



Chesil and the Fleet

European Marine Site

Management Scheme
March 2001

Conservation objectives for all interest features of the European marine site...

English Nature provided advice on the conservation objectives for the interest features of the European marine site after discussions with the Steering and Advisory Groups. They were formally issued on 4 November 1999 in the document entitled: "English Nature's advice given under Regulation 33(2) of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations, 1994" (more commonly referred to as the 'Regulation 33 package').

Conservation objectives are the starting point from which this management scheme has developed as they provide the basis for determining what is likely to cause a significant effect, and for informing on the scope of appropriate assessments of plans or projects.

The conservation objectives set out what needs to be achieved to deliver the aims of the Habitats Directive.

The conservation objectives for the Chesil and Fleet European marine site are provided again overleaf and should be read in context with:

Section 2 of the Regulation 33 package, which identifies the interest features for the site;

Section 3 of the Regulation 33 package, which provides summary information on the interest of each of the features;

Section 5 of the Regulation 33 package, which provides information on how to recognise favourable condition for each of the features;

The map included in this document showing the extent of the various interest features and sub-features.



1 Conservation objectives for SAC interest features

1.1 The conservation objective for the lagoon

Subject to natural change, maintain the lagoon in favourable condition¹, in particular:

- Seagrass bed communities
- Tide-swept communities
- Subtidal coarse sediment (gravel, cobbles, pebbles) communities
- Intertidal sediment communities
- Shingle spring line communities

1.2 The conservation objective for annual vegetation of drift lines

Subject to natural change, maintain the annual vegetation of drift lines in favourable condition¹, in particular:

- Sea Beet (*Beta vulgaris maritima*) - Orache (*Atriplex*) communities
- Sea Sandwort (*Honkenya peploides*) - Sea Rocket (*Cakile maritima*) communities

1.3 The conservation objective for the Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic halophilous scrub

Subject to natural change, maintain the Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic halophilous scrub in favourable condition¹, in particular:

- Shrubby Sea-blite (*Suaeda vera*) communities

1.4 The conservation objective for the Atlantic Salt Meadows

Subject to natural change, maintain the Atlantic Salt Meadows in favourable condition¹, in particular:

- Salt Marsh (*Halimione portulacoides*) communities
- Salt Marsh (*Puccinellia maritima*) communities

2 Conservation objectives for SPA interest features

2.1 The conservation objective for the internationally important populations of the regularly occurring Annex 1 bird species

Subject to natural change, to maintain in favourable condition¹ the habitats for the internationally important populations of the regularly occurring Annex 1 bird species, under the Birds Directive, with particular reference to:

- Lagoon waters

Numbers of bird species using these habitats are given in Table 1

2.2 The conservation objective for the internationally important populations of regularly occurring migratory bird species

Subject to natural change, to maintain in favourable condition¹ the habitats for the internationally important populations of regularly occurring migratory bird species, under the Birds Directive, with particular reference to:

- Intertidal sediment communities;
- Seagrass bed communities

Numbers of bird species using these habitats are given in Table 1

Note: These SPA conservation objectives focus on habitat condition in recognition that bird populations may change as a reflection of national or international trends or events. Annual counts for qualifying species will be used by English Nature, in the context of five year peak means, together with available information on UK population and distribution trends, to assess whether this SPA is continuing to make an appropriate contribution to the Favourable Conservation Status of the species across Europe.



Table 1 - Information on populations of internationally important species of birds under the Birds Directive using the Chesil and Fleet European marine site at the time the SPA was classified.

Bird Species	Little Tern <i>Sierna albifrons</i>	Wigeon <i>Anas penelope</i>
Qualifying Status	Internationally important breeding population of Annex 1 species	Internationally important population of regularly occurring migratory species
Population (as at July 1985)*	Up to 100 pairs (representing 5% British breeding population)	Up to 7000 individuals (representing at least 1% of the north-western European population)

* SPA citation held on Register of European Sites for GB

¹ For a detailed definition of how to recognise favourable condition see: Favourable Condition Table, Section 5 in Regulation 33 package.

Features of Interest

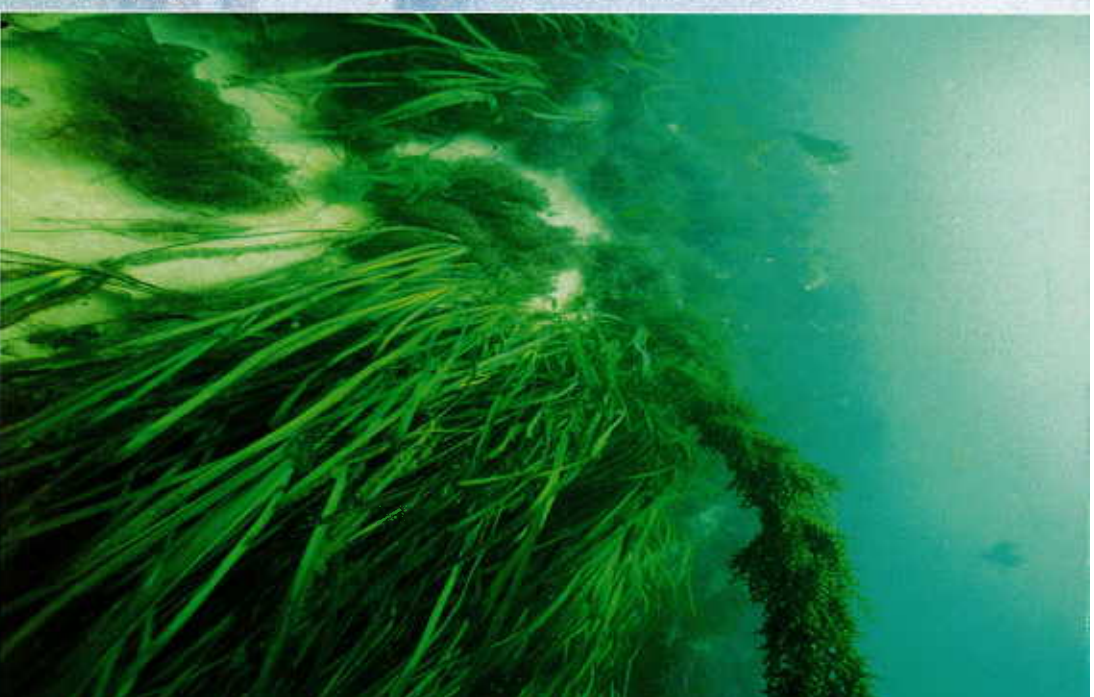
Chesil and the Fleet is a candidate Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Special Protection Area (SPA). The marine components (any part covered continuously or intermittently by tidal waters) of both sites are described as the Chesil and the Fleet European marine site.

Where habitats and species of European importance occur within the European marine site they are referred to as interest features. Sub-features have also been identified to highlight the ecologically important components of each interest feature. The interest features and sub-features for the Chesil and the Fleet European marine site are described and mapped overleaf.

