

Site Improvement Plan

Lyme Bay and Torbay

Site Improvement Plans (SIPs) have been developed for each Natura 2000 site in England as part of the Improvement Programme for England's Natura 2000 sites (IPENS). Natura 2000 sites is the combined term for sites designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protected Areas (SPA). This work has been financially supported by LIFE, a financial instrument of the European Community.

The plan provides a high level overview of the issues (both current and predicted) affecting the condition of the Natura 2000 features on the site(s) and outlines the priority measures required to improve the condition of the features. It does not cover issues where remedial actions are already in place or ongoing management activities which are required for maintenance.

The SIP consists of three parts: a Summary table, which sets out the priority Issues and Measures; a detailed Actions table, which sets out who needs to do what, when and how much it is estimated to cost; and a set of tables containing contextual information and links.

Once this current programme ends, it is anticipated that Natural England and others, working with landowners and managers, will all play a role in delivering the priority measures to improve the condition of the features on these sites.

The SIPs are based on Natural England's current evidence and knowledge. The SIPs are not legal documents, they are live documents that will be updated to reflect changes in our evidence/knowledge and as actions get underway. The information in the SIPs will be used to update England's contribution to the UK's Prioritised Action Framework (PAF).

The SIPs are not formal consultation documents, but if you have any comments about the SIP or would like more information please email us at IPENSLIFEProject@naturalengland.org.uk, or contact Natural England's Responsible Officer for the site via our enquiry service 0300 060 3900, or enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

This Site Improvement Plan covers the following Natura 2000 site(s)

UK0030372 Lyme Bay and Torbay SCI

Site description

The two sections of the Lyme Bay and Torbay cSAC off the Devon coast of England contain a greater diversity of habitats than found in other existing SACs in the Western English Channel and Celtic Sea.

Within the Lyme Bay Reefs portion, bedrock and stony reef, boulders and cobble and sediments comprise a type of reef uncommon in the region. This complex and diverse reef habitat supports particularly high species richness. Hydroids, anemones, sea squirts, sponges and corals populate the area to the extent the area has been identified as a marine biodiversity 'hotspot.' The pink sea fan (a priority species under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan) and the nationally rare southern cup coral is found throughout the site. The diverse geology of the 'Mackerel Cove to Dartmouth Reefs' in Torbay, limestone reefs and outcrops, sandstone, slate reef, granite outcrops, and stony reef, supports a similarly rich assemblage of animal communities, including an extensive coverage of kelp and blue mussel communities on shallower reefs, and species of sponge, anemone, soft corals and crustaceans on the deeper reefs. The area also contains a diversity of wave-eroded sea caves at Babbacombe to Hopes Nose and Broad Sands to Berry Head. The freshwater and saltwater mix in these caves makes them some of the best examples of coastal solution caves in the UK. The caves also support a richness of animal life including many nationally significant species such as sponges, pink sea fingers, burrowing anemones and southern cup coral.

The IFCA and MMO have not been formally consulted during this stage, however we are currently supporting them in their assessments of fisheries activities in this site as part of Defra's revised approach to managing fisheries in European Marine Sites, which deal with the same issues raised in this Site Improvement Plan.

Plan Summary

This table shows the prioritised issues for the site(s), the features they affect, the proposed measures to address the issues and the delivery bodies whose involvement is required to deliver the measures. The list of delivery bodies will include those who have agreed to the actions as well as those where discussions over their role in delivering the actions is on-going.

Priority & Issue	Pressure or Threat	Feature(s) affected	Measure	Delivery Bodies
1 Fisheries: Commercial marine and estuarine	Threat	H1170 Reefs	Ensure continuing compliance with byelaws	Devon & Severn Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA), Southern Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA), Marine Management Organisation (MMO)

2 Fisheries: Commercial marine and estuarine	Pressure/ Threat	H1170 Reefs	Complete assessments to establish whether management is required	Devon & Severn Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA), Southern Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA), Marine Management Organisation (MMO)
3 Public Access/Disturbance	Pressure/ Threat	H8330 Sea caves	Support local ongoing work in promoting an environmental code of conduct	Natural England, Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust

Issues and Actions

This table outlines the prioritised issues that are currently impacting or threatening the condition of the features, and the outstanding actions required to address them. It also shows, where possible, the estimated cost of the action and the delivery bodies whose involvement will be required to implement the action. Lead delivery bodies will be responsible for coordinating the implementation of the action, but not necessarily funding it. Delivery partners will need to support the lead delivery body in implementing the action. In the process of developing the SIPs Natural England has approached the delivery bodies to seek agreement on the actions and their roles in delivering them, although in some cases these discussions have not yet been concluded. Other interested parties, including landowners and managers, will be involved as the detailed actions are agreed and delivered. Funding options are indicated as potential (but not necessarily agreed or secured) sources to fund the actions.

1 Fisheries: Commercial marine and estuarine

Hydraulic dredges, dredges, benthic trawls and benthic seines have been categorised as 'Red' for this interest feature (and specifically the sub-features: circalittoral rock and other hard substrata, Infralittoral rock and other hard substrata; sublittoral biogenic reefs: mussel beds and sublittoral stony reef as part of Defra's revised approach to commercial fisheries management in European Marine Sites (EMS). The Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw & Annex 3 (Devon and Severn IFCA) and the Bottom Towed Fishing Byelaw (Southern IFCA) have been implemented and restrict the use of demersal towed gear over areas within the site boundaries that have been identified as Annex I reef. In the limited areas where towed gear is allowed vessels are subject to compulsory monitoring by inshore Vessel Monitoring System (iVMS).

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
1A	Ensure compliance with bye-laws and provide an appropriate level of reporting to ensure sites are well managed and to enable Natural England to provide advice on the condition of features and potential condition threats.	Not yet determined	2015 onwards	Enforcement: Byelaws	Defra, Local Authority	Devon & Severn Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA)	Southern Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA), Marine Management Organisation (MMO)

2 Fisheries: Commercial marine and estuarine

Commercial fishing activities categorised as 'amber or green' under Defra's revised approach to commercial fisheries in EMSs are being assessed by the Southern and Devon and Severn IFCAs to determine whether management is required. For activities categorised as 'green', these assessments should take account of any relevant in-combination effects with other fishing activities. Anchored nets/lines, including gill nets, trammel nets & tangle nets, and long lines that are anchored to the seabed; vessel-based hand-lines and rod and line angling could result in abrasion or disturbance of seabed. The level of fishing pressure that might be allocated between the commercial and recreational sectors is unknown. Traps, pots and creels are also used in the bay to target crab, whelk and lobster. Target species, notably scallops are collected by divers. The potential for abrasion and disturbance to habitats and benthic fauna and tolerances to the removal of target species is uncertain. Potting and netting activities that occur over the reef feature could increase following the recent Southern and Devon and Severn IFCAs' 'Red' byelaws, with particular concern for the increased pressure on target species. This issue will be addressed through the 'amber' assessment process, but is considered a high priority for the site due to the presence of fragile emergent epifauna on the feature which could be affected.

<i>Action</i>	<i>Action description</i>	<i>Cost estimate</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Mechanism</i>	<i>Funding option</i>	<i>Delivery lead body</i>	<i>Delivery partner(s)</i>
2A	Where the assessments indicate management is required, introduce appropriate measures. Deadline December 2016.	Not yet determined	2015-16	Regulation: Creation / amendment of byelaws	Defra, Local Authority	Devon & Severn Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA)	Southern Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA), Marine Management Organisation (MMO)
<i>Action</i>	<i>Action description</i>	<i>Cost estimate</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Mechanism</i>	<i>Funding option</i>	<i>Delivery lead body</i>	<i>Delivery partner(s)</i>
2B	Potting and netting activities that occur over the reef feature could increase following the recent Southern and Devon and Severn IFCAs' 'Red' byelaws, with particular concern for the increased pressure on target species. This issue will be addressed through the 'amber' assessment process, but is considered a high priority for the site due to the presence of fragile emergent epifauna on the feature which could be affected. Deadline December 2016.	Not yet determined	2015-16	Regulation: Creation / amendment of byelaws	Defra, Local Authority	Devon & Severn Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA)	Southern Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA), Marine Management Organisation (MMO)

