

## Pevensey Levels Biodiversity Opportunity Area

**Joint Character Area** Pevensey Levels

**Geology** Pevensey Levels Biodiversity Opportunity Area lies on siltstone, mudstone and sandstone.



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

Pevensey Levels has been recognised as a Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA) as it represents a priority area for the delivery of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) targets. It is one of 75 such areas across Sussex. The BOA covers approximately 5065 hectares.

Pevensey Levels is a site of international importance for its wetland ecology that is badly afflicted by the invasive aquatic weed Floating Pennywort.

### BAP Habitat

Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh

Coastal vegetated shingle

Lowland fens

Maritime cliff and slope

Reedbeds

Saline Lagoons  
Traditional orchards  
Wood-pasture and parkland  
Woodland

BAP Species 76 species recorded, with the following in the last ten years:

<b>Species</b>	<b>Habitat Requirements</b>
Knot Grass <i>Acrionicta rumicis</i>	Meadows, gardens and hedgerows, larvae feed on a range of herbs
Tree Pipit <i>Anthus trivialis</i>	Newly planted conifers or open heath, mixed deciduous woodland
Garden Tiger <i>Arctia caja</i>	River valleys, gardens and parks
Water Vole <i>Arvicola terrestris</i>	Rivers, ponds, canals and drainage ditches, reedbeds, fens, grazing marsh, banks, slow-flowing waters
Bittern <i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	Wet reedbed and marshland
Mottled Rustic <i>Caradrina morpheus</i>	Suburban areas, hedgerows, Nettle and Dandelion
True Fox-sedge <i>Carex vulpina</i>	River banks, ditch sides and damp meadows on heavy clay soils, standing water, open conditions are required
Stinking Goosefoot <i>Chenopodium vulvaria</i>	Nutrient-rich disturbed ground
Small Heath <i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>	Dry grassland, heathlands, short turf, parks and gardens
Cuckoo <i>Cuculus canorus</i>	Woodland, scrub, marshes, heathland, reedbed
Fen Raft Spider <i>Dolomedes plantarius</i>	Peat pools, grazing marsh ditches and open water with floating vegetation
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
Bloxam's Entoloma <i>Entoloma bloxamii</i>	Unimproved grassland, old meadows, short turf
Red Hemp-nettle <i>Galeopsis angustifolia</i>	Arable land, open ground, coastal vegetated shingle
Black-throated Diver <i>Gavia arctica</i>	Breeds on freshwater, winters around sheltered coasts and occasionally at inland freshwater
Rustic <i>Hoplodrina blanda</i>	Gardens, grassland and heathland, docks, plantains
Rosy Rustic <i>Hydraecia micacea</i>	Marshy areas, waste ground
Wall <i>Lasiommata megera</i>	Short, open grassland, gardens, sand dunes, vegetated undercliffs and rocky foreshores
Brown Hare <i>Lepus europaeus</i>	Open farmland and grassland, habitat mosaic
Grasshopper Warbler <i>Locustella naevia</i>	Scrub, thick grassland, reedbeds, forestry and gravel pits
Dot Moth <i>Melanchra persicariae</i>	Gardens, verges, waste ground
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
Grape-hyacinth <i>Muscari neglectum</i>	Waysides, hedgerows, rough ground, disturbed land on free draining soils
Spotted Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa</i>	Open woodland and woodland edges, parks and gardens

