

## Reasons for recommendation as a candidate Special Area of Conservation

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Area name: Hamford Water

Administrative area: Essex

Component SSSI: Hamford Water

This area has been recommended as a candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC) because it contains species which are rare or threatened within a European context. The SSSI citation describes the special interests for which the site was notified in the British context. The interests for which the site was selected as SSSI may differ from the interests selected in a European context.

The species for which the area has been recommended as a candidate SAC is listed below. The reasons for their selection are listed, together with a brief description of the habitats and species as they typically occur across the UK. This area contains the interests described although it may not contain all the typical features.

The area is considered to have a high diversity of habitats/species of European importance.

### Interest(s) submitted to the European Commission

#### European priority interest(s):

1. Fisher's estuarine moth *Gortyna borelii lunata*

- **for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.**

*Gortyna borelii lunata* has a localised population distribution in the UK, due to its specific habitat requirements and is only found in two areas, the north Essex coast and the north Kent Coast.

Hamford Water supports the majority of the Essex population and is the most important UK site for this species, supporting approximately 70% of the population.

Hamford Water is a large, shallow estuarine basin comprising tidal creeks, islands, intertidal mud, sand flats and saltmarshes. Above the saltmarsh there is unimproved and improved grassland (including grazing marsh), scrub, woodland, hedges, ditches, ponds and reedbeds. The site encompasses those areas where the moth's food plant hog's fennel (*Peucedanum officinale*) grows and where there is an abundance of the grasses required by the species for egg laying.

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