<i>Action</i>	<i>Action description</i>	<i>Cost estimate</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Mechanism</i>	<i>Funding option</i>	<i>Delivery lead body</i>	<i>Delivery partner(s)</i>
2C	If management measures are established, ensure compliance with bye-law and provide an appropriate level of reporting to ensure sites are well managed and to enable Natural England to provide advice on the condition of features and potential condition threats. Ongoing action.	Not yet determined	2015 onwards	Enforcement: Byelaws	Defra, Local Authority	Devon & Severn Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA)	Southern Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA), Marine Management Organisation (MMO)

3 Public Access/Disturbance

A number of the coastal cave features are accessible to visitors. If access is left unregulated, coasteerers, kayakers, diver visits and casual visitors using the entrances in the coastal cliffs could impact the delicate fauna and rare species. Coasteering is growing in popularity as a sport, so the sea caves are likely to be visited more frequently in future. At least two commercial dive operators organise dives at Watcombe Sea Caves. The biological communities at risk are highly delicate.

<i>Action</i>	<i>Action description</i>	<i>Cost estimate</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Mechanism</i>	<i>Funding option</i>	<i>Delivery lead body</i>	<i>Delivery partner(s)</i>
3A	Support the Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust to continue to work with local coasteering, diving and watersports companies, making them aware of the delicate nature of the seacave fauna. This will be done through promoting the Sea Torbay coasteering, climbing and wild swimming environmental code of conduct and the Torbay sea caves code of conduct produced by Chris Proctor. If funding can be identified print copies of the code of conducts and distribute to relevant groups. Encourage coasteering companies to sign up to the Trust's coasteering licensing scheme, Coast Wise, at Anstey's Cove.	Not yet determined	2015 onwards	Advice: Education & awareness raising	Not yet determined	Natural England	Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust

Site details

The tables in this section contain site-relevant contextual information and links

Qualifying features

#UK Special responsibility

Lyme Bay and Torbay SCI	H1170 Reefs
	H8330 Submerged or partially submerged sea caves

Site location and links

Lyme Bay and Torbay SCI

Area (ha) **31248** Grid reference **50 39 04** [Map link](#)
N, 02 58
11 W

Local Authorities Devon County Council; Dorset County Council; East Devon; South Hams; Teignbridge District Council; Torbay; West Dorset

Site Conservation Objectives [Lyme Bay and Torbay cSAC](#)

European Marine Site conservation advice [Lyme Bay and Torbay cSAC](#)

Regulation 33/35 Package [Regulation 33/35 package link](#)

Marine Management Organisation site plan [n/a](#)

Water Framework Directive (WFD)

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) provides the main framework for managing the water environment throughout Europe. Under the WFD a management plan must be developed for each river basin district. The River Basin Management Plans (RBMP) include a summary of the measures needed for water dependent Natura 2000 sites to meet their conservation objectives. For the second round of RBMPs, SIPs are being used to capture the priorities and new measures required for water dependent habitats on Natura 2000 sites. SIP actions for non-water dependent sites/habitats do not form part of the RBMPs and associated consultation.

Lyme Bay and Torbay SCI

River basin

[South West RBMP](#)

WFD Management catchment

East Devon, South Devon

WFD Waterbody ID (Cycle 2 draft)

GB108044009760, GB108046004910

Overlapping or adjacent protected sites

Site(s) of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	
Lyme Bay and Torbay SCI	Axmouth to Lyme Regis Undercliffs SSSI Saltern Cove SSSI Sidmouth to Beer Coast SSSI Chesil Beach & The Fleet SSSI Froward Point SSSI Berry Head to Sharkham Point SSSI West Dorset Coast SSSI Hope's Nose to Walls Hill SSSI
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	
Lyme Bay and Torbay SCI	Axmouth to Lyme Regis Undercliffs NNR
Ramsar	
Lyme Bay and Torbay SCI	Chesil Beach & the Fleet
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)	
Lyme Bay and Torbay SCI	n/a

<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1.0	30/07/2015	

www.naturalengland.org.uk/ipens2000

