

5.0 Human activities in and around the NE Kent European marine sites



Main photograph: George Wilson. Inset pictures: Thanet District Council

5.0 Human activities in and around the NE Kent European marine sites

5.1 Human activities

Whilst the main aim of the management scheme is to promote the favourable condition of the habitats and species, this should be done in a way which takes account of economic, social, cultural requirements and regional and local characteristics. The purpose of the scheme is not to exclude human activities from the sites, but rather to ensure that they are undertaken in ways which do not threaten the nature conservation interest, and wherever possible in ways which support it. Where it is shown that deterioration or disturbance is occurring, the Habitats Directive requires appropriate action to be taken to ensure that any continuation is compatible with the nature conservation objectives.

The NE Kent European marine sites comprise the coastal boundary of the district of Thanet and parts of the coastal boundary of Canterbury district and Dover district. As these three districts have different character, scientific interest and administration each has been considered separately.

5.1.2 Thanet Coast

The coastline is urbanised with the three large resorts of Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate abutting the shore. There is intense recreation and tourism use, both off shore and shore based, with 2 million day visitors, 600,000 long stay visitors, and 127,000 local people. There is also a port, several harbours, fishing activity, sea walls and other coastal protection and a large waste water treatment works.

The Sandwich Bay National Nature Reserve (NNR) falls partly within Thanet District.

5.1.3 Dover Coast

The section of Dover's coast within the NEKEMs has lower levels of human activity than other parts of the sites because the shore is less accessible. Part is designated as Sandwich Bay National Nature Reserve. Deal lies at the southern end of the sites with some resulting recreation pressure.

5.1.4 Canterbury Coast

Along the Canterbury coastline Whitstable lies just beyond the western end of the site, and Herne Bay between two parts of the coast that have been designated. These coastal towns have a combined population of 67,900. Over 75% of all jobs are in the service sector. There are an estimated 710,000 day trips to the towns each year. It is not known what percentage of these will visit the parts of the coast which are designated.

5.2 Aspirations and objectives of Stakeholders

As described in section 1.9.1 stakeholders (from Thanet Coast, Sandwich Bay, and with a Kent wide or regional remit) were brought together in a sequence of four workshops to discuss the sustainable future of Thanet Coast and Pegwell Bay. The trigger for this process was the need to produce this management scheme however, the workshops were also used to look at ways of resolving conflicts between different users of the coast and also to generate new ways the coast could be used to contribute towards the economic regeneration of the area.

As described in sections 1.9.2 and 1.9.3 Canterbury local stakeholders will be involved in preparing a coastal strategy and stakeholders from south of Sandwich Bay will be involved if management issues for that area arise. If the aspirations and objectives of these stakeholders differ markedly from those involved in the Thanet workshops their views will be added to this plan when it is reviewed.

In advance of the first of the Thanet workshops stakeholders were asked to bring along answers to the question 'It's really good to live, work and enjoy leisure along the Thanet Coast in 2010 because.....' The outcome of this was an expression of stakeholders aspirations for the future. A summary compiled by the facilitator was intended as a temporary text however it has been copied here as it continues to be an excellent overview of the aspirations that were expressed in the workshops :

In general, successful management of the Thanet Coast will;

- Protect, restore and improve environmental quality
- Enhance the local economy, including that based on leisure and tourism
- Help to strengthen the sense of community and local identity

More particularly, successful management plans will;

- Deliver a high quality environment in all projects, initiatives and developments.
- Avoid the worst of commercialisation while encouraging more visitors (who stay longer, spread more widely across the area and come over a longer season etc).
- Encourage better choices in favour of public transport, both for access to the area and for getting around it.
- Provide transport that copes properly with the needs of visitors, without prejudicing local transport needs.
- Steadily raise and then maintain standards of air and water quality, beach cleanliness and safety.
- Extend the range of formal and informal leisure and recreation activities, widen access to these for residents and visitors, and ensure that they complement each other without environmental damage.
- Protect and enhance all natural environment features, but especially those (such as chalk reefs, cliffs, dunes and birds) that make the coast internationally special.
- Ensure economic change that, where ever possible, does not prejudice existing business, commerce and trade.
- Promote new economic development that benefits local people and groups and the local economy.
- Celebrate and enhance local feelings about the attractiveness of the area and its sense of community (or communities).
- Continue to involve local people in planning, action and management in delivering all of the above.

