina</i> spp. is noticeably absent from most of the estuary, but a small stand does grow southeast of the Old Shoreham Bridge.</p> <p>At the landward margin of the saltmarsh a variety of herbs and shrubs are frequent, including mugwort <i>Artemisia vulgaris</i>, orache <i>Atriplex</i> spp., teasel <i>Dipsacus fullonum</i>, yarrow <i>Achillea millefolium</i> and elm <i>Ulmus procera</i>. The intertidal mudflats of the Adur Estuary support a number of wading birds, particularly redshank, dunlin and ringed plover. The number of ringed plover regularly exceed 1% of the total British population, making the estuary of national importance for this species. A variety of species breed within the reedbed adjacent to the estuary north of the A27, including moorhen, reed warbler and sedge warbler. The estuary embankment near the car park supports a large colony of viviparous lizards, <i>Lacerta vivipara</i>.</p>
	National Nature Reserves	7	Studland and Godlington Heath		Lowland Heath	<p>Little Sea: sand dune ridges have built up over the last 400 years to enclose an acidic freshwater lake - the Little Sea - in the north of the reserve. The lake attracts wintering wildfowl and there are four hides overlooking Little Sea. An inlet of Poole Harbour can be viewed from a hide at Brands Bay to the west of Little Sea.</p> <p>Agglestone: a conspicuous landmark, the Agglestone is a large block of iron-rich sandstone which has resisted erosion.</p> <p>Godlington Heath: the heath is one of the largest remaining tracts of lowland heathland. The site supports large populations of Dartford warblers, nightjars and all six British reptile species. Wintering waders feed here at low tide and many then move to the north end of Studland beach to rest at high tide. Little egrets roost throughout the winter. The reserve also has particularly rich populations of dragonflies, grasshoppers, bees and wasps.</p> <p>As well as wildlife there are archaeological remains throughout the reserve, ranging from mysterious man-made hollows, barrows and standing stones to 20th century bunkers (pill boxes) and shell holes.</p>
			Newton Harbour		Coastal and Wood Pasture	<p>Newtown Harbour NNR is owned and managed by the National Trust. The Trust also owns many of the buildings in Newtown village. The estuary is probably the best example of an undisturbed natural harbour on the south coast. In the 13th century Newtown was a flourishing free town and port, but the gradual silting up of the estuary led to its decline. Newtown is now a village, but the outline of the old town can be seen in wide grassy tracks and small hedged meadows on the site, these features following the pattern of former streets, gardens and strip fields.</p> <p>The estuary supports a number of rare species and habitats, but its primary importance is as a wintering ground for wildfowl and waders, with important numbers of Brent goose, black-tailed godwit,</p>

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						<p>wigeon and teal. Old salt workings at Newtown Quay form an important saline lagoon. The rare lagoon sandshrimp and four other specialist lagoon species have been recorded here.</p> <p>The natural transition from ancient woodland to saltmarsh found along the edge of the woods is nationally rare. The woods support populations of red squirrel and dormice and are also noted for their invertebrate communities. Rare invertebrates found at the site include the fringed horned mason bee and butterflies such the silver washed fritillary, white admiral and white-letter hairstreak. Damp meadows surrounding the ancient village support plants typical of unimproved grassland such as corky-fruited water-dropwort, green-winged orchid and adder's-tongue fern. Some of these ancient meadows are adjacent to the saltmarsh and this natural transition is, like that of the woodland, nationally rare. As well as its wildlife interest the reserve is also an important geological site. Sections of fossil rich foreshore are exposed here and fossil mammal remains are particularly abundant.</p>
			North Solent		Coastal; Woodland; Lowland Grassland, and Lowland Heath.	<p>The North Solent reserve has a diverse range of habitats ranging from open shore and mudflats to saltmarsh, coastal grazing marsh, neutral and acidic grassland, woodland, valley mire and heathland. There are also low, sandy cliffs of geological interest. Plants found on the NNR include dwarf spike-rush, little robin, narrow-leaved lungwort, slender hare's-ear, lax-flowered sea-lavender and corky-fruited water-dropwort. Moths and butterflies seen locally include the pearl-bordered fritillary, goat moth, mocha, great oak beauty, broad-bordered bee hawk and orange footman. The site is also home to the rare Roesel's bush cricket. The site is internationally important for its populations of overwintering and migratory waterfowl, and is of national importance for its populations of breeding gulls, terns and wading birds. The North Solent NNR is SPA, Ramsar site, and a SAC</p>