<i>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, hedgerows, grazing marsh, gardens, fish, amphibians
Lunar Yellow Underwing <i>Noctua orbona</i>	Sunny open grassy sites amongst woodland or heathland, sandy or calcareous soils, larvae feed in tussocks of fine-leaved grasses
Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i>	Reedbeds, estuaries, damp grassland, heathland, mosaic of tall vegetation for nesting with short vegetation and open habitats for feeding
Tubular Water-dropwort <i>Oenanthe fistulosa</i>	Floodplain meadows, fens, shallow water in ditches, streams, ponds and canals, open areas
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
Wood Warbler <i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>	Mixed deciduous woodland, even age-canopy, little understorey, patchy ground cover
Soprano Pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	A widespread bat that has a preference for riparian habitats, hedgerows, buildings are often important for roost sites and it requires good linkages between these and its foraging grounds.
Brown Long-eared Bat <i>Plecotus auritus</i>	A widespread bat of open woodlands, hedgerows, parks and gardens, it roosts in old buildings and trees in the summer, moving to caves and underground sites in the winter.
Sharp-leaved Pondweed <i>Potamogeton acutifolius</i>	Shallow, species-rich drainage ditches in grazing marsh
Three-lobed Water-crowfoot <i>Ranunculus tripartitus</i>	Temporary pools and edges of shallow water bodies in disturbed areas that are temporarily wet
Mullein Wave <i>Scopula marginepunctata</i>	A moth of gardens, hedgerows and bushes mainly in coastal areas, the larvae feed on Yarrow and Mugwort
Greater Water-parsnip <i>Sium latifolium</i>	Permanently wet, species-rich, tall-herb fen, margins of lakes and large rivers, ditches, reedswamp, not tolerant of shade
White Ermine <i>Spilosoma lubricipeda</i>	Gardens and hedgerows
Buff Ermine <i>Spilosoma luteum</i>	Woodland, parks and gardens
Turtle Dove <i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	Woodland edges, hedgerows and open land with scattered bushes
Hedge Rustic <i>Tholera cespitis</i>	A moth of open grassland, larvae feed on grasses including Mat-grass and hair-grasses.
Blood-Vein <i>Timandra comae</i>	Gardens, fields and waste ground
Ring Ouzel <i>Turdus torquatus</i>	Short grassy areas
Valve Snail <i>Valvata macrostoma</i>	Well-vegetated still or slow-moving water that is rich in calcium
Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Farmland, grazing marsh, wet meadows, seeds and insects
Oak Hook-tip <i>Watsonalla binaria</i>	Oak woodland and parkland, larvae feed on oak
Common Lizard <i>Zootoca vivipara</i>	Open woodland, moorland, heathland, fens, sand dunes, rocks, gardens and cliffs

**Invasive Non-native Species** 17 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*  
Shallon *Gaultheria shallon*  
Spanish Bluebell *Hyacinthoides hispanica*  
Hybrid Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta x hispanica = H. x massartiana*  
Floating Pennywort *Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*  
American Mink *Mustela vison*  
Winter Heliotrope *Petasites fragrans*  
Rhododendron *Rhododendron ponticum*

## Designated Sites

Pevensey Levels Ramsar/NNR/SSSI is one of the largest and least fragmented lowland wet grassland systems in the region. The low lying grazing meadows are intersected by a complex system of ditches which support a variety of important wetland communities. There are many rare, vulnerable or endangered invertebrates including the Fen Raft Spider, and this is the only known British site for some species. There is also an important assemblage of breeding and wintering birds including Lapwing and Yellow Wagtail.

Cooden Cliffs SNCI consists of low, steep clay cliffs with patches of fine grassland and some maritime species including Thrift and Sea Lavender.

Langney Levels SNCI consists of a network of drainage channels within a field system, with the most mature field having a typical neutral flora such as Meadow Barley and Crested Dog's-tail. The site has potential for a good aquatic invertebrate community.

Shingle Beach at Norman's Bay SNCI comprises shingle flora on the top of the beach and herb rich grassland on the landward slopes.

Sovereign Harbour Beach SNCI retains some of the plant species and habitat which once existed extensively over the shingle system of the Crumbles, including typical shingle species such as Sea Fern-grass and Yellow Horned-poppy.

## Opportunities Identified

- Wetland habitat management, restoration and creation
- Coastal habitat management, restoration and creation
- Control of non-native invasive species
- Wetland bird interest
- Landowner advisory and agri-environment schemes
- Policy integration
- Access improvements

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