Chesil and the Fleet qualifies as a European marine site for the following:

- Lagoons;
- Annual vegetation of drift lines;
- Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic halophilous scrub;
- Internationally important populations of regularly occurring bird species listed on Annex 1 of the Birds Directive;
- Internationally important populations of regularly occurring migratory bird species; and
- Atlantic salt meadows

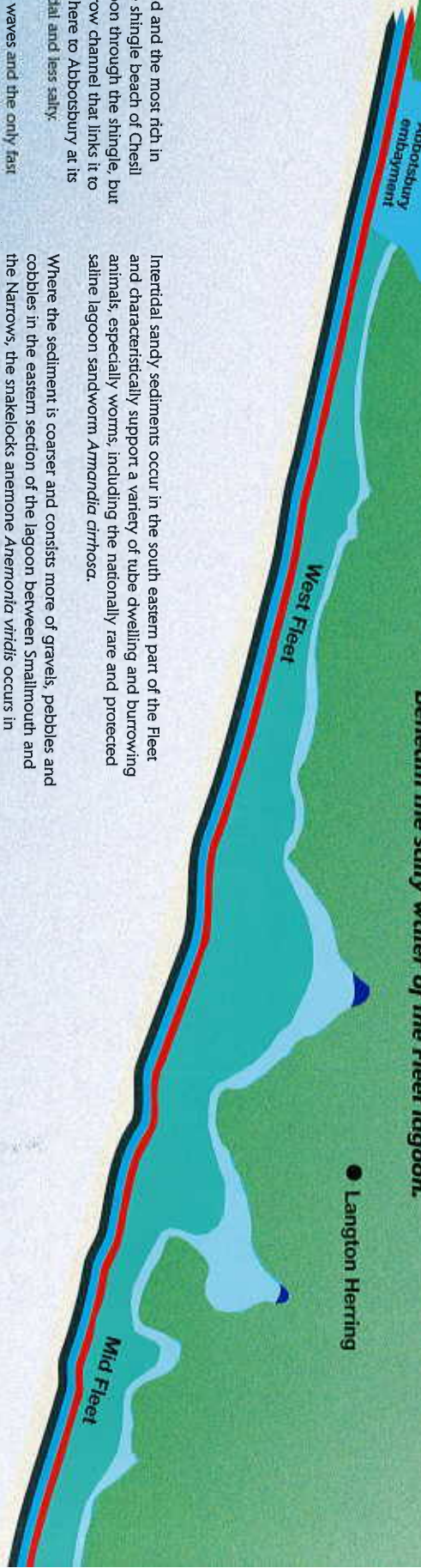
The Chesil and the Fleet SAC also qualifies for the habitat perennial vegetation of stony banks. However, since this is located above Highest Astronomical Tide, it is not included within the European marine site. The internationally important population of little tern also breed on shingle outside the reach of waves. Relevant authorities therefore need to have regard to such adjacent European interests, as they might be affected by activities taking place within, or adjacent to the European marine site.



Chesil Bank and the Fleet Lagoon

Abbotsbury ●

The superb and beautiful coastal scenery of Chesil Bank and the Fleet is amongst the most distinctive along the Dorset coast and is valued by locals and visitors alike. Some of the wildlife which is found there is immediately recognisable whilst much lies hidden from view in and beneath the salty water of the Fleet lagoon.



The Fleet Lagoon

The Fleet is the largest lagoon of its kind and the most rich in wildlife in the UK. It is bordered by the shingle beach of Chesil Bank. Seawater percolates into the lagoon through the shingle, but most of its water flows through the narrow channel that links it to Portland Harbour at Ferrybridge. From here to Abbotsbury at its western end, the water becomes less tidal and less salty.

The lagoon is sheltered from wind and waves and the only fast currents flow in the Narrows and at the entrance at Ferrybridge. The tidal range is much smaller and temperature range far greater than on the open coast. The seabed of the Fleet ranges from deep, soft mud to scoured rock and a range of different plants and animals are suited to living there, with a number of nationally rare, scarce and protected species. There are 9 Biodiversity Action Plan species found in the Fleet. The fauna includes sponges, anemones, starfish, cockles, worms and marine snails. Over 150 species of seaweed grow in the shallow waters, and in the main lagoonal basin in the mid Fleet, mudflats crossed by narrow channels support the most extensive mixed seagrass meadows in Britain.

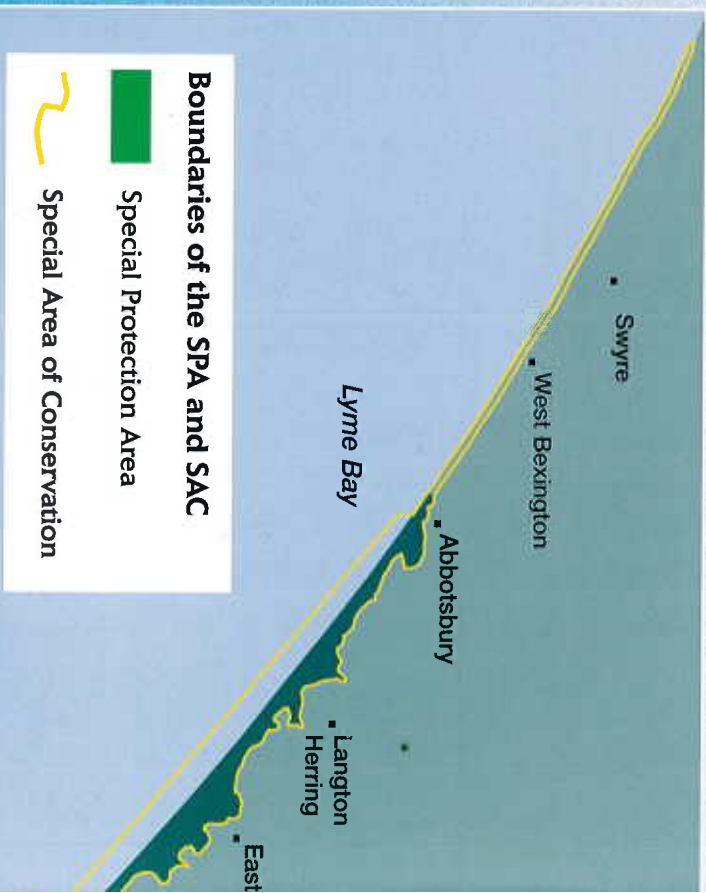


Intertidal sandy sediments occur in the south eastern part of the Fleet and characteristically support a variety of tube dwelling and burrowing animals, especially worms, including the nationally rare and protected saline lagoon sandworm *Ammandia cirrhosa*.

Where the sediment is coarser and consists more of gravels, pebbles and cobbles in the eastern section of the lagoon between Smallmouth and the Narrows, the snakelocks anemone *Auremonia viridis* occurs in unusually high densities with the starfish *Asterina gibbosa*. Seawater from Lyme Bay percolates through Chesil Bank at the low shore level and in places, small saline springs occur and flow into the lagoon. These springs support an unusual assemblage of molluscs including Defolin's lagoon snail *Caecum armoricum* which is not known elsewhere in the UK.

Where the fast flowing water in the Narrows scours the only subtidal bedrock in the Fleet, large sponges and seaweeds survive in the strong ebbtide which carries nutrients from the western Fleet.

Over 25 different species of fish have been recorded in the Fleet. The lagoon provides warm sheltered conditions for young fish in particular and is a designated nursery for sea bass.



The birds of Chesil and the Fleet

Chesil and the Fleet was classified as a Special Protection Area (and Ramsar site) in July 1985. At that time at least 1% of the north-west European population of wigeon regularly over-wintered on and around the Fleet. The shingle on Chesil Bank provided nesting habitat for internationally important numbers of little tern (Annex 1 species) which also fed in the Fleet, comprising c. 5% of the British breeding population. Breeding numbers of common tern (Annex 1 species) and ringed plover approached national importance. There were also nationally important populations of gadwall, mute swan, pochard, red breasted merganser and coot.