			Titchfield Haven		Reedbeds; Ponds and Meadow.	<p>Titchfield Haven National Nature Reserve covers 369 acres of the Lower Meon valley. There is a variety of wetland habitats containing a wealth of wildlife including reedbeds, rivers, ponds, ditches, scrubs, willows and meadows. Over 200 species of birds have been recorded at the Haven including residents plus winter or summer migrants. Over 300 plant families are found - 32 species are uncommon in Hampshire and six are nationally scarce.</p> <p>Mammals include Roe Deer, Fox and Badger plus Pipistrelle Bats and Harvest Mice. Grass Snake and Viviparous Lizard are most easily seen in summer together with 19 species of dragonflies and damselflies and over 30 species of butterflies.</p>
			Kingley Vale		Yew forest.	<p>Kingley Vale reserve contains one of the finest yew forests in western Europe, including a grove of ancient trees which are among the oldest living things in Britain. The thin soils on the steep valley slopes support a rich downland turf with up to 50 species of flowering plants and grasses within a square metre. The reserve is one of the most important archaeological sites in southern England and has 14 scheduled ancient monuments, including Bronze Age burial mounds at the top of Bow Hill. From here, there are stunning panoramic views.</p> <p>Highlights: Of the 58 species of butterfly that breed in England, 39 have been recorded at Kingley Vale. Breeding birds have included nightingale, grasshopper warbler, blackcap, marsh tit and green woodpecker, though the first two of these are now only occasionally seen. The plaintive mewing of buzzards is sometimes heard over the reserve. This species has certainly become more frequently encountered over the last 10 years. Other birds of prey to be observed are kestrel, sparrowhawk, hobby (in summer) and tawny owl. Of the mammals, the most significant in terms of their effect on the reserve's vegetation are rabbits and the herds of roe and fallow deer. Their grazing and browsing help to restrict invading tall grasses and scrub.</p> <p>On the negative side, the deer chew the bark of young yew trees and check their growth. Among other mammals found here are stoats, weasels, foxes, dormice and badgers.</p> <p>The reserve's woods contain many other shrub and tree species, including ash, privet, blackthorn, hawthorn, dogwood and holly. Their berries and seeds provide food for winter flocks of thrushes - among which are visitors from mainland Europe like redwings and fieldfares - and for small mammals. Yew leaves and seeds can be highly poisonous but birds and shrews can eat the pulpy red fruits without ill effect. (<a href="http://www.wildlifeextra.com/go/uk/wr-kingleyvale.html#cr">http://www.wildlifeextra.com/go/uk/wr-kingleyvale.html#cr</a>)</p>
			Lullington Heath and Pevensy Levels		Lowland Grassland and Lowland Heath.	<p>The Lullington Heath and Pevensy Levels reserve supports lowland grassland, lowland heath and open water. The site has slightly acid, fine soil has allowed the development of an intimately mixed chalk and heath plant community. Acid loving heathers and tormentil grow among plants such as thyme, salad burnet and dropwort, which have adapted to the chalk.</p> <p>Pevensy Levels NNR is part owned and managed by the Sussex Wildlife Trust. The remainder is owned and managed by Natural England. Many types of flowering water plant grow here, some of which are nationally rare. There are high numbers of dragonflies and damselflies present and the site is among the top five locations in Great Britain for aquatic beetles.</p>
	Local Nature Reserves	20	Lymington to Keyhaven Marshes		Saltmarsh	<p>A major feature of this coast is the grazing marshes lying inside the Keyhaven-Lymington seawall. Covering an area of more than 450 acres these are owned and managed by Hampshire County Council. The Hampshire Wildlife Trust's Reserve on the west Solent is situated between Hurst Shingle Spit in the west and Lymington River to the east. This Reserve extends to over 2,000 acres of saltings and mudflats thus forming a major part of the Hurst Castle/Lymington River Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest. The intertidal area of the Reserve is complemented by the addition of botanically-rich sections of Hurst Shingle Spit. The marshes to the east of the Lymington River became a Local Nature Reserve in 1995. They are managed by the Trust in partnership with South Hampshire Wildfowling Association under a lease from New Forest District Council. Other traditional uses of the intertidal areas such as non-commercial bait digging and the collection of gulls eggs are permitted under a series of licences and leases.</p> <p>The saltmarshes and mudflats, together with the associated shingle ridges, support nationally and internationally important numbers of birds. During the breeding season the most numerous is the Black-headed Gull with up to 7,000 pairs regularly nesting on the Reserve. Several species of Tern also breed here, including Little, Common and Sandwich Terns. Among breeding waders the most conspicuous are Oystercatcher, Ringer Plover and Redshank.</p>

