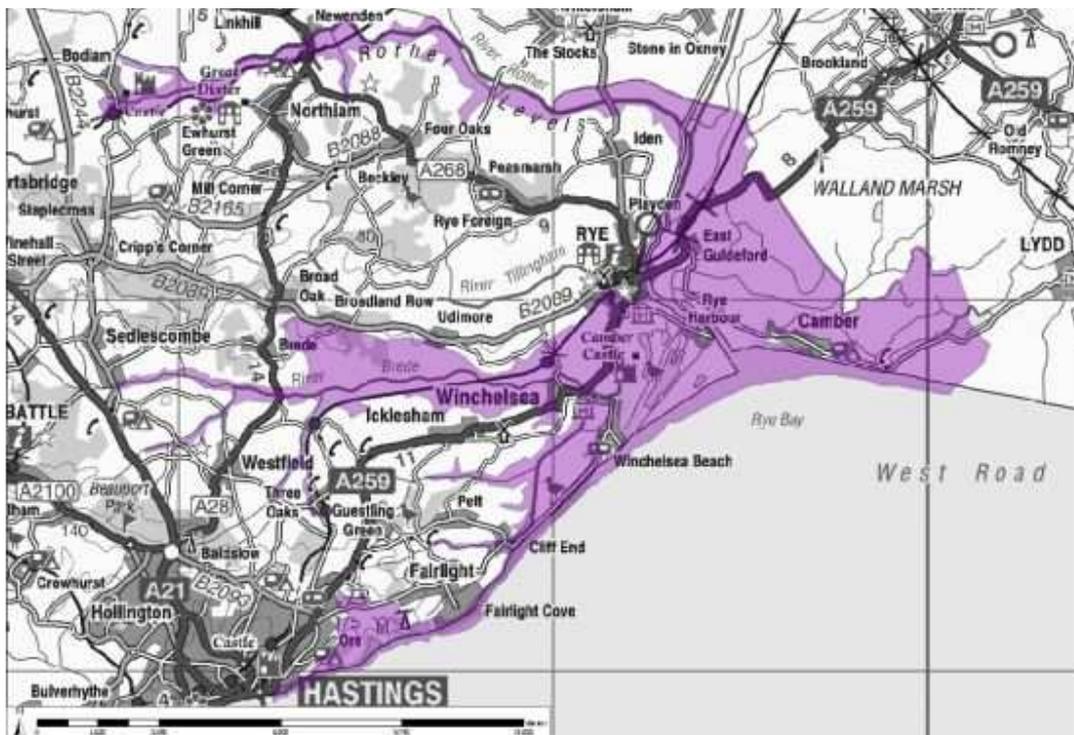


## Romney Marsh area Biodiversity Opportunity Area

### Joint Character Area Romney Marsh

**Geology** Romney Marsh Area Biodiversity Opportunity Area lies mostly on Hastings sandstone, siltstone and mudstone, with extensive beach and tidal flat deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel.



The Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) are the regional priority areas of opportunity for restoration and creation of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats. They are a spatial representation of BAP targets and are areas of opportunity, not constraint. The BOAs are the property of the South East England Biodiversity Forum [www.sebiodiversity.org.uk](http://www.sebiodiversity.org.uk). Contains Ordnance Survey data Crown copyright and database right 2010

The Romney Marsh area has been recognised as a Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA) as it represents a priority area for the delivery of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) targets. This is one of 75 such areas across Sussex. The BOA covers approximately 7858 hectares.

This part of Sussex is heavily designated for its wildlife value, with extensive SSSIs, LNRs and Local Wildlife Sites as well as sites of international importance for wildlife. The main habitat features of this area have a maritime influence and include vegetated shingle, reedbed, mudflat and saltmarsh, saline lagoons and grazing marsh. These features have made the area extremely important for birds (wintering, breeding and non-breeding).

The area is bounded by the sea to the south, the Royal Military Canal to the west and the A259 to the north-east. The area is a stronghold for Water Vole in the county as well as hosting a large number of rare plants. The Sussex Wildlife Trust reserve Castle Water, in the centre of the area is an important site for reedbed species, including Bittern. To the

far south-west this area extends along its SSSI beach to Hastings Country Park, managed as a LNR by Hastings Borough Council. The Country Park boasts extensive soft cliffs which provide a unique habitat, most notably for invertebrates and vegetation.