The site is currently internationally important for the breeding population of little tern which nests on Chesil and feeds in the Fleet and in addition, the dark bellied Brent goose which winters around the Fleet and relies on the sea-grass meadows for feeding habitat. Wigeon (with over 5000 regularly recorded), pochard, red breasted merganser, coot, little grebe, shoveler and goldeneye occur in the Chesil and Fleet.

European marine site in numbers which are approaching the nationally important thresholds. The site also supports the largest resident mute swan population in Britain (1000+ birds, with some 140 breeding pairs), which graze predominantly on the sea-grass beds. Teal, tufted duck and pintail are also present.

Plants of Chesil Bank and Portland Harbour shore

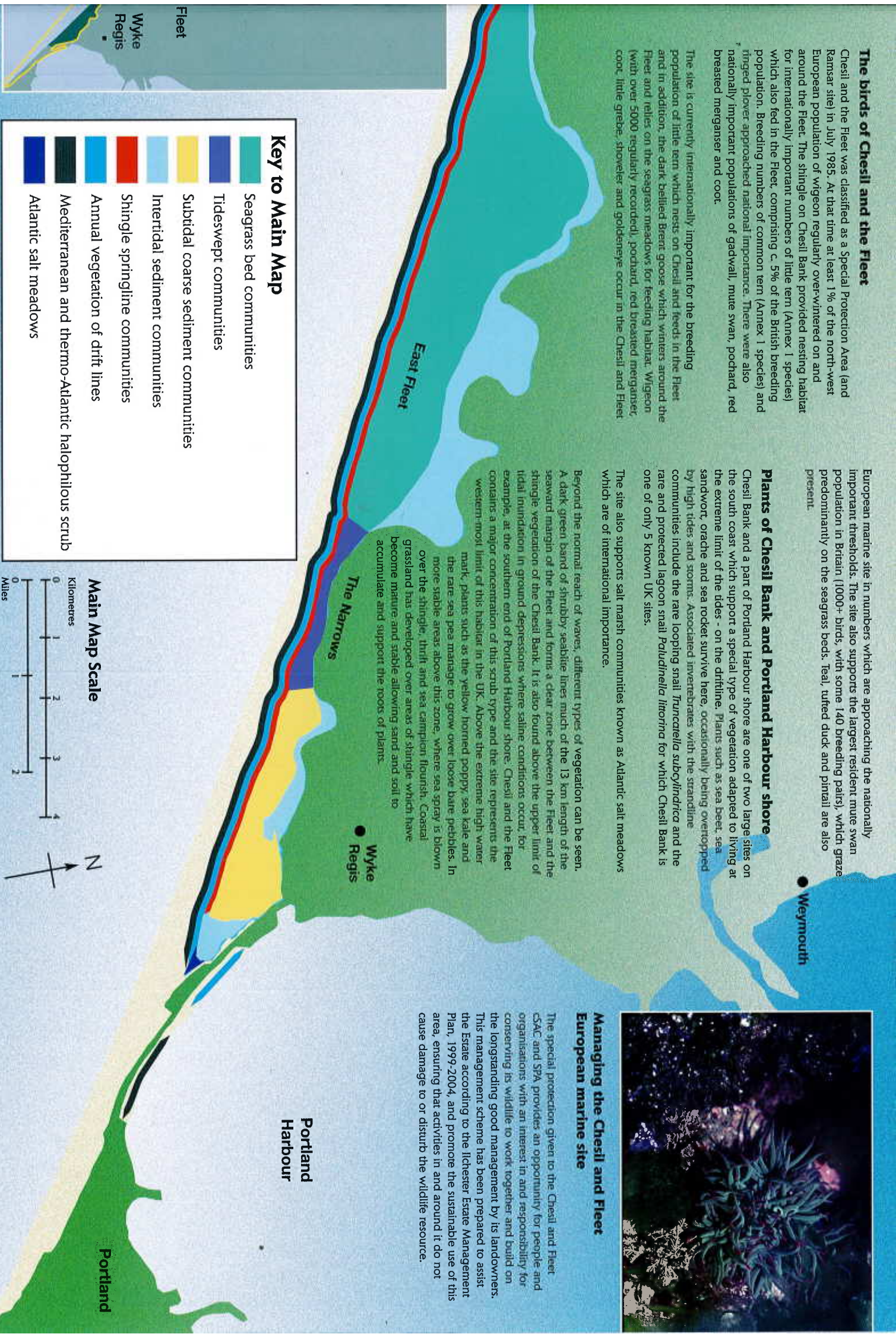
Chesil Bank and a part of Portland Harbour shore are one of two large sites on the south coast which support a special type of vegetation adapted to living at the extreme limit of the tides - on the driftline. Plants such as sea beet, sea sandwort, orache and sea rocket survive here, occasionally being overtopped by high tides and storms. Associated invertebrates with the strandline communities include the rare looping snail *Truncatella subcylindrica* and the rare and protected lagoon snail *Peritidemia littorina* for which Chesil Bank is one of only 5 known UK sites.

The site also supports salt marsh communities known as Atlantic salt meadows which are of international importance.

Beyond the normal reach of waves, different types of vegetation can be seen. A dark green band of shrubby seabird lines much of the 13 km length of the seaward margin of the Fleet and forms a clear zone between the Fleet and the shingle vegetation of the Chesil Bank. It is also found above the upper limit of tidal inundation in ground depressions where saline conditions occur, for example, at the southern end of Portland Harbour shore. Chesil and the Fleet contains a major concentration of this scrub type and the site represents the western-most limit of this habitat in the UK. Above the extreme high water mark, plants such as the yellow horned poppy, sea kale and the rare sea peas manage to grow over loose bare pebbles. In more stable areas above this zone, where sea spray is blown over the shingle, thrift and sea campion flourish. Coastal grassland has developed over areas of shingle which have become mature and stable allowing sand and soil to accumulate and support the roots of plants.

Managing the Chesil and Fleet European marine site

The special protection given to the Chesil and Fleet CSAC and SPA provides an opportunity for people and organisations with an interest in and responsibility for conserving its wildlife to work together and build on the longstanding good management by its landowners. This management scheme has been prepared to assist the Estate according to the Ilchester Estate Management Plan, 1999-2004, and promote the sustainable use of this area, ensuring that activities in and around it do not cause damage to or disturb the wildlife resource.



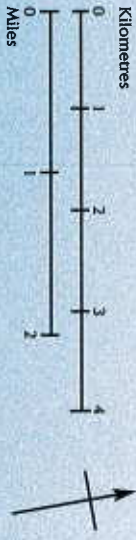
Wyke Regis

Fleet

Key to Main Map

- Seagrass bed communities
- Tideswept communities
- Subtidal coarse sediment communities
- Intertidal sediment communities
- Shingle springline communities
- Annual vegetation of drift lines
- Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic halophilous scrub
- Atlantic salt meadows

Main Map Scale



Portland Harbour

Portland

Monitoring of interest features of the European marine site

In addition to its candidate SAC status and SPA status, parts of Chesil and the Fleet are also designated and subject to agreements under

other conservation legislation (ie. Chesil and the Fleet SSSI,

West Dorset Coast SSSI,

Portland Harbour Shore SSSI and Chesil and the Fleet

Ramsar site). The obligations of relevant authorities and other organisations under such designations are not affected by the advice contained in this document. Information on these designations may be obtained from the Dorset office of English Nature.

English Nature is responsible for reporting to Europe on the condition of the European marine site. The condition monitoring programme is based on a six year reporting period of feature assessment. The favourable condition table (Section 5) in the Regulation 33 package sets out the attributes of Chesil and the Fleet European marine site which will be monitored. Of the actions in the Regulation 33 package, two thirds are likely to fall to English Nature, the majority of the remainder, concerning aerial survey and aspects of water quality may fall to the Environment Agency, although this is to be confirmed.

A summary monitoring programme of actions to be carried out by English Nature is set out in the following table. For a more comprehensive monitoring programme, refer to Section 5 in the Regulation 33 package.

Interest Feature	Assessment	Timescale for assessment
Lagoon	Water clarity & extent of green algae as indicators of high nutrient levels	2005/2006
Lagoon	Character of subtidal communities, in particular the extent and quality of seagrass beds	2005/2006
Lagoon	Species composition of intertidal sediments and shingle springline communities	2005/2006
Annual vegetation of driftlines, Mediterranean & thermo-Atlantic halophilous scrub and Atlantic salt meadows	Species composition of annual vegetation of driftlines, Mediterranean & thermo-Atlantic halophilous scrub and Atlantic salt meadows	2001
Internationally important populations of regularly occurring Annex 1 bird species and migratory bird species	Food availability and disturbance to important bird populations and relevant population information	beginning 2001

Where change is detected, it is important to distinguish 'natural' from 'un-natural' change. If and when a change is occurring as a result of human activities (ie un-natural change), the managing authorities are obliged to introduce some form of management to reduce the impact on the designated habitats.

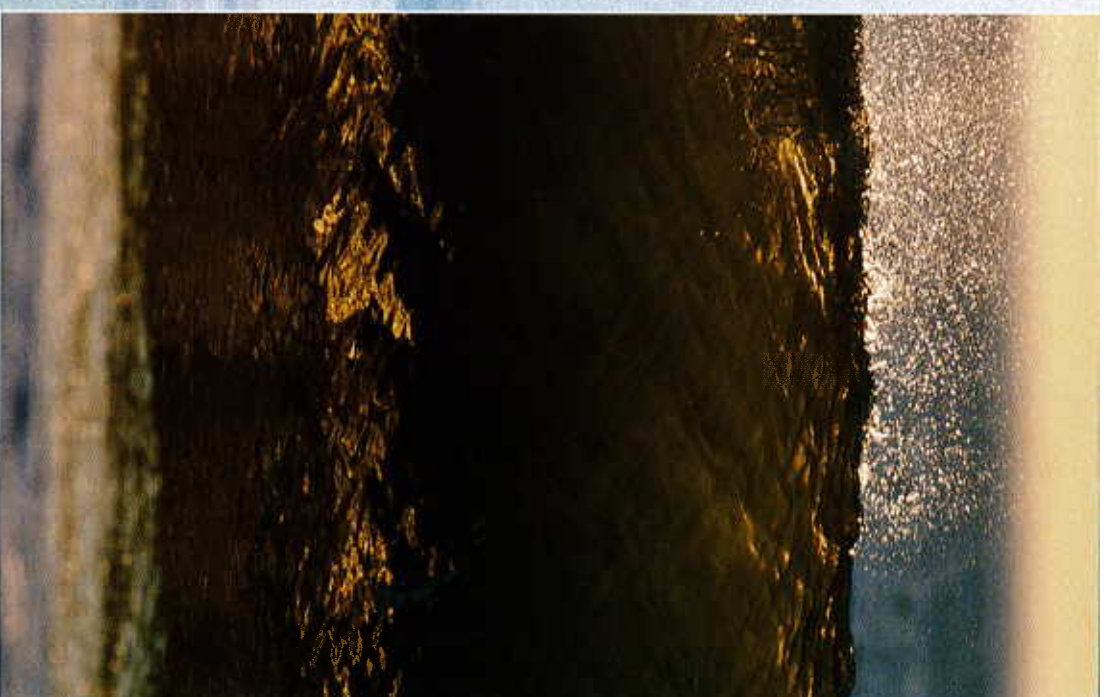
Guidance for relevant authorities for applying the Habitats Regulations to plans and projects...

An appropriate assessment needs to be undertaken in respect of any plan or project which:

- either alone or in combination with other plans or projects would be likely to have a significant effect on a European Site; and
- is not directly connected with the management of the site for nature conservation.

(See Appendix II of the Regulation 33 package for further information.)

A guide against which relevant authorities (RAs) can initiate an assessment of the 'significance' of any plans or projects (and ongoing operations or activities) proposed for the site is provided in Tables 3 & 4 of the Regulation 33 package. This does not remove the need for RAs to formally consult English Nature over individual plans and projects where required under the Regulations.

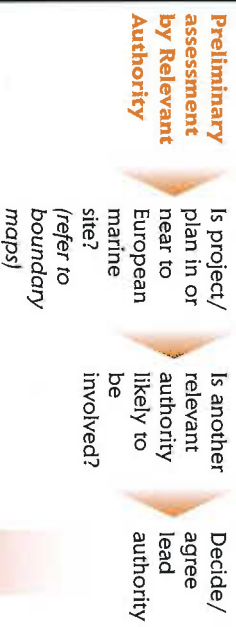


Guidance For Relevant Authorities For Applying The Habitats Reg

Adapted from: *Draft procedures and guiding principles for applying the Habitats Regulations to new Environment Agency authorisations and consents*, Nov 1999. EA, EN, CCW.

NB. This flow chart is for guidance only; in case of uncertainties, seek further clarification from Planning Policy Guidance note no.9 and experts on the Habitats Regulations

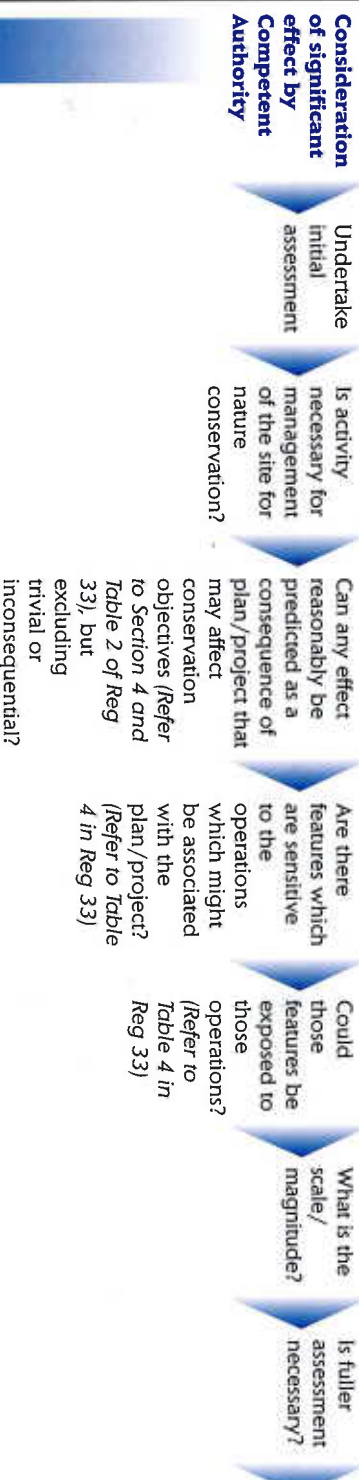
Stage 1: Preliminary assessment.
Establish if the Habitats Regulations apply and agree lead authority