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						<p>A wide variety of birds visit during both spring and autumn migrations and in the winter months. The mudflats, teeming with diverse mud-dwelling organisms, provide rich feeding areas for many wetland species. In spring these include waders and other waterfowl en route from wintering quarters in Europe and Africa to breeding grounds in Scandinavia and Siberia. Late June and early July heralds the beginning of the return migration, this reverse journey continuing until October. In winter the Reserve is of international importance for Brent Geese with an average of over 3,000 visiting each year. There are also significant numbers of waders such as Dunlin, Grey Plover and Black-tailed Godwits.</p> <p>The marsh lagoons lying inside the seawalls may at first glance appear to be uninteresting. However, they form a nationally important habitat for a number of uncommon salt and brackish water creatures. Foremost among these are the Starlet Sea-anemone and the small shrimp-like <i>Gammarus insensibilis</i>. These two species are confined to only a very few sites in Great Britain and are protected internationally.</p> <p>The plants on the reserve are also of great importance. Much of the intertidal area is dominated by Common Cord-grass, Glassworts, Sea-purslane and Sea Aster which looks just like a Michaelmas Daisy. The uncommon Golden-sapphire is, however, perhaps the most conspicuous. It flowers between July and September when the golden yellow flowers forming a breathtaking display.</p>
			Calshot Marshes		Saltmarsh and Eelgrass beds.	Calshot Marshes Local Nature Reserve supports saltmarsh and inter-tidal mudland lying within the shelter of Calshot Spit. The Spit protects extensive saltmarshes of great wildlife interest that have developed in its lee, in front of the Fawley power station. These are included in the Hythe - Calshot Marshes SSSI. The foreshore of the Spit extending westwards into Stanswood Bay is of regional nature conservation importance because of the eelgrass beds it supports, which are the largest along the south coast. These are included in the North Solent SSSI. These SSSIs are in the Solent and Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar Site. They are also in the Solent and Southampton Water SAC. In addition, there are several proposed Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) within this zone.
			Boldre Foreshore		Spartina saltgrass beds and Urban Fringe.	Boldre Foreshore LNR supports extensive Spartina saltgrass beds
			Chessel Bay		Undeveloped, natural shoreline along the lower Itchen river.	The Bay is the only remaining long stretch of undeveloped, natural shoreline in the lower Itchen river. A narrow strip of woodland, with oak, beech, brambles and hawthorn, runs along the edge of the Reserve which is bounded by a railway line to the north east. A parallel strip of shingle and salt-marsh contain iris, sea club rush, reeds and sea asters. The largest proportion of the site is composed of mudflats, which at low tide provide feeding grounds for wading birds and wildfowl. The distinctive sight and sound of oystercatchers is common throughout the year, as is the song of birds which inhabit the woodland.
			Hook-with-Warsash		Reedbeds; Saltmarsh and Urban Fringe.	Hook-with-Warsash LNR supports habitats such as scrapes, reedbed, coastal grazing marsh, scrub, saltmarsh, inter-tidal mud, stable shingle ridge and woodland. Birds include dark-bellied Brent goose, little egret, wigeon, black-tailed godwit, lapwing, little owl, cuckoo, green woodpecker, reed warbler, Cetti's warbler. Butterflies include white-letter hairstreak, green hairstreak, small copper, and grizzled skipper. Dragonflies include broad-bodied chaser, blue-tailed damselfly, azure damselfly, common darter, hairy hawk and golden-ringed dragonfly. Mammals include roe deer, fox, pipistrelle bat and long-eared bat. Reptiles - viviparous lizard, adder and grass snake. Plants include sea kale, yellow horned poppy, slender hare's ear, marsh marigold, English stonecrop, wild carrot, bird's-foot trefoil and lords and ladies.
			Hackett's Marsh		Meadows; Saltmarsh and Urban Fringe.	Hackett's Marsh comprises an area of semi-improved dry meadow, wet unimproved grazing meadows and saltmarsh.
			Titchfield Haven		Reedbeds; Ponds; Meadow and Urban fringes.	See Titchfield Haven NNR for further information.