## BAP Habitat

Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh

Coastal saltmarsh

Coastal sand dunes

Coastal vegetated shingle

Intertidal mudflats

Lowland dry acid grassland

Lowland heathland

Lowland meadows

Wood-pasture and parkland

Maritime cliff and slope

Reedbeds

Saline lagoons

Traditional orchards

Woodland

BAP Species 169 species recorded, with the following in the last ten years:

<b>Species</b>	<b>Habitat Requirements</b>
Aquatic Warbler <i>Acrocephalus paludicola</i>	Mosaic of tall and short vegetation, sedge beds, herb-rich areas, often on edge of reedbed
Grey Dagger <i>Acronicta psi</i>	Hedgerows, parks, woods and gardens, Hawthorn and Blackthorn
Knot Grass <i>Acronicta rumicis</i>	Meadows, gardens and hedgerows, larvae feed on a range of herbs
Flounced Chestnut <i>Agrochola helvola</i>	Woodland, hedgerows, larvae feed on deciduous trees
Beaded Chestnut <i>Agrochola lychnidis</i>	Woodland rides, scrub, hedgerows and open country
Green-brindled Crescent <i>Allophyes oxyacanthae</i>	Woodlands, hedgerows and gardens, larvae feed on a number of trees and bushes including Hawthorn and Blackthorn
Ear Moth <i>Amphipoea oculea</i>	Chalk grassland, marshy and damp places
Mouse Moth <i>Amphipyra tragopoginis</i>	Grassland, heathland, wetland, hedgerows and some woodland
European Eel <i>Anguilla anguilla</i>	Sea, freshwater rivers, eutrophic standing waters, moderate water quality
Slow-worm <i>Anguis fragilis</i>	Open habitats, gardens, heathland, cliff, mixed deciduous woodland, structural variation
European White-fronted Goose <i>Anser albifrons</i> subsp. <i>albifrons</i>	Roost in remote, undisturbed areas such as sandbanks, saltmarsh, grazing marsh, feed on cattle grazed pasture, other open areas of grassland, arable
Tree Pipit <i>Anthus trivialis</i>	Newly planted conifers or open heath, mixed deciduous woodland
Large Nutmeg <i>Apamea anceps</i>	Chalk grassland, hedgerows and woodland edges, larvae feed on grasses, including Annual Meadow-grass and Cock's-foot
Dusky Brocade <i>Apamea remissa</i>	Woodland, marsh, chalk and other grassland

Garden Tiger <i>Arctia caja</i>	River valleys, hedgerows, gardens and parks
Water Vole <i>Arvicola terrestris</i>	Rivers, ponds, canals and drainage ditches, reedbeds, fens, grazing marsh, banks, slow-flowing waters
Centre-Barred Sallow <i>Atethmia centrago</i>	Woodland and hedgerows, larvae feed on Ash and Sallow
Scaup <i>Aythya marila</i>	Lakes, bogs and rivers, estuaries
Fin Whale <i>Balaenoptera physalus</i>	Coastal areas, sometimes in water as shallow as 30 metres
Brown-banded Carder-bee <i>Bombus humilis</i>	Flower-rich grassland and parkland, usually in coastal areas, hedgerows
Moss Carder Bee <i>Bombus muscorum</i>	Tussocky areas, flower-rich grassland with tall sward, nests on or near surface often in sunny spots
Bittern <i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	Wet reedbed and marshland
Minor Shoulder-Knot <i>Brachylomia viminalis</i>	Damp woodland, hedgerows, heathland and fens, Willow
Dark-bellied Brent Goose <i>Branta bernicla</i> subsp. <i>bernicla</i>	Productive, open grasslands and autumn sown cereals, saltmarsh, inter-tidal mudflats with Eelgrass
Common Toad <i>Bufo bufo</i>	Scrub, rough grassland, fens, reedbed and wet woodland, dense ground vegetation or litter, ponds, large water bodies, hedgerows
Nightjar <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>	Heathland, moorland, open woodland, recently felled conifer plantations, mosaic of bare ground, low vegetation, scrub and trees
Mottled Rustic <i>Caradrina morpheus</i>	Suburban areas, hedgerows, Nettle and Dandelion
Lesser Redpoll <i>Carduelis cabaret</i>	Birch and Alder woods, most common in the north in the summer
Divided Sedge <i>Carex divisa</i>	Vegetated shingle, grazing marsh, ditches, tidal rivers, brackish, no tidal inundation
True Fox-sedge <i>Carex vulpina</i>	River banks, ditch sides and damp meadows, standing water, open conditions are required
Crescent <i>Celaena leucostigma</i>	Wetlands, reedbeds, grazing marsh, wet woodland, Yellow Flag Iris, Great Fen Sedge
Latticed Heath <i>Chiasmia clathrata</i>	Chalk grassland, gardens, fens, open woodland, heathland and moorland, larvae feed on clover, trefoil and Lucerne
Hawfinch <i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>	Woodland, good supplies of fruit, seeds and keys, drinking pools
Small Heath <i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>	Dry grassland, heathlands, short turf, parks and gardens
Goat Moth <i>Cossus cossus</i>	Feeds under the bark and in the heartwood of broadleaved trees, along riverbanks, fens, marshes, heathland, woodland edge
Stinking Hawk's-beard <i>Crepis foetida</i>	Disturbed and well-drained shingle or chalky areas
Cuckoo <i>Cuculus canorus</i>	Woodland, scrub, marshes, heathland, reedbed
Small Blue <i>Cupido minimus</i>	Chalk grassland, chalk cliffs, Kidney Vetch, sheltered conditions, mosaic of short and tall vegetation with scrub
Oak Lutestring <i>Cymatophorima diluta</i>	Mature oak woodland, larvae feed on Oak
Small Square-Spot <i>Diarsia rubi</i>	Prefers damp and marshy places, hedgerows
Small Phoenix <i>Ecliptopera silaceata</i>	Woodland, hedgerows, open habitats including commons and gardens, willowherbs