Additional aspiration emerged at later workshops and so were not captured in the above. Stakeholders want the effective management and use of the coast to;

- Foster co-operation between the many different leisure and recreational users of the shore and waters so that conflict between each others needs is resolved or minimised and activities can be carried out in a way that is safe, considerate of others and does not harm the wildlife or habitats. Codes of conduct/best practice are considered a good start to achieving this (see section 6.0).
- Integrate, market and manage the different human activities and natural resources under the umbrella of a 'coastal park/zone' initiative.
- Use the many detailed ideas which came out of the workshop but which are outside the remit of this management scheme. This includes ideas about improving transport, marketing, cultural activities, community feel, quality of life, and the built environment.

6.0 Site management



Bait digging photograph (bottom left) : Paul Glendell, Other photographs : George Wilson

6.0 Site management

6.1 Introduction

The NE Kent European marine sites have qualified for designation against the background of use at the time they were selected. It follows then that some human use of the site is broadly compatible with the maintenance of the conservation interest. However an essential step in developing a management scheme is the evaluation of the following

- existing site use against English Nature's conservation objectives and operations advice.
- assessment of existing site management (regulation, voluntary agreements and unregulated use)
- identification of gaps in management
- development and introduction of new management measures

In fulfilment of this each human activity which takes place within the European marine sites has been taken through the process described in Table 5.

Stakeholders requested that the evaluation of each activity should be recorded and made available as part of this management scheme. This is so that all parties could have access to the evaluation relevant to their own interests. This has made for a lengthy document and so two summary tables (Tables 6 and 7) have been provided for quick reference.

It should be noted that the assessments of the effects of the different human activities has been based on currently available information. It is a requirement that two sorts of monitoring should be carried out both compliance monitoring - is everyone abiding by the management scheme, and condition monitoring - to assess the condition of the habitats (see 7.3 and 7.3.3 for monitoring action plan). As information is fed back to the management group it is anticipated that the advice on effects will also change. This will in turn lead to review and revision of the management measures.

6.2 Approach to management taken in each district.

The NE Kent European marine sites abut the shore of three different local authorities; Thanet, Dover and Canterbury. For the reasons described in Section 1.9 and Table 2 both the issues and the level of management necessary differ considerably between these three districts and the way in which stakeholders have been involved reflects this. The tables in sections 6.4 to 6.14 are formatted so that each activity is considered on a district basis.

6.2.1 Thanet District Coast and the Sandwich Bay area of Dover District.

Information has yet to be gathered particularly regarding numbers of people involved in various activities. Further information is also needed about the effects of different activities on the reefs, caves or birds. For example it is known that a number of activities do cause disturbance to the birds in that they put the birds to flight however it is unclear how much this impacts the welfare of the birds and their survival. It also emerged that whilst the local authorities aim to manage water based activities via the control of launch sites there is no way of controlling where the craft go once launched. Taken together these factors make it difficult to evaluate whether or not some activities are leading to deterioration or disturbance.



Photograph: George Wilson

Codes of Conduct

In agreeing on-going management a general principle has been that current levels of human use will carry on and that the area will be further promoted for tourism and recreation. In this context and given the information still needed stakeholders have agreed that the best way forward is to take a precautionary approach and that voluntary codes of conduct will be drawn up for all current recreational and unregulated activities. It has also been agreed that where new activities are proposed they too will have a code of conduct.

The existing federations and recreational clubs seek to manage their activities in a responsible way. Their concern to continue to do so, and to include consideration of the natural environment, was demonstrated by the active participation of many of them in the workshops, and their willingness to provide assistance and help in the gathering of information. None the less existing codes of conduct were written before the importance of the wildlife features of the area was widely understood.

In the workshops clubs worked with other stakeholders to agree general principles about how the codes of conduct will be drafted and what they will contain (see box).

At the workshops stakeholders also generated some activity and location specific advice and these will be used as a basis for codes as they are developed.

Whilst recognising that this management scheme is to address the maintenance of the features of wildlife importance, it was agreed that the codes of conduct will also:

- include recognition of the rights to use the coast;
- include courtesy to other users,
- address clashes between different activities and may include voluntary zoning at sea*
- address matters of safety for participants and others site users.
- for watercraft include basic navigation rules.