			Farlington Marshes		Grazing marsh; Saline lagoon and Urban Fringe.	Farlington Marshes supports flower-rich grazing marsh and saline lagoon. The reserve extends out into Langstone Harbour and from the sea wall round the marsh you will see wildfowl, including brent geese, wigeon, teal, shoveler, pintail and other ducks. Waders are present especially in the winter, including curlew, dunlin, redshank and black-tailed godwits; and if you know what to look for there is a rich plant and invertebrate population. Raptors are common and include in season short eared owls, peregrine, kestrel and others. The Lake on the west side not far from the car-park is a hot spot and many of the frequent rarities appear here. The Deeps on the east is also a good spot to look for rare ducks and waders. The eastern shore tends to be better for harbour birds like merganser, goldeneye and scarcer sea ducks. The reserve is on Portsmouth CC owned land but managed by the HIWWT who employ a reserve officer for the day to day management. In the summer the marshes are grazed.

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			West Hayling		Oyster beds and Urban Fringe.	<p>West Hayling Nature Reserve is on the north eastern side of Langstone Harbour. It used to be known as the Oysterbeds as the man-made beds were dug to farm oysters which had started on Hayling Island's shores throughout the Roman times. When the oyster farming ceased the beds became redundant but it wasn't long before wildlife starting taking them over.</p> <p>Conservation work has created saline lagoons, an island and the mud at low tide provides important food resources for a range of birds including geese, waders and ducks. The island provides breeding habitat for common and little terns, black headed gulls, ringed plovers and oystercatchers. Besides the birds there are seasonal wild flowers and butterflies in the summer, especially for the butterfly clouded yellows in the late summer.</p>
			The Kench, Hayling Island		Intertidal saltmarsh and Intertidal mudflat.	<p>The Kench Local Nature Reserve is a small naturally protected inter-tidal inlet close to the entrance to Langstone Harbour. Much of the Kench LNR is run by Hampshire Council who purchased it after a series of attempts to develop it as a marina had failed in the planning process. To the North of the mouth of the Kench is a large shingle bank running - the only remnant of an early attempt to construct a railway line doomed to failure by the wind and waves in the harbour.</p> <p>The Kench supports a small area of inter-tidal mud and saltmarsh. Brent Geese , grey plovers, curlew over winter in the Kench with the bird populations congregating to roost on the shingle spit to the north of the inlet. Large flocks of waders roost at the Kench particularly on spring tides. Flocks of bar-tailed godwits, knot, redshank and curlew may be seen along with cormorants, gulls and little egrets. During the late summer passage waders are often seen roosting here together with terns. A large roost of common, Sandwich and little terns builds to a peak in September.</p> <p>The Kench supports the golden samphire, a scarce plant in Britain which has a stronghold around the Solent. Several species of grasshopper and bush-cricket may be found amongst the coarse saltmarsh grasses during late summer.</p>
			Sandy Point		Sand dune; Shingle beach and Heath grassland.	Sandy Point LNR is on the south-eastern corner of Hayling Island, this site is a unique mixture of coastal habitats found nowhere else in Hampshire - a complex mixture of sand dune, shingle, heath, grassland and mixed scrub.
			West Beach		Shingle beach and Sand dunes.	<p>The West Beach LNR was declared by Arun District Council in 1995.</p> <p>The LNR is part of the Climping Beach SSSI, which has national protection. It includes sand flats, shingle, sand dunes and the plants, birds, molluscs, reptiles and mammals which either live or feed on them.</p>
			Pagham Harbour		Extensive saltmarsh; Mudflats, and Vegetated shingle.	<p>Managed by West Sussex County Council in partnership with local landowners and community groups, Pagham Harbour Local Nature Reserve is an internationally important site for nature conservation, featuring plant and animal habitats of global rarity. The Reserve covers 1500 acres, about half of which is saltmarsh and mudflats, while the rest comprises farmland, copses, lagoons, reed beds and shingle beaches.</p> <p>Pagham Harbour supports large tidal mudflats attracting significant bird populations throughout the year, including little egrets. The shingle ridges lining the coast are a site for rare plants such as the childling pink.</p> <p>See Pagham Harbour SSSI for further details.</p>
			The Wildwater		Rapids	Popular location for wild canoing and rafting.
