

EC Directive 79/409 on the Conservation of Wild Birds: Special Protection Area

Thanet Coast (Kent)

The Thanet Coast proposed Special Protection Area includes a wide variety of coastal habitats including areas of chalk cliff, rocky shore, shingle, sand and mudflats, saltmarsh and sand dunes. As well as its value for breeding and wintering birds, the site supports outstanding communities of terrestrial and marine plant species, a significant number of rare invertebrate species, and is of considerable geological importance.

The Thanet Coast qualifies under Article 4.1 by supporting, in summer, a nationally important breeding population of little tern *Sterna albifrons* (30 pairs - over 1% of the British population).

The site also qualifies under Article 4.1 by supporting a nationally important wintering population of golden plover *Pluvialis apricaria*. During the five year period 1985/86 - 1989/90, an average peak count of 1,980 golden plover was recorded, representing 1% of the British wintering population.

The site qualifies under Article 4.2 by regularly supporting an internationally important wintering population of turnstone *Arenaria interpres*. In the five year period 1986/87 - 1990/91, an average peak count of 1,340 turnstone was recorded, representing 2% of the East Atlantic Flyway population and 3% of the British wintering population. The site also supports nationally important wintering populations of a further four species (average peak counts over the five year period 1986/7 - 1990/91): 370 ringed plover *Charadrius hiaticula* (over 1% of the British wintering population), 530 grey plover *Pluvialis squatarola* (over 2% of British), 700 sanderling *Calidris alba* (over 5% of British), and 40 Lapland bunting *Calcarius lapponicus* (about 11% of British). In addition large numbers of migratory passerine birds pass through the site during the spring and autumn migration periods. These migratory birds have been monitored since 1952 by the Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory.

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Signed [Signature]
on behalf of the Secretary of State for the Environment