Yellowhammer <i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	Open countryside, scrubby areas, woodland edges, hedgerows, insect-rich grassland, seed-rich areas
Reed Bunting <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	Wetlands including reedbeds, tall rushes and wet grassland with good vegetation cover, gardens, farmland, hedgerows, ditches
Dusky Thorn <i>Ennomos fuscantaria</i>	Woodland, parkland, Ash
Hedgehog <i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>	Woodland, farmland, urban areas, hedgerows
Autumnal Rustic <i>Eugnorisma glareosa</i>	Woodland edges, moorland, hedgerows
Garden Dart <i>Euxoa nigricans</i>	Gardens, waste ground, hedgerows
White-line Dart <i>Euxoa tritici</i>	Sand dunes and heathland, larvae feed on bedstraws and grasses
Black-throated Diver <i>Gavia arctica</i>	Breeds on freshwater, winters around sheltered coasts and occasionally at inland freshwater
Small Emerald <i>Hemistola chrysoprasaria</i>	Chalk downland, hedgerows, woodland edges, larvae feed on Traveller's-joy
Ghost Moth <i>Hepialus humuli</i>	Grassy areas, hillsides, waste ground
Short-snouted Seahorse <i>Hippocampus hippocampus</i>	Shallow muddy waters in estuaries or inshore amongst seaweed and seagrasses, also be found in rocky areas.
Rustic <i>Hoplodrina blanda</i>	Gardens, grassland and heathland, docks, plantains, hedgerows
Sea Barley <i>Hordeum marinum</i>	Brackish habitats, saltmarsh, grazing marsh, ditches, bare mud alongside water bodies
Rosy Rustic <i>Hydraecia micacea</i>	Marshy areas, waste ground, hedgerows
Marsh Mallow Moth <i>Hydraecia osseola</i> subsp. <i>hucherardi</i>	Damp low-lying places along watercourses, coastal grazing marshes, field margins and ditches, larvae feed on Marsh-mallow.
Wryneck <i>Jynx torquilla</i>	Mainly on the ground in open woodland, farmland, occasionally seen in gardens
Herring Gull <i>Larus argentatus</i>	Nests on cliff tops, saltmarsh, shingle, coastal grassland, urban roofs, winters on pasture, arable and urban recreational grassland
Wall <i>Lasiommata megera</i>	Short, open grassland, gardens, sand dunes, vegetated undercliffs and rocky foreshores
White Admiral <i>Limenitis camilla</i>	Woodlands, sunny glades, Bramble, Honeysuckle, partially-shaded locations
Grasshopper Warbler <i>Locustella naevia</i>	Scrub, thick grassland, reedbeds, forestry and gravel pits
Wood Lark <i>Lullula arborea</i>	Heathland, woodland, mosaic of scattered trees, bare ground, short vegetation and taller vegetation, open seed-rich areas
Lackey <i>Malacosoma neustria</i>	Gardens, hedgerows, Hawthorn, Blackthorn
Dot Moth <i>Melanchra persicariae</i>	Gardens, verges, waste ground, hedgerows
Broom Moth <i>Melanchra pisi</i>	Open woodland, shrub, heathland, Broom, Bracken
Common Scoter <i>Melanitta nigra</i>	Breed around mesotrophic waters, blanket bog and heathland, winters around inshore waters
Rosy Minor <i>Mesoligia literosa</i>	Grasslands particularly in coastal areas
Yellow Wagtail <i>Motacilla flava</i>	Wet meadows and pastures with ponds or ditches and a mosaic of short swards and tussocks
Hazel Dormouse <i>Muscardinus avellanarius</i>	Woodland, overgrown hedgerows, Honeysuckle, Bramble, Hazel and Ash, well-structured woodland with a well-developed understorey and scrubby areas
Spotted Flycatcher	Open woodland and woodland edges, parks and gardens