			Newtown Marshes		Intertidal mudflats.	Now an NNR, but small part retained as an LNR
			Afton Marshes		Marshland.	<p>The Afton Marshes reserve covers 15.3 ha of tall fen and open water habitat, with broad-leaved woodland and scrub on the upper reaches of the Western Yar. The site is on the old flood plain of the river, and was once grazing marsh.</p> <p>The river Yar flows northward from Freshwater Bay to Yarmouth, reaching the sea at a sluice gate on the Causeway. This closes at high tide causing the water to back up to the rustic bridge. Weirs further upstream prevent water levels rising in the south marsh</p>
			Dodnor Creek		Marshland.	Werrar Marshes (Dodnor Creek) LNR is 8.7 ha. The marshes at Dodnor Creek (a former millpond ) are particularly valuable ecologically for its natural transition from fen vegetation through marginal scrub to ancient woodland.
			Hengistbury Head		Sandbar and Headland.	<p>Hengistbury Head LNR is owned and managed by Bournemouth Borough Council. The area is acclaimed for its diversity of wildlife and geology and is protected as a SSSI. The land was declared a LNR in 1990, as a commitment by the town of Bournemouth to conserving and enhancing the environment.</p> <p>The heathland forms part of the Dorset Heaths and is internationally protected as a SAC and SPA. Much of the upper reaches of Christchurch Harbour including the meadows at Wick are designated as an Environmentally Sensitive Area. People have visited and settled here on several occasions during the past 12,500 years and today the area is recognised as a site of international importance,</p>

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						<p>and is scheduled as an Ancient Monument. The popularity of the headland (approximately 1 million visitors a year) has resulted in serious damage from overuse.</p> <p>The sand bar at the end of Hengistbury Head is the main feature closing the harbour from the south, while a peninsula at Mudeford closes the harbour from the north. The main nature reserve area faces Christchurch Harbour, and is contiguous with the reed beds of Wick Fields. The Quarry Pool is now a significant part of the nature reserve features of the Head. While it was very acidic in the early years, since 1990 it has allowed the growth of a significant number of plant and insect species, as well as mallard and little grebe. The insects provide valuable food for migrating martins and swallows.</p>
			Branksome Dene Chine		<p>Nationally important geological cliffs;</p> <p>Wooded valleys and Ridges.</p>	<p>The Branksome Dene Chine reserve consists of approximately 5.25 hectares of steep sided, wooded valleys and ridges. The woodland includes a number of tree species, although much of the shrub layer is dominated by dense stands of rhododendron and laurel. Small areas of remnant heathland are present. Much of the rhododendron and other invasive shrubs have now been removed.</p> <p>This is the largest semi-natural area on the Poole Bay Cliffs wildlife corridor. The cliff is a geological Site of Scientific Interest, featuring a plant bed and large exposures showing river valley development.</p>
			Luscombe Valley		<p>Open woodland;</p> <p>Grassland and Streams.</p>	<p>Luscombe Valley Nature Reserve is situated between Parkstone Golf Course and Shore Road at the Eastern edge of Poole Harbour and covers an area of about 10 acres.</p> <p>Luscombe Valley is barely above sea level - a man-made stream runs down the centre of the reserve from the Golf Course and drains into Poole Harbour after passing under Shore Road. The area consists of woodland with open areas mainly consisting of gorse, grassland, reeds, streams and ditches. There are also seasonal ponds containing freshwater which often dry up during the Summer.</p>
	National Parks	1	New Forest		<p>Lowland bogs;</p> <p>Lowland heath;</p> <p>Extensive mudflat;</p> <p>Saltmarsh, and</p> <p>Tidal estuaries.</p>	<p>The New Forest National Park was created in March 2005 and the New Forest National Park Authority took up its full powers in April 2006. Its purposes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Park</li> <li>* To promote opportunities for understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities</li> </ul> <p>It is the eighth national park in England, the first in the south-east of England and the first to be created for nearly 50 years. The National Park lies mainly in south-west Hampshire – from east of the Avon Valley to Southampton Water and from the Solent coast to the edge of the Wiltshire chalk downs. The New Forest has long been recognised as a special and important area that needs protection. National Park designation means the strongest possible level of protection for the future which is especially important in the south and south-east where development pressures are intense and on the increase.