Seek advice from EN, other agencies, DETR, if necessary



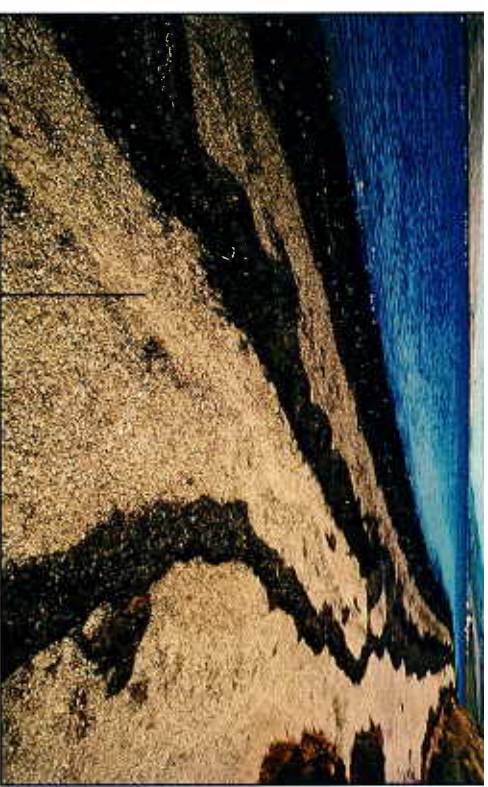
Stage 2: Significant effects. Assess whether plan/project is likely to have a significant effect on European marine site - alone or in combination with other plans/projects



Recommend seek advice from EN; test of significance is a coarse filter and identification of significant effects at this stage does not indicate unacceptability
Competent Authority (CA) must consider if there are other plans/projects that, in combination, should be included in any assessment and discuss these with EN. CA may proceed with authorisation at this stage if effects of plan/project are confirmed to be trivial and inconsequential



Evaluations To Plans And Projects



Stage 3: Appropriate assessment.
 Carry out appropriate assessment - can it be ascertained that the plan/project will not adversely effect the integrity of the site.

Consider effects of plan/project alone or in combination

Consultation

Seek additional info from applicant/proposer

Appropriate assessment by Relevant Authority

Identify effects of proposal

Assess each likely impact on each interest feature (Refer to Section 6.8 in Reg 33)

Determine extent to which impacts can be avoided in order to prevent adverse effects - eg Can location or process be changed? Can activity be modified? Can conditions be applied? Can monitoring be included in conditions so that if effects are detected, changes can be made before there is an adverse effect on the integrity of the site?

Are there significant adverse effects remaining?

YES

Further considerations

Are there alternative solutions?

NO

Are there imperative reasons for overriding public interest* to authorise?

YES

Secretary of State must secure compensatory measures for European marine site

Inform Secretary of State: seek views of other RAs (if involved)

Authority may wish to take opinion of general public, especially expert opinion, both in Stage 2 and Stage 3, if appropriate

Agree scope of information required with EN and others

Must seek advice from EN as necessary during process: assessment is likely to be an iterative process involving RA, EN and developer/proposer

If no, then Relevant Authority can conclude no adverse effects on site integrity and can authorise subject to conditions /agreements if applicable; inform EN of decision

Continue to seek advice from EN; include DETR European Wildlife Division

If YES, do not authorise

If NO, do not authorise

*Where a 'priority' habitat is involved eg lagoon, public interest is limited to health & safety

Supplementary guidance on applying for consent to carry out an activity in or near Chesil and the Fleet

(This advice is derived from recent experience of issuing consents for plans and projects and applying the Habitats Regulations)

When to submit an application

Applicants should normally discuss with the competent authority at the earliest possible stage, and well prior to the submission of the application, where their plan or project is in or near to, or could possibly affect the Chesil and the Fleet European marine site.

The competent authority, English Nature, and the applicant if necessary, will discuss and identify possible effects of the plan or project. If the competent authority confirms a significant effect on the European site they will have to undertake an 'appropriate assessment'. They will require the applicant to supply sufficient information as to allow them to determine if the plan or project could threaten the integrity of the European site. Such information will include direct and indirect impacts of the plan or project, including impacts of its construction and operation, if appropriate.

If an application is submitted with inadequate information to enable the competent authority to carry out the appropriate assessment, then delay in processing the application is almost inevitable. The applicant may incur additional costs if resubmission is required.

Indirect effects

Applicants should be aware that indirect effects of the plan or project on a European site are a material consideration. It should be emphasised that operations outside the site boundary may also have indirect effects. Such effects will vary between applications, but may impact on parts of the sites quite remote from the application area, such as through changes to water quantity or quality.

In combination effects

It is a clear objective of the Habitats Directive to prevent "in combination" effects such as incremental damage to European sites as a result of several developments; the effects of which individually are inconsequential, but when combined, do amount to a level of damage that threatens the integrity of the sites.

In combination effects may be difficult to quantify in reality. However, a precautionary approach might suggest that individual effects of a scheme should be set to such a low level or threshold that the theoretical combination of similar effects across a number of plans or projects would still not amount to a level that would threaten site integrity.

Advice

The implementation of the Habitats Directive via the Habitats Regulations in the UK is relatively new and untested legislation. Government advice is provided in Planning Policy Guidance no. 9 with subsequent advice notes, and English Nature has issued three guidance notes. At a local level, English Nature at Wareham and Dorset County Council can also provide advice. As with all matters relating to interpretation of legislation, only the courts can ultimately decide.

Insert from Chesil and the Fleet European marine site management scheme. (March 2001), published by English Nature.

For more information: English Nature, Dorset Team, Stepe Farm, Arne, Wareham, Dorset BH20 5BN Telephone: 01929 556688

E-mail: dorset@english-nature.org.uk

Designed and produced by: Herbert Design & Production Tel: +44 (0)1305 889440 E: info@herbertdesign.com

Guidance for carrying out activities not requiring statutory consents...

The great majority of the activities carried out by visiting members of the public within or adjacent to the European marine site do not require any statutory consents. In recent decades however increased use of the site for recreational, educational and research purposes have presented some threats and damage.

The following questions and advice are intended as guidance for anybody who is intending to plan or carry out any formal or organised activity or individual members of the public whose activity has a purpose beyond casual visiting within or adjacent to the Chesil and Fleet European marine site. The aim is to raise awareness of the nature conservation sensitivities and management restrictions of this unique site. It is not the intention to necessarily prevent activities from occurring, rather to ensure that they are carried out in the most environmentally appropriate manner and keep disturbance or damage to a minimum.

Are you aware of the location of the European marine site and the reasons why it is of such importance?

See map and description of the site showing the location of the features of interest - this is included in the leaflet entitled 'Chesil Bank and the Fleet lagoon', part of the Discover Dorset series produced by Dorset Countryside Service, available from the Visitor Centre at Ferrybridge.

Is the activity you are carrying out, or intend to carry out, within or adjacent to this European marine site?

If yes, consider the following questions...

What sort of impacts could arise from the activity? Can you minimise the potential impacts? Could your activity be fulfilled in a nearby site of less sensitivity?

If unsure, seek advice from Chesil Bank and Fleet Nature Reserve Warden on 01305 760579 or English Nature on 01929 556688.

Do you need permission or a permit? Have you sought advice from any of the authorities or the landowner responsible for managing the site? Have the Nature Reserve staff been informed of your plans?

If in doubt, call the Chesil Bank and Fleet Nature Reserve Warden on 01305 760579. The Reserve staff will be able to advise you and provide relevant and useful information - they also maintain a register of events to avoid any conflict of interests within the Fleet.



Questions & answers continued over.

What is the scale of activity you are intending to carry out? Are you likely to repeat it?

Consider how the scale and frequency might be minimised to reduce any possible impacts.

Have you checked that access to the site is possible? Are there sensitive times of year during which access might be limited?

For example, little terns breed on Chesil Bank at Ferrybridge and during April to August they are vulnerable to disturbance. Please heed the temporary signs for these and other restrictions.

Does your activity involve access over sensitive habitats like shingle vegetation or saltmarsh?

Please follow approved routes and try to avoid trampling over vegetation.

Do you intend to use the beach for educational purposes?

Chesil and the Fleet is a popular venue for many parties of students throughout the year. Visiting the site on foot from the car parks does not require a permission but consider consulting the reserve staff for advice. They may be able to supply you with educational material and perhaps the services of the Warden or one of the volunteers as a guide. Any activities planned for the visit should be agreed with the Warden. See guide on 'Using Chesil and the Fleet for Educational Purposes' and the case study 'Chesil Beach and the Fleet' in the 'Portland Geography Fieldwork Guide' published by Weymouth & Portland Borough Council.

Are you planning to use Chesil and the Fleet for research purposes?

Chesil Bank and the Fleet are widely and intensively used for research purposes. Any study whether just making observations on casual visits or carrying out a series of sampling and/or measurements should be registered with the Warden and follow the practices listed in the 'Carrying out Research on Chesil Bank and the Fleet Nature Reserve'. Research information should be provided to the Warden when completed.

Do you intend to take any samples? Is this necessary and has it been given the necessary approval?

You may require a licence or permit (check with English Nature as above). Please ensure that any sampling is kept to an absolute minimum. Please pass on any records/sightings you have made to the Reserve Warden.

Do you know whether others might be involved in similar activities which you might join up with to avoid duplication of effort?

The Reserve Warden might be able to put you in touch with others.

Have you checked that military firing or bridging trials are not occurring?

Call Wyke Regis Training Area on 01305 783456.

Does your activity involve use of a boat? Have you checked launching availability? Are you aware that boats with engines are discouraged from accessing the Fleet beyond the Narrows?

Ensure that you refuel on land away from the site where pollution could cause serious damage. Please follow good practices.

Do you intend holding an informal/formal event on the beach or in the Fleet?

Generally only quiet activities take place and more physical activities are discouraged. However reasonably active events are held from time to time. With guidance from the warden the impact may be reduced to acceptable limits and therefore welcomed. An example of this are angling competitions which are held regularly on the Beach working to agreed practices.

Other questions visitors may ask:

Can we light a fire or barbecue?

Any heating for cooking should be raised not only to avoid damage to the ground but also in the interests of safety - hot pebbles explode! Care should be taken to avoid trampling a particular area and any waste should be taken home. Music should be kept at a socially acceptable level.

Can I use a rod and line in the Fleet?

Fishing from the foreshores is only permitted in the Ferrybridge and Narrows area - not in the West, Mid and East Fleet. As a bass nursery area, angling for bass from a boat is not permitted. In the Ferrybridge area a request is made to anglers to avoid the shore adjacent to the protected little tern breeding area.

Is sailing in the Fleet permitted?

Whilst it is not permitted for any craft to use the West Fleet, it is technically legal for sail craft to be used elsewhere. However it is actively discouraged throughout, not only to reduce disturbance to marine life but also to avoid danger in respect of shallow areas, strong currents and other hazards that are present in the Fleet.

Can I collect the pebbles?

No! Please do not collect any pebbles. Pebble extraction was stopped years ago when it was realised that this resource was not being replenished naturally. Every single pebble is now required for Chesil to effectively perform its role as a sea defence for the whole of Weymouth and beyond!

Can we walk along Chesil Bank from Abbotsbury to Ferrybridge or vice versa?

There is no right of way for walkers along Chesil Bank but yes, you are welcome to walk the beach from September to April inclusive. In the summer period the beach is closed for the benefit of the ground nesting sea-birds. Please note that walking opposite the West Fleet is only permitted on the seaward side of the beach and care should be taken to avoid trampling on the vegetation.

Walking on the beach is extremely strenuous. You are advised to plan this trip well, taking a mobile phone and letting someone know your estimated time of arrival.

Can we dig the lugworms at Ferrybridge for fish-bait?

Yes. Small quantities for personal use only is permitted. Please backfill the holes.

Can we metal detect?

No. As a SSSI, the beach is protected from damage caused by digging. It also has to be remembered that the beach is private property.

Can we use our mountain bikes on the shores and beach?

Sorry no, nor the coast path either.

Can we exercise our dogs on the shores and beach?

The shores are vital areas for water-birds feeding, so please avoid these areas. You are welcome to take dogs under close control on the beach adjacent to the car parks. Remember the beach at Ferrybridge is used by bathers. It is not practical to provide doggy bins on Chesil so please carry a suitable bag to clear up behind your dog.

Can we pick the flowers?

No. Whilst the desire to pick the sea-pinks and other beautiful sea-side plants is appreciated, please leave them for everyone to enjoy. Plant up-rooting is illegal.

Can I drive onto the beach and along the foreshores?

Use of vehicles and motor-bikes on a SSSI can be very damaging and is not permitted. It is the reserve management's policy to report offenders to the police.

Can we camp on the beach?

No! Whilst wind-breaks for pic-nicking and 'beach buddies' for sheltering anglers are allowed, tents must not be erected.



Action Plan

Identified Actions

The following Action Plan identifies the actions to be undertaken by the relevant authorities in support of the Ilchester Estate's site management and the Advisory Group. The contents of the action plan are derived mostly from the Regulation 33 package and the Ilchester Estate Management Plan, but other sources of information are also referred to where appropriate.

The Action Plan has been drawn up with cross referencing to the Regulation 33 package, so that it is clear as to which interest feature(s) and processes are specifically relevant to each identified issue. Those issues highlighted in bold, are believed to have the highest priority. A timescale has also been allocated to assist with prioritising the issues and necessary actions.

Reviewing and reporting on progress

It is proposed that the relevant authorities will report on progress of the action plan on an formal basis to the annual meeting of the Advisory Group. Outstanding issues and, if appropriate, new issues which may have arisen during the preceding year will be discussed and allocated a lead authority and timescale to be progressed.