<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	
Shoulder-striped Wainscot <i>Mythimna comma</i>	Gardens, damp habitats, marshes and fens, Cock's-foot.
Grass Snake <i>Natrix natrix</i>	Water, reedbed, ponds, heathland, grazing marsh, gardens, fish, amphibians
Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i>	Reedbeds, estuaries, damp grassland, heathland, mosaic of tall vegetation for nesting with short vegetation and open habitats for feeding
Noctule <i>Nyctalus noctula</i>	Woodland, wetlands, hedgerows and pastures, predominantly roost in tree cavities
Tubular Water-Dropwort <i>Oenanthe fistulosa</i>	Floodplain meadows and fens, shallow water in ditches, streams, ponds and canals
Powdered Quaker <i>Orthosia gracilis</i>	A moth of habitats such as floodplain grassland where larvae feed on Bog Myrtle and willows
House Sparrow <i>Passer domesticus</i>	Urban areas, farmland, hedgerows
Tree Sparrow <i>Passer montanus</i>	Farmland, woodland edges, hedgerows with mature trees, wetland edges
Dark Spinach <i>Perluga comitata</i>	Suburban habitats, waste ground and weedy locations, larvae feed on Orache and goosefoots
Grey Partridge <i>Perdix perdix</i>	Farmland, rush pastures, moors, mosaics of bare ground and cover, hedgerows, uncultivated margins
Red-necked Phalarope <i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>	Breed around shallow often vegetated coastal pools, or grassy areas surrounding open water, winter mainly at sea
Harbour Seal <i>Phoca vitulina</i>	
Wood Warbler <i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>	Mixed deciduous woodland, even age-canopy, little understorey, patchy ground cover
Whelk-shell Jumping Spider <i>Psuedeuophrys obsoleta</i>	Coastal vegetated shingle in plant litter and shells
Grizzled Skipper <i>Pyrgus malvae</i>	Grassland, quarries, embankments, woodland rides, larvae feed on Agrimony and <i>Potentilla</i> species, requires warmth and shelter
Undulate Ray <i>Raja undulata</i>	The seabed particularly on sandy substrates, mostly at depths of 10 to 30m but have been found as deep as 200m
Large Wainscot <i>Rhizodra lutosa</i>	Frequenting reedbeds and riversides, the larvae feed in the bases of stems and the roots of Common Reed
Prickly Saltwort <i>Salsola kali</i>	A plant of sand dunes and vegetated shingle
Scarce Aspen Knot-horn <i>Sciota hostilis</i>	Mature Aspen in woodland or on woodland edges
Mullein Wave <i>Scopula marginepunctata</i>	A moth of gardens, hedgerows and bushes mainly in coastal areas, the larvae feed on Yarrow and Mugwort
Shaded Broad-bar <i>Scotopteryx chenopodiata</i>	Chalk grassland and a range of open habitats, larvae feed on vetch and clover
White Ermine <i>Spilosoma lubricipeda</i>	Gardens and hedgerows
Buff Ermine <i>Spilosoma luteum</i>	Woodland, parks and gardens
Arctic Skua <i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>	Breeds on coastal moorland, winters at sea
Roseate Tern <i>Sterna dougallii</i>	Nest areas sheltered by overhanging rock or tall vegetation, often on offshore islands
Turtle Dove <i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	Woodland edges, hedgerows and open land with scattered bushes