</p> <p>The New Forest NP supports relatively large areas of important lowland habitat including valley bogs, wet heaths, dry heaths and deciduous woodland. The area contains a profusion of rare wildlife, including the New Forest cicada <i>Cicadetta montana</i>, the only cicada native to Great Britain. The wet heaths are important for rare plants, such as marsh gentian <i>Gentiana pneumonanthe</i> and marsh clubmoss <i>Lycopodiella inundata</i>. Several species of sundew may be found in the Forest, and the area is also the habitat of many unusual insect species, including Southern damselfly (<i>Coenagrion mercuriale</i>), and the mole cricket <i>Gryllotalpa gryllotalpa</i> (both rare in Britain).</p> <p>The New Forest coast extends for 26 miles in length making it up to 76% of Hampshire's total coastline (33 miles). The New Forest coastal zone contains a wide range of environments including open water, The New Forest coast extends for 26 miles in length making it up to 76% of Hampshire's total coastline (33 miles). The New Forest coastal zone contains a wide range of environments including open water, extensive mudflat and saltmarsh, offshore sandbanks and tidal estuaries.</p>
	Areas of Natural outstanding Beauty (AONBs)	3	Isle of Wight		<p>Major estuarine habitats;</p> <p>Chalkgrasslands and</p> <p>Coastal cliffs.</p>	<p>Visually the Isle of Wight AONB is dominated by chalk in the sharp upfold which forms both the island's east-west backbone and southern expanse of wide green downs, and its most famous landmark, the white stacks of the Needles. On the north coast, the AONB protects the low clay cliffs, salt-marsh and mud-flats of the Hamstead Heritage Coast. In the south, the complex landscapes bounded by the Tennyson Heritage Coast range from sandy bays to high unstable sandstone and chalk cliffs, cut by wooded 'chines'. This complexity gives rise to chalk downland, arable farmland, wooded dairy pasture, small areas of heathland and hay meadows, sea cliffs and creeks.</p> <p>The AONB landscape is of considerable scientific and ecological importance and includes exceptional flora-rich chalk grasslands, the north coast's major estuarial habitats and the geologically notable southern cliffs and landslips. A rural island, 80 per cent of its land area is devoted to agriculture with sheep rearing on the downs and heath 'rangelands' and dairying on the lower-lying land, together with pockets of arable farming and forestry. Farming in the north retains its traditional pattern of woodlands, fields and hedgerows, a contrast with the open grazed uplands.</p> <p>The Isle of Wight is one of Britain's longest established visitor destinations and includes seaside family resorts, caravan and holiday parks and the seasonal day trip influx on the Solent ferries. The island is also a popular yachting centre, focused on Cowes and Yarmouth. To encourage countryside tourism, the council has created the Isle of Wight coastal footpath and seven long-distance trails.</p>
			Chichester Harbour		<p>Tidal inlets and</p> <p>Estuarine habitats.</p>	<p>Chichester Harbour AONB is backed by the South Downs, the harbour is a series of tidal inlets, with a narrow mouth to the sea, punctuating areas of fertile farmland. Fringed by a narrow margin of wind-sculptured oaks and hawthorn, the fields in turn give way to salt-marsh and intertidal mud-lands, broken by a maze of creeks and rithes.</p> <p>The AONB's massive stretch of tidal flats and saltings are of outstanding ecological significance. The rich, complex estuarine habitats of the harbour are a Ramsar designated wetland. Very large populations of wildfowl and waders use the mudflats feeding on the rich plant life and the huge populations of intertidal invertebrates. More than 9,000 Brent geese overwinter on the intertidal</p>

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						<p>mud-land and adjacent farmland.</p> <p>There are no towns in the AONB, although it is easily accessible from Portsmouth and Southampton. The harbour lowlands contain high quality arable farmland with some beef and dairy farming. Boatyards, marinas and commercial fishing are important elements of the local economy.</p> <p>This is one of the south coast's most popular sailing waters with as many as 10,000 craft regularly using the harbour, but with 14 yacht and sailing clubs and seven training centres the area is considered to have reached capacity. The villages, sea walls and footpaths of the AONB are a popular local leisure area and day visitor destination for London and the South East.</p>