Action Plan

Issue	Interest feature	Process (Reg 33)	Management solutions	Relevant authority	Key partners	Timescale	Target	Key reference /Source
A Physical Loss and/or Damage								
A1. Concern that developments might cause loss of, or damage to, habitats	Lagoon, Ann veg, Medit, Annex 1, Migratory; Salt mead	Removal, smothering, siltation, abrasion, selective extraction	A1.1 Ensure that developments are assessed (appropriate assessment or EIA) and designed such that no significant loss of habitat occurs	All RAs		Ongoing		
			A1.2 Develop guidance on what is significant effect	All RAs, EN lead		March 2001		
A2. High sediment run-off into the Fleet	Lagoon, Annex 1, Migratory	Smothering, siltation	A1.3 Protect against removal or smothering of habitats caused by dredging or construction	PHA, DCC	Ilch Est, MAFF	Ongoing		PHRO
			A2.1 Actively promote agricultural best practice eg uptake of Stewardship/Landcare in Fleet hinterland to reduce sediment run-off	EA, EN, DCC, WDDC	MAFF, FRCA, Landowners, Adv Grp, Ilch Est	2001+	A2.1 100% semi-natural habitat corridor along length of Fleet and immediate carries by end 2003	IEMP 6.3 8
A3. Smothering of habitats and other effects caused by physical structures	Lagoon, Migratory, Salt mead	Smothering, siltation, abrasion	A3.1 Investigate effects of oyster testles on intertidal sediment communities and sediment processes	EN	MAFF, Ilch Est	2001		IEMP
			A3.2 Agree a management regime for location and length of stay of testles	EN	Ilch Est, Adv Grp	2001	A3.2 Agreed procedure and monitoring by end 2002	
			A3.3 Ensure that bridging trials are not carried out in new locations		MOD	Ongoing		
A4. Concern that East Fleet is becoming silted	Lagoon, Annex 1, Salt mead	Siltation, smothering	A4.1 Compare historic and recent bathymetric information. Identify actions/further work required	SFFC, PHA, EN	MAFF, Ilch Est	2001		Reg 33 PHRO
A5. Physical damage to, or loss of, seagrass beds	Lagoon, Migratory	Abrasion	A5.1 Continue to discourage use of boat engines and anchors west of the Narrows		MOD, Ilch Est	Ongoing		
			A5.2 Minimise use of damaging fishing gear west of the Narrows	SFCC	Ilch Est	Ongoing		
A6. Damage to vegetation on shingle caused by access at certain locations	Ann veg, Veg shingle, Medit Salt mead	Abrasion	A6.1 Investigate provision of information and/or boardwalks to reduce trampling pressure	DCC, WDDC, WPBC	Crown & Ilch Ests	2001		IEMP 4.6
			A6.2 Maintain use of turning mat during Bridging trials		MOD	Ongoing		
			A6.3 Investigate potential for encouraging recolonisation where appropriate	EN, DCC, WDDC	Ilch Est			
B Non Physical Disturbance								
B1. Disturbance to roosting, feeding or breeding birds	Annex 1, Migratory,	Noise, visual presence	B1.1 Maintain warden presence to monitor levels of disturbance and promote responsible behaviour	EN	Ilch Est, Adv Grp	Ongoing		IEMP 4.2
			B1.2 Maintain Abbotsbury embayment and mid Fleet as a sanctuary area		Ilch Est	Ongoing		IEMP 4.4
C Toxic Contamination								
C1. Changes in water quality	Lagoon	Introduction of toxic compounds	C1.1 Continue water quality monitoring project paying particular attention to levels and sources of toxic compounds	EA	FSG	Ongoing		WQ Log LEAP

Issue	Interest feature	Process (Reg 33)	Management solutions	Relevant authority	Key partners	Timescale	Target	Key reference /Source
C2. Risk of point source fuel/chemical pollution	Lagoon, Ann veg, MEDIT, Annex 1, Migratory, Salt mead	Introduction of toxic compounds	C2.1 Complete oil & hazardous chemical spill Contingency plans	PHA		2000		PHOSCP PHRO
			C2.2 Ensure adequate resourcing and review procedures for Contingency plans	PHA		2000+		PHOSCP PHRO
			C2.3 Carry out regular oil & hazardous chemical spill control exercises	PHA, DCC	Adv Grp	Ongoing	C1.3 Spill exercise every 6 months	PHOSCP, BPB, IEMP 6.3.15, PHRO
			C2.4 Raise awareness amongst emergency services over procedure for chemical strandings Consider the need for practical exercises	DCC	Adv Grp	2001		
			C2.5 Ensure that adequate /appropriate disposal points are made available and publicised	WPBC, PHA	Ilch Est, Adv Grp	2001		
C3. Risk of diffuse pollution	Lagoon, Annex 1, Migratory	Introduction of toxic compounds	C2.6 Provide information on best practice for use & disposal of fuel & other contaminants to Fleet users and adjacent landholders	EA, WPBC	Ilch Est, Adv Grp	2001		
			C3.1 Actively promote best practice to reduce agricultural run-off into the Fleet	EA, EN, DCC, WDDC	MAFF, FRCA, Ilch Est, Landowners, Adv Grp	2000+	A2.1	RCA Stewardship documents, WQ Lag, RN project proposal
			C3.2 Feasibility study for Landcare project approach in Fleet hinterland	EN, DCC, WDDC		2000/1	A2.1	IEMP 6.3.8
			C3.3 Continue Fleet Hinterland Improvement Plan adopting the precautionary principle for new inputs	DCC, WDDC	Ilch Est	Ongoing	A2.1	IEMP 6.3.8
D Non-Toxic Contamination								
D1. Changes in water quality	Lagoon, Annex 1, Migratory	Nutrient enrichment, organic enrichment, changes in turbidity, changes in salinity	D1.1 Continue water quality monitoring project	EA, WW	FSG	Ongoing		WQ Lag
			D1.2 Develop work programme on additional research requirements	EA, WW	FSG	Ongoing	D1.2 Outline work programme Summer 2001	WQ Lag
D2. Risk of diffuse or chronic pollution arising from nutrient and/or organic enrichment and/or changes in turbidity	Lagoon, Annex 1, Migratory	Nutrient enrichment, organic enrichment, changes in turbidity, changes in salinity	D2.1 As for C3.1 - C3.3				A2.1	
D3. Risk of point source pollution	Lagoon, Annex 1, Migratory	Nutrient enrichment, organic enrichment, changes in turbidity, changes in salinity	D3.1 Carry out review of consented discharges	EA, EN, WW		2000/1	D2.1 Discharge consent review complete by end 2002	Habs Regs
E Biological Disturbance								
E1. Concern over spread and effects of non-native species	Lagoon	Introduction of non-native species, selective extraction of species	E1.1 Map and monitor distribution of Japanese seaweed in the Narrows	EN	MOD	Ongoing	E1.1 Map complete by summer 2001	
			E1.2 Keep annual management of Japanese seaweed under review		MOD	Ongoing		
			E1.3 Identify risk and management of ballast water	PHA		Ongoing		PHRO
E2. Concern over intensity and effects of bait digging	Lagoon, Migratory	Selective extraction of species	E2.1 Continue to monitor bait digging activity at Ferrybridge		Ilch Est	Ongoing		IEMP 4.2, 6.3.1
			E2.2 Promote best practice via code of conduct leaflet	EN, WPBC	Ilch Est, Adv Grp	2001	E2.2 Leaflet produced end 2001	IEMP 6.3.1

Action Plan continued

Issue	Interest feature	Process (Reg 33)	Management solutions	Relevant authority	Key partners	Timescale	Target	Key reference /Source
E3. Concern that Pacific oyster might establish in the wild	Lagoon	Introduction of non-native species	E3.1 Re-establish temperature and spatfall monitoring programme	EA, EN	MAFF, Adv Grp	2001	E3.1 Biannual check for spat settlement, annual temperature reports	Seaward
E4. Gaps in information on wildfowling and effects on bird populations	Migratory	Selective extraction	E4.1 Carry out review of wildfowling trends to determine sustainable proportion	EN	Wildfowlers, Ilch Est	2001	E4.1 Objective advice on bag numbers for 2002 season	IEMAP 5.2.1, 6.2.2
E5. Gaps in information on feeding habits of little tern	Annex 1	Selective extraction	E5.1 Carry out review of feeding patterns of the little tern to identify significant feeding areas and food sources	EN	Adv Grp, RSPB	Start 2001		Colombe '97
E6. Concern over excessive green algal growth and bacteria	Lagoon	Nutrient enrichment eutrophication	E6.1 Monitor growth of green algae in summer E6.2 Continue to monitor water quality	EN EA	FSG	Ongoing Ongoing		Reg 33 LEAP
F Generic Issues								
F1. Procedure required for dealing with small or urgent plans or projects	Whole site	All processes	F1.1 Provide examples of real cases where "fast-track" procedure would be valuable F1.2 Prepare guidance on procedure for "fast-tracking"	PHA EN, PHA		2000 2001		PHRO PHRO
F2. Existing consented activities may cause or be causing deterioration of condition	Whole site	All processes	F2.1 Carry out review of consents under Regulation 50	All RAs		Start 2000	F2.1 Complete review by end 2003	Habs Regs Reg 33 6.7

