



## Biodiversity Opportunity Area Statement

### Name: Thanet Cliffs and Shore

**Description:** The whole opportunity area is designated as SSSI, SPA and Ramsar and the cliff-top chalk grassland in the eastern part is designated as an SAC. The Thanet Coast Marine Conservation Zone has been designated for a wide range of habitats found in the area including sand, chalk, rock, peat and clay and gravel habitats as well as to protect the ross worm reefs and two species of stalked jellyfish found here. The area also includes sites such as the golf course at Kingsgate (a LWS), Bishops Cliffs LNR and the cliffs and shingle beach at Reculver (home to the biggest sand martin colony in Kent). However, along much of the coast; high rise development, main roads and lighting hug the coast line and dominate the landscape.

**National Character Area(s):** North Kent Plain.

**Landscape Character Area(s):** Thanet; Wantsum and Lower Stour Marshes

**Seascape Character Area(s):** C1E Broadstairs to N. Foreland; C3C Ramsgate Harbour; I2A Broadstairs knolls & Ramsgate Road

**Landscape Character:** A predominantly coastal and marine BOA, chalk cliffs rise sharply from the sea, exposing a rocky coastline and isolated sandy beaches at low tide. Towards the west, the gradient between land and sea drops and inland marshes give way to intertidal mud flats.

**Geology:** London Clay from Herne Bay to Reculver, then Alluvium to Minnis Bay (old Wantsum channel), then Upper chalk all along the coast to Ramsgate and Cliffsend.

#### Biodiversity:

- 1 Chalk cliffs and sea-caves, together with intertidal and subtidal habitats, are of international importance.
- 2 Nationally significant soft cliffs and important foreshore.
- 3 The chalk shore features many gullies and supports lush seaweed assemblages, rich mussel beds and ross worm reefs. There is a very rich variety of marine species including the stalked jellyfish St John's Jellyfish (*Lucernariopsis cruxmelitensis*).
- 4 Saline lagoons are present at Coldharbour and Plumpudding (seasonal) along the Northern Sea Wall, near the Wantsum.
- 5 Cliff-top grassland is fragmented but significant.
- 6 The cliffs support scarce cliff plant species, such as sea-stock. Wintering waders use the shores around the coast, with several species being present in nationally important numbers. The soft cliffs at Bishopstone are known for the breeding population of sand martins; cliff-top grassland also supports the mining bee *Colletes halophilus* and the shrill carder bumblebee *Bombus sylvarum*.

#### Targets:

- 1 Ensure the protection and enhancement of important cliff, intertidal and marine habitats, and monitor the extent and quality of intertidal and subtidal chalk.
- 2 Maintain and enhance the quality of existing littoral and sub-littoral chalk:
  - As far as possible, allow natural coastal processes to determine the geomorphology of the littoral and sub-littoral environment; and the carefully plan of any coastal defense work in order to maintain these naturally dynamic habitats through the Shoreline Management Plan.
  - Develop an action plan for managing the impact of non-native species of concern;
  - Implement appropriate management of Marine Protected Areas to allow marine habitats to recover.
- 3 Restore, improve management of, and extend or create areas of cliff-top grassland.
- 4 Maintain and enhance saline lagoon habitats, ensuring no net loss.

## ***Biodiversity Opportunity Area Statement***



- 5 Action for naturally widely dispersed habitats (ponds, traditional orchards), wildlife associated with arable farmland, and widely dispersed species such as great crested newt will need to focus across the whole of the area and not just within the Biodiversity Opportunity Area boundary.

# Biodiversity Opportunity Area Statement



## How should Biodiversity Opportunity Area maps and statements be used?

1. The BOA maps can be seen as a spatial reflection of the Kent Biodiversity Strategy. They indicate where the delivery of Kent Biodiversity Strategy targets should be focused in order to secure the maximum biodiversity benefits. The BOA maps also show where the greatest gains can be made from habitat enhancement, restoration and recreation, as these areas offer the best opportunities for establishing large habitat areas and/or networks of wildlife habitats. As such, they will be useful to local planning authorities in the development and delivery of Green Infrastructure and resilient ecological networks. The BOA statement documents will provide guidance on the conservation priorities which should be adopted in each area.
2. Information provided on the habitats and species associated with each BOA is not definitive. Rather, it identifies those priority habitats for which the area is known to be most important, and provides a range of examples of priority species for which the area is known to be important. It is likely that each BOA will support additional habitats and species of principle importance for the conservation of biodiversity, and reference should be made to the Kent Habitat Survey and the Kent & Medway Biological Records Centre to support decision-making.
3. Biodiversity targets identified in the statement documents incorporate, where appropriate, targets in the Kent Biodiversity Strategy. However, not all targets in the Strategy are easily spatially defined, and the BOA maps and statements should be read alongside relevant Action Plans in the Kent Biodiversity Strategy.
4. The BOA maps should not be seen as planning constraint maps. It is not intended or proposed that nature conservation becomes the primary land-use within the target areas, so long as the targets and objectives for each area can be met, and development of any kind is not precluded. However, consideration might in some cases need to be given to ensuring that development within a BOA did not significantly increase the fragmentation of wildlife habitats within target areas or neutralize significant opportunities for habitat restoration or recreation.
5. BOA boundaries are not absolute. They have been drawn to follow mapped boundaries wherever possible in order to facilitate spatial planning and decision-making. However, a project immediately outside the mapped boundary should not be immediately dismissed if it would help to deliver the targets identified for the BOA concerned. It is also not the case that all land within a BOA offers the same opportunities for habitat restoration or recreation, and reference should be made to the Habitat Opportunity maps on the Kent Landscape Information System, when this becomes available, to support detailed decision-making.
6. The areas outside the identified BOAs still have substantial biodiversity interest, and include a number of nature reserves, Local Wildlife Sites, ancient woodlands and other areas of habitats. Although the focus of any biodiversity action should be on the BOAs, it will still be necessary to maintain, enhance, buffer and extend areas of wildlife habitat outside the mapped areas in order to maintain the wildlife interest and richness of the wider countryside.
7. Some biodiversity interest is not well served by the BOA mapping process, and action for ponds, traditional orchards, wildlife associated with arable farmland, and widely dispersed species such as great crested newt will need to focus across the whole of Kent and Medway and not just within identified Opportunity Areas.
8. While the primary purpose of the BOAs is to direct positive action for nature conservation, information on landscape has been included in the target documents. Reference should be made to AONB management plans or other landscape policy documents in drawing up proposals for habitat restoration or recreation in order to maximize the positive benefits for landscape and avoid conflict with features of landscape importance.

## ***Biodiversity Opportunity Area Statement***

Kent Nature Partnership – <http://www.kentnature.org.uk/>  
Kent & Medway Biological Records Centre – [www.kmbrc.org.uk](http://www.kmbrc.org.uk)