			Dorset	Chalk ridges; Heathland; Sandflats and Mudflats.	<p>The Dorset AONB covers approximately 44% of Dorset. The dominating chalk ridge of Dorset underpins the AONB's landscape. It stretches in a broad band of downland from the Upper Axe Valley eastwards to the Stour Valley near Blandford Forum. A southern arm circles Dorchester and extends to the Isle of Purbeck. The rural landscape varies from the ridges and valleys of central Dorset, through chalk ridges and limestone plateau to the sandy heaths and flats of Poole Harbour.</p> <p>The AONB's coast, including the famous Lulworth Cove and the great pebble barrier bank of Chesil Beach, notable for its complex chalk, limestone and sandstone geology and rich ecology. The rare remaining downland and heathland are also highly important conservation habitats supporting a wide range of flora and fauna with notable rarities. The AONB encompasses many SSSIs and several NNR. The particular quality of the Purbeck Heritage Coast has been recognised by the award of the Council of Europe's Diploma for the Conservation of Protected Landscapes. Rich in prehistoric sites and field patterns, the AONB contains one of the finest Iron Age forts in Europe - Maiden Castle.</p> <p>Agriculture is the major land user, including mixed arable, dairying with beef and sheep grazing. Mineral-rich Purbeck is the site of extensive oil, gas, limestone and brick industries. Skirting major centres, the AONB includes picturesque market towns and ports such as Beaminster and Bridport. The AONB population of 90,000 continues to grow through in-migration of commuters and the retired.</p> <p>The coastal stretch of the AONB is a highly popular tourist area and major resorts such as Weymouth and Swanage attract two million visitors a year. The 956 km South West Coast Path starts at Poole Harbour and the coast's extensive footpath network is well-used by residents and visitors.</p>	
Private / Voluntary	Heritage Coasts	3	Purbeck	Durleston Head; Lulworth Cove and Durdle Door.	<p>The Purbeck area is famous for Purbeck Marble (a crystalline limestone). The Purbeck heritage coast runs from Arne, in Poole Harbour, along the southern shore of the Isle of Purbeck to Weymouth Bay. Purbeck is not actually an island; the "isle" is surrounded by the sea and the River Frome on three sides, but marshy ground south of Wareham made access to the area almost impossible. The name "Purbeck" derives from Saxon which very roughly translates as "beak-shaped ridge which is home to bittern or snipe". The high chalk ridge the Saxons were referring to was the only road into Purbeck until a causeway was built across the marshes towards Corfe.</p> <p>At the eastern end of the heritage coast, the isolated peninsula of Arne is the site of an RSPB bird centre and nature reserve. Another popular nature reserve exists on Brownsea Island in Poole Harbour, where a large colony of red squirrels has survived the incursions of their grey American counterparts. Durlston Head, just south of Swanage, is a nature park run by the Dorset County Council. The facilities include a birdwatching station. The Durlston area has yielded fossilized remains of many many dinosaurs, reptiles, and early mammals.</p> <p>At the southernmost tip of Purbeck is St. Aldelm's Head, and midway along the heritage coast is Lulworth Cove housing the limestone arch of Durdle Door. The arch was formed by seawater eroding the chalk and leaving stronger limestone to support itself. In calm weather a boat can pass through the arch.</p> <p>The circular bay of Lulworth is a well-frequented tourist attraction, and the home of the rare Lulworth Skipper butterfly.</p>	
			Tennyson	The Needles and Alum Bay.	<p>The Tennyson Heritage Coast begins at Totland on the Solent, and stretches along the southwest shore of the Isle of Wight nearly to Ventnor. The Heritage Coast encompasses the chalk stack of The Needles promontory and skirts shingle beaches, high cliffs and a petrified forest of fossilized conifers.</p> <p>The chalk stacks of The Needles are perhaps the most notable feature on the coast. On Headon Hill, just to the north of The Needles, lies a Bronze Age burial mound dating to perhaps 1500 BCE. At Alum Bay the cliffs are stained in multi-coloured hues by mineral deposits. The colours run in vertical bands up the cliffs, which have been a popular seaside gathering place since Victorian times.</p> <p>The inaccessible undercliffs along the coast provide a breeding ground for the Glanville Fritillary butterfly, a species found only on the Isle of Wight and the Channel Islands.</p>	
			Hamstead Coast	Saltmarsh; Mudflats and Bouldnor fossil relics.	<p>The Hamstead Coast stretches along the northwestern Solent shore of the Isle of Wight from Yarmouth harbour to Thorness Bay, near Cowes. Much of the Isle of Wight is administered as AONB encompassing Hamstead Heritage Coast. The coast itself is a region of salt marshes and mud flats backed by low cliffs of clay. Flocks of redshanks, oyster catchers, and ringed plovers visit the coast regularly.</p> <p>At Bouldnor, near Hamstead, these cliffs are especially rich in fossils supporting exposed deposit of Oligocene fossils embedded in the clay.</p> <p>Newtown was a busy port in the early medieval period, eclipsing its more famous rivals Newport and Yarmouth in size and importance, but a raid by the French in 1377 razed the town, and it lapsed into obscurity. The Newtown River estuary is now owned by the National Trust.</p>	
