

EC Directive 92/43 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora

Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Name: Sandwich Bay
Unitary Authority/County: Kent
SAC status: Designated on 1 April 2005
Grid reference: TR354617
SAC EU code: UK0013077
Area (ha): 1137.87
Component SSSI: Sandwich Bay and Hacklinge Marshes SSSI

Site description:

Sandwich Bay is a largely inactive dune system with a particularly extensive representation of fixed dune grassland, the only large area of this habitat in the extreme south-east of England. The vegetation of these dunes and their associated slacks is extremely species-rich. The site includes a number of rare and scarce species, such as fragrant evening-primrose *Oenothera stricta*, bedstraw broomrape *Orobanche caryophyllacea* and sand catchfly *Silene conica*, as well as the UK's largest population of lizard orchid *Himantoglossum hircinum*.

The seaward edge at the northern end of the site displays a good sequence of embryonic shifting dune communities and there is a clear zonation within the extensive dune system, with strandline species on the seaward edge and sand-binding grasses inland. Lyme-grass *Leymus arenarius* is extremely sparse and sand couch *Elytrigia juncea* is the dominant sand-binding species. The shifting dune vegetation contains a good range of characteristic foredune species including sea bindweed *Calystegia soldanella*, sea spurge *Euphorbia paralias* and sea-holly *Eryngium maritimum*.

A small area of dunes with creeping willow *Salix repens* ssp. *argentea* is of interest as it is the only example found in the dry south-east of England and is representative of this habitat type in a near-continental climate.

Qualifying habitats: The site is designated under **article 4(4)** of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following habitats listed in Annex I:

- Dunes with *Salix repens* ssp. *argentea* (*Salicion arenariae*). (Dunes with creeping willow)
- Embryonic shifting dunes
- Fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes). (Dune grassland)*
- Humid dune slacks
- Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* (white dunes). (Shifting dunes with marram)

Annex I priority habitats are denoted by an asterisk (*).

This citation relates to a site entered in the Register of European Sites for Great Britain.

Register reference number: UK0013077

Date of registration: 14 June 2005

Signed: *Trevor Salmon*

On behalf of the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs