

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

Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Name: Orfordness – Shingle Street

Unitary Authority/County: Suffolk

SAC status: Designated on 1 April 2005

Grid reference: TM440486

SAC EU code: UK0014780

Area (ha): Suffolk

Component SSSI: Alde-Ore Estuary SSSI

Site description:

Orfordness is an extensive shingle structure consisting of a foreland, a 15 km-long spit and a series of recurves running from north to south. It supports some of the largest and most natural sequences in the UK of shingle vegetation affected by salt spray. The southern end has a particularly fine series of undisturbed ridges, with zonation of communities determined by the ridge pattern. Pioneer communities with sea pea *Lathyrus japonicus* and false oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius* grassland occur. Locally these are nutrient-enriched by the presence of a gull colony; elsewhere they support rich lichen communities.

Drift-line vegetation occurs on the sheltered, western side of the spit, at the transition from shingle to saltmarsh, as well as on the exposed eastern coast. The drift-line community is widespread and comprises sea beet *Beta vulgaris* ssp. *maritima* and orache *Atriplex* spp.

The site also includes a series of percolation lagoons that have developed in the shingle bank adjacent to the shore at the mouth of the Ore estuary. The salinity of the lagoons is maintained by percolation through the shingle, although at high tides sea water can overtop the shingle bank. The fauna of these lagoons includes typical lagoon species, such as the cockle *Cerastoderma glaucum*, the ostracod *Cyprideis torosa* and the gastropods *Littorina saxatilis tenebrosa* and *Hydrobia ventrosa*. The nationally rare starlet sea anemone *Nematostella vectensis* is also found at the site.

The adjacent estuarine and intertidal habitats are designated separately as the Alde, Ore and Butley Estuaries SAC.

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:

- Annual vegetation of drift lines
- Coastal lagoons*
- Perennial vegetation of stony banks. (Coastal shingle vegetation outside the reach of waves)

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: UK0014780

Date of registration: 14 June 2005

Signed: *Trevor Salmon*

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