	RSPB Reserves	3	Langstone	Extensive mudflats and	The RSPB reserve occupies one third of Langstone Harbour. Terns, gulls and wading birds descend to breed on the islands in spring and summer, while thousands of waders and brent geese migrate	

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			Harbour		Sstuartine habitats.	<p>from the Arctic to feed and roost in safety here. The reserve consists mostly of intertidal mud but includes five small islands composed of saltmarsh and shingle ridges.</p> <p>Apart from a landing area for recreational boat users on one of the islands, access to the reserve is restricted, thereby allowing birds to breed, feed and roost in an undisturbed state and the fragile habitats, with their specialised fauna, to develop naturally.</p> <p>The invertebrates and vegetation of the mudflats are a rich food source for wildfowl and waders, while the islands are used for breeding by gulls, terns and waders and as a roosting site during high tide periods.</p>
			Brading Marshes		Intertidal mudflats and Intertidal sandflats	<p>Brading Marshes is the RSPB's first reserve on the Isle of Wight. It covers most of the beautiful valley of the lower River Yar running from the village of Brading to the sea at Bembridge Harbour.</p> <p>The Brading Marshes RSPB reserve encompasses inter tidal sand, mud flats and rocky ledges exposed off the coast at low water.</p>
			Arne		Open heathland.	The Arne RSPB site encompasses open heathland and old oak woodland. The site supports populations of avocet, Dartford warbler, little egret, night jar and stonechat.
	Wildlife Trust Reserves	8	Dorset	Townsend, Swanage	Limestone grassland.	An area of limestone grassland which has settled to form a very uneven landscape of mounds and hollows. The site supports flowering communities of spider orchid, bastard-toadflax, kidney vetch and yellow rattle. Great green bush crickets, long-winged cone heads and yellow meadow ants are found, in addition to marbled white and common blue butterflies within the scrubby margins.
			Sussex	Brownsea Island, Brighton	Woodlands; Reedbeds and Lakes.	Brownsea Island, is leased from the National Trust, situated in Poole Harbour with a large sheltered lagoon which is particularly important for overwintering and summer breeding birds. The site encompasses flooded woodland, lakes, reedbeds, pine woods and a population of red squirrels.
			Hampshire	Key Haven and Pennington Marshes	Saltmarsh.	<p>Key Haven and Pennington salt marshes stretch along the New Forest coast from Hurst Castle to Pitts Deep and are managed by the Trust on behalf of New Forest District Council and the Lymington Harbour Conservancy.</p> <p>The site covers large area of coastal marsh and mud flats supporting internationally important numbers of birds and specialised plants. There are large creeks between the saltmarsh which are nursery areas for fish and at low tide birds feed on the exposed mud.</p>
			Lymington Reed Beds		Reed beds and Wet woodland.	A wide ribbon of reeds growing along the Lymington River bordered by wet woodland. The regular flooding of the reed beds every winter promotes the growth of reeds and discourages other plants unadapted to growth on waterlogged soils. The reed beds are also important for otters and insects.
			Pewit Island		Vegetated shingle and Saltmarsh.	<p>An Island within Portsmouth Harbour composed of vegetated shingle and saltmarsh habitats. An integral part of Portsmouth Harbour which has the status of SSSI, SPA and RAMSAR.</p> <p>Pewit Island Reserve provides a roosting and breeding site for birds and is one of the few undeveloped areas of Portsmouth Harbour providing a refuge for waders at high tide. The site supports a wide variety of plants including Sea Lavender and Golden Samphire. The grassland communities also support good populations of common blue and meadow brown butterflies.</p>
			Farlington Marshes		Grazing marsh; Saline lagoon and Urban Fringe.	Farlington Marshes is the Trust's oldest wildlife reserve. It is 125 hectares of flower-rich grazing marsh on the northern shore of Langstone Harbour between Portsmouth and Havant. See Farlington Marshes LNR for more details.
			Hythe Spartina Marsh		Coastal saltmarsh.	The Hythe Spartina Marsh supports saltmarsh with shell shingle frontage. The reserve is a small stretch of coastal habitat flanking Southampton Water. The plants found in the saltmarsh are specialised to cope with being covered by sea water. Large creeks divide the saltmarsh providing shelter for juvenile fish.
West Sussex	Pagham Harbour	Extensive saltmarsh; Mudflats, and Vegetated shingle.	See Pagham Harbour LNR for further details.			

**References:**

JNCC, Natural England

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