* Whilst the use of launch sites is zoned by restricting the type of water craft which can use a given launch, craft move outside their launch bays and have rights of navigation at sea.

General Principles about how the codes of conduct will be drafted.

- Codes of conduct will be codes of best practice, positive in tone and encourage responsible use of the coast.
- They will be voluntary and encourage self regulation.
- They will include information about the wildlife interest and the need to avoid damage to it.
- They will be drafted via meetings bringing together clubs and/or individuals carrying out the activity, conservation specialists, clashing interests, and responsible authorities eg Local Authorities.
- These meetings will be carried out in a participatory way using the tools, techniques and principles of consensus building which have been experienced to work well in the workshops and which have led to this document.
- Where available existing local and national codes will be drawn on.
- Where clubs exist they will have a responsibility to ensure that their members support and comply with codes of conduct.
- Where concessionaires rent out equipment they will encourage hirers to read and comply with relevant codes.
- Where there is a problem with non club members or activities which do not have organised clubs every effort will be made to get the information to them eg via display boards at information and access points, with purchases from recreation outlets and suppliers, at beach cafes, via concessionaires, via tourist accommodation, through the local tourist board and information centres, via schools and youth clubs, and via the water users group.
- The codes of conduct will be monitored to evaluate whether or not they are effective in managing activities.
- If it becomes clear that a code is not being complied with and that significant deterioration or disturbance is resulting to the reefs, caves or birds, the situation will be reviewed with representatives of the activity and if no other solution can be found the code will be enforced via mechanisms such as bylaws, registration and licences.
- The codes of conduct will be tackled in the order advised by English Nature and Thanet District Council.

Promotion of site interest

All stakeholders agreed that an important key to keeping the reefs, caves, and birds in favourable condition would be a general increase in awareness of the international wildlife importance of the coast. To some extent this could be achieved as user groups and clubs agree codes of conduct but there is no current manpower to co-ordinate and lead this work and in any case it will not involve the wider community and tourists. To deliver codes of conduct and reach the wider public the following has been agreed:

A new coastal wildlife project will be set up to: promote the nature conservation interest of the coast, work with all stakeholders to generate mutually acceptable codes of conduct, act as a focal point for the gathering of information about activities and locations, and assess the efficacy of the codes in managing activities.

In addition to these tasks stakeholders generated a list of other ideas which they would like to see the project achieve. This includes a range of educational projects including the out of season use of the area for educational field trips and increasing local and tourist appreciation of the wildlife value of the area through events, the arts and landscaping. The new coastal wildlife project will action many of these ideas.

6.2.2 Dover

The main focus of human activity within the Dover Districts coast occurs around Sandwich Bay. Stakeholders from this area participated in the consensus building workshops and contributed to the agreement listed under 6.2.1 above.

Much of this area is designated a National Nature Reserve (see map in Appendix H). Part of the NNR falls in Thanet District. It is managed in the interests of wildlife by Kent Wildlife Trust with advice from a management group comprising a range of different organisations. The codes of conduct to be produced by the new coastal wildlife project will also include stakeholders for activities that occur in or near the NNR.

No management issues have been identified for the part of the SPA between the Sandwich Bay estate and Deal. If any emerge in the life of this plan relevant stakeholders will be asked to explore the issues and identify workable solutions.

6.2.3 Canterbury

As described in section 1.9 the only international interest that affects Canterbury District is the wintering turnstone. Issues that have been selected for discussion and resolution with stakeholders have been identified by Canterbury City Council. This was done by using outputs from the Thanet Workshops and identifying management issues that are relevant to the Canterbury part of the SPA. The issues surround shore based activities affecting wintering birds. Only 43% of the Canterbury coast is affected and a limited number of activities. Canterbury stakeholders will address these issue and identify workable solutions as part of the preparation of the Canterbury Coastal Plan which has a much wider remit.

Table 5
Stages involved in reviewing the human activities against the conservation objectives and arriving at actions to implement management measures.