Key to Interest Feature

Lagoon	The Fleet Lagoon
Ann veg	Annual vegetation of driftlines
Veg shingle	Coastal vegetated shingle outside the reach of waves
Medit	Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic halophilous scrub
Annex 1	Internationally important populations of breeding bird species listed on Annex 1 of Birds Directive
Migratory	Internationally important populations of regularly occurring migratory species
Salt mead	Atlantic salt meadows

Key to Key reference/Source

PHOSCP	Portland Harbour Oil Spill Contingency Plan. Portland Harbour Authority
FBP	Fleet Booming Plan, Dorset County Council, 1996
IEMP	Cesil Bank & the Fleet Management Plan, 1999-2004, Ilchester Estate
WQ Lag	Guidelines for investigating & managing water quality in saline lagoons based on a case study of the Fleet, 2000 UK Marine SACs Project
Habs Regs	The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994
Seaward	Monitoring spatfall of Pacific oysters in the Fleet, 1992
Colombe '97	The current and historical status of little terns and their future management
LEAP	West Dorset Local Environment Agency plan, 1st annual review 1999-2000
Reg 33	Cesil and the Fleet Regulation 33 package
PHRO	Portland Harbour Revision Order

Key to relevant authority/key partners

RA	Relevant Authority
EN	English Nature
PHA	Portland Harbour Authority
DCC	Dorset County Council
Ilch Est	Ilchester Estate
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food
EA	Environment Agency
WDCC	West Dorset District Council
FRCA	Farming & Rural Conservation Agency
MoD	Ministry of Defence
SSFC	Southern Sea Fisheries Committee
WPBC	Weymouth & Portland Borough Council
Adv Grp	Advisory Group
FSG	Fleet Study Group
WW	Westsex Water
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds



Cesli and the Fleet European marine site consists of the marine components of the Cesli and the Fleet candidate SAC and SPA.

The relevant authorities of a European marine site are required to exercise their functions so as to protect the habitats and species for which the site has been designated. This management scheme will provide the framework through which this will be done.

This management scheme must be used alongside the following documents, and not in isolation:

English Nature, 4 November 1999, Cesli and the Fleet European marine site. English Nature's advice given under Regulation 33(2) of the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc) Regulations 1994, Dorset EN (The management scheme draws heavily from this document and must be read in conjunction with it.)

Moxom, D.J., Colombe, S.V. Cesli Bank and the Fleet management plan, 1999-2004, Ilchester Estate. (This sets out the background issues relevant to the site.)

A large proportion of the Cesli and Fleet European marine site is privately owned and managed by the Ilchester Estate. The fact that most of the site has been under the same ownership for more than 400 years has contributed hugely to the stability of this site.

Existing management to date has been effective by restricting public access to much of the site. In addition, many traditional users are aware of its importance and have adapted their practices accordingly. However, there are activities and threats to the environment over which the Estate has no control through its landownership, in particular, indirect threats and those that affect in combination. Therefore support in managing these is needed. In addition, it is widely recognised that the warden role for this site provides the crucial link between management and the user, and this role must continue to be supported by the relevant authorities.

Aim of the management scheme:

To maintain the Cesli and the Fleet European marine site as a European stronghold for lagoonal and shingle habitats, and breeding and migratory bird species.

Guiding principles:

Integrating sustainable management of the European marine site with existing and future plans and initiatives to avoid duplication of effort

Ensure that users and interested parties are kept informed and where possible involved in the management of the site

Undertake monitoring and periodic review of the management scheme to ensure its successful implementation

Target groups:

Those closely involved in the management process, such as the relevant authorities and their key partners in management activities.

Regular users of the site, landowners and occupiers, who need to be aware of management of the site and activities.

Other parties with an interest in the site.

GLOSSARY

Advisory Group	The body of representatives from local interests, user groups and conservation groups, formed to advise the management group.
Annex I habitat type(s)	A natural habitat type listed in Annex I of the Habitats Directive for which Special Areas of Conservation can be selected.
Annex II species	A species listed in Annex II of the Habitats Directive for which Special Areas of Conservation can be selected.
Community	A group of organisms occurring in a particular environment, presumably interacting with each other and with the environment, and identifiable by means of ecological survey from other groups.
Competent authority	Any Minister, government department, public or statutory undertaker, public person or person holding a public office that exercises legislative powers (see also relevant authority).
Conservation objective	A statement of the nature conservation aspirations for a site, expressed in terms of the favourable condition required for the habitats and/or species for which the site has been selected.
European marine site	A European site (SAC or SPA) which consists of, or in so far as it consists of, marine areas.
Favourable condition	A range of conditions for a natural habitat or species at which the sum of the influences acting upon it are not adversely affecting its distribution, abundance, structure or function within an individual Natura 2000 site. The condition in which the habitat or species is capable of sustaining itself on a long-term basis.
Favourable conservation status	A range of conditions for a natural habitat or species at which the sum of the influences acting upon it are not adversely affecting its distribution, abundance, structure or function throughout the biogeographic region. The condition in which the habitat or species is capable of sustaining itself on a long-term basis.
Halophilious	Plants which can thrive in, or tolerate the presence of saline conditions.
Interest feature	A natural or semi-natural feature for which a European site has been selected. This includes any Habitats Directive Annex I habitat or Annex II species and any population of a bird species for which a site has been selected under the Birds Directive.
Management scheme	The framework established by the relevant authorities at a European marine site under which their functions are exercised to secure compliance with the Habitats Directive in relation to that site.
Plan or project	Any proposed development that is within a relevant authority's function to control, or over which a competent authority has a statutory function to decide on applications for consents, authorisations, licences or permissions.
Relevant authority	Any Statutory bodies or public office with local powers or functions which have, or could have an impact on the marine area within or adjacent to a European marine site.

The Chesil and Fleet European marine site has a Steering Group which has the responsibility to implement this management scheme.

This group is made up of representatives from:

Dorset County Council,

English Nature,

the Environment Agency,

the Ilchester Estate,

Portland Harbour Authority,

Southern Sea Fisheries Committee,

West Dorset District Council,

Weymouth & Portland Borough Council

Wessex Water

and the

Ministry of Defence (Wyke Regis Training Area),

The Steering Group also draws on advice from the European marine site Advisory Group chaired by the Ilchester Estate, and receives scientific support and advice from the Fleet Study Group.



For more information:

English Nature, Dorset Team, Slepe Farm, Arne,

Wareham, Dorset BH20 5BN

Telephone: 01929 556688

E-mail: dorset@english-nature.org.uk

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Designed and produced by: Herbert Design & Production
Tel: +44 (0)1305 889440 E-mail: graham@herbertdesign.com