Long-spined Ant <i>Temnothorax interruptus</i>	Shingle and bare sand on heathland in sunny positions
Feathered Gothic <i>Tholera decimalis</i>	Rough grassland and downland, larvae feed on grass blades
Blood-Vein <i>Timandra comae</i>	Gardens, fields and waste ground
Ring Ouzel <i>Turdus torquatus</i>	Short grassy areas
Cinnabar <i>Tyria jacobaeae</i>	Meadows, wasteland, road verges and downland
Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Farmland, grazing marsh, wet meadows, seeds and insects
Adder <i>Vipera berus</i>	Open heathland, woodland and moors, fens, cliff
Oak Hook-tip <i>Watsonalla binaria</i>	Oak woodland and parkland, larvae feed on oak
Dusky-lemon Sallow <i>Xanthia gilvago</i>	Broadleaf woodland, hedgerows and parkland, larvae feed on English Elm and Wych Elm
Sallow <i>Xanthia ictertia</i>	A common species in most of Britain, occupying damp woodland, hedgerows, heathland and marshy places, larvae feed on willow
Dark-barred Twin-spot Carpet <i>Xanthorhoe ferrugata</i>	Coastal sandhills, limestone and chalk downlands, hedgerows
Common Lizard <i>Zootoca vivipara</i>	Open woodland, moorland, heathland, fens, sand dunes, rocks, gardens and cliffs

**Invasive Non-native Species** 23 species recorded, with the following in the last ten years

Three-cornered Leek *Allium triquetrum*  
Water Fern *Azolla filiculoides*  
Heath Star Moss *Campylopus introflexus*  
Red Valerian *Centranthus ruber*  
Wall Cotoneaster *Cotoneaster horizontalis*  
New Zealand Pigmyweed *Crassula helmsii*  
Canadian Waterweed *Elodea canadensis*  
Nuttall's Waterweed *Elodea nuttallii*  
Japanese Knotweed *Fallopia japonica*  
Giant Hogweed *Heracleum mantegazzianum*  
Spanish Bluebell *Hyacinthoides hispanica*  
Hybrid Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta x hispanica = H. x massartiana*  
Himalayan Balsam *Impatiens glandulifera*  
Curly Waterweed *Lagarosiphon major*  
Muntjac *Muntiacus reevesi*  
American Mink *Mustela vison*  
Parrot's-feather *Myriophyllum aquaticum*  
Signal Crayfish *Pacifastacus leniusculus*  
Winter Heliotrope *Petasites fragrans*  
Cherry Laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*  
Rhododendron *Rhododendron ponticum*  
False-acacia *Robinia pseudoacacia*  
Red-eared Terrapin *Trachemys scripta*

## Designated Sites

Dungeness to Pett Level SPA is designated on account of its international importance for breeding and wintering birds. The site supports a number of Annex I species including breeding Little and Common Terns, Mediterranean Gull and wintering Shoveler and Bewick Swan. Dungeness is the UK's largest shingle structure and retains large areas of intact parallel ridges with characteristic vegetation zonation, as well as areas of saltmarsh, freshwater marsh, open water and grassland, and as such is designated as a SAC. The site also has large Great Crested Newt and Water Vole populations and supports nationally important communities of plants, birds and invertebrates, including rare species such as Least Lettuce and Medicinal Leech. It is of international importance for coastal geomorphology.

Hastings Cliffs SAC encompasses the Hastings Cliff to Pett Beach SSSI. It is an area of actively eroding soft cliff that includes the most southerly exposures of the lower Hastings Beds, designated for its vegetated sea cliffs. A number of habitats are represented including woodland, predominantly ancient in origin, maritime acid grassland, heathland and vegetated shingle, and there are several rare lichens, bryophytes, Coleoptera and vascular plants. The site is also important for its geological and fossil interest.

Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay SSSI contains a mosaic of important habitats including saline lagoons, sand dunes, vegetated shingle, standing water and basin fens. The lowland ditch systems support Water Vole, and the site is regularly used by at least 40 birds typical of shingle beaches and saltmarshes. The site is also notable for its invertebrate assemblage and its populations of Great Crested Newt.

Camber Sands SNCI is the only extensive area of sand dunes in East Sussex, and the SNCI accounts for two small areas not designated SSSI. The site also contains a small area of vegetated shingle.

Pett Levels SNCI west of the Royal Military Canal includes two areas of ditch systems which are rich in aquatic and marginal vegetation. There are also two lengths of old sea cliff, which are mostly now wooded.

Shingle Beach, Dog's Hill SNCI contains extensive mats of the notable Sea Pea, and retains some relict ridge structure.

## Opportunities Identified

- Wetland habitat management, restoration and creation
- Wetland bird interest
- Cross-county working
- Landowner advisory and agri-environment schemes