Stage	Action	By whom	Where to find the result in this management scheme
1	Identification of human activities and the possible effects that they might have on the feature of nature conservation importance.	All stakeholders in consensus building workshops.	Table 6
2	Available information gathered about the locations at which the activity takes place, the time of year, the frequency, the scale eg numbers involved, and way it is carried out.	Stakeholders who carry out those activities. Information gathered at workshops and verified between and post the workshops.	Maps and tables in Sections 6.4 - 6.14
3	This information together with English Nature's advice (on conservation objectives and operations that may cause deterioration or disturbance - see Section 3 and 4) used to assess the likely and possible effects of the activity on the feature of interest.	Stakeholders representing wildlife interests at the workshops. Post the workshops English Nature led and co-ordinated this process to ensure that the assessments were consistent with their formal Regulation 33 advice.	Sections 6.4 and 6.14
4	The authorities relevant to this activity listed and information collated about the existing management.	Relevant Authorities at and post the workshops.	Sections 6.4 and 6.14
5	Where considered possible or likely that a human activity will have an effect and the existing management is not sufficient to ensure that the features are kept in favourable condition gaps have been identified.	Stakeholders at and post the workshops.	Sections 6.4 and 6.14
6	New management measures have been agreed for implementation.	Stakeholders decided at workshops that all recreation activities should have mutually agreed codes of conduct. Where authorities carry out the activities directly measures have been agreed post the workshops.	Sections 6.4 to 6.14 and summarised in Table 7
7	Timetable who will do what and by when to implement management measures.		Action Plan Section 7

HUMAN ACTIVITIES		English Nature's categories of operations which may cause deterioration or disturbance																		
Numbers refer to the section where the activity is considered in detail.		physical loss		physical damage		non-physical disturbance		toxic contamination		non-toxic contamination					biological disturbance					
		removal	smothering	siltation	abrasion	extraction	noise	visual	synthetic	non-synthetic	radio nuclides	nutrient	organic	thermal	turbidity	salinity	microbial pathogens	non-native species	extraction of species	
6.6 Shore Based Recreation																				
6.6.1	Bathing						WB BB	WB BB												
6.6.2	Cycling							WB BB												
6.6.3	Dog Walking				R		WB BB	WB BB												
6.6.4	Horse riding and hunting							WB BB												
6.6.5	Land sailing						WB BB	WB BB												
6.6.6	Motorbikes						WB BB	WB BB												
6.6.7	Recreational events						WB BB	WB BB												
6.6.8	Walking, rockpooling, informal beach combing	R C			R C		WB BB	WB BB												R
6.7 Water Based Recreation																				
6.7.1	Recreational Hovercrafts				R		WB BB	WB BB												
6.7.2	Diving				R															R
6.7.3	Surfing						WB BB	WB BB												
6.7.4	Water based powered and sail craft						WB BB	WB BB												
6.8 Air based activities																				
6.8.1	Microlights and other small light aircraft						WB BB	WB BB												

HUMAN ACTIVITIES		English Nature's categories of operations which may cause deterioration or disturbance																		
		physical loss		physical damage			non-physical disturbance		toxic contamination		non-toxic contamination			biological disturbance						
		removal	smothering	siltation	abrasion	extraction	noise	visual	synthetic	non-synthetic	radio nuclides	nutrient	organic	thermal	turbidity	salinity	microbial pathogens	non-native species	extraction of species	
6.9 Ports and harbours																				
6.9.1	Anchoring of large vessels				R				R	R										
6.9.2	Dredging	D	R	R	R			WB												
6.9.3	Navigation buoys				R															
6.9.4	Ports and harbours operations						WB	WB	R	R										
6.10 Research and education																				
6.10.1	Archaeology	R			R	R	WB BB	WB BB												
6.10.2	Geology and geomorphology				R	R	WB BB	WB BB												
6.10.3	Biology and ecology				R	R	WB BB	WB BB											R	C
6.10.4	Interpretation and promotion of wildlife				R	R	WB BB	WB BB											R	
6.11 Water Quality																				
6.11.1	Nutrients and organic matter															R				
6.11.2	Synthetic and non-synthetic compounds								R	R										
6.11.3	Plastics and non-biodegradable waste									C										
6.12 Species management																				
6.12.1	Non-native species - Japweed																		R	
6.12.2	Mosquito control																			WB
6.12.3	Seaweed collection				R															WB
6.13 Extraction of materials																				
6.13.1	Flints/curios and other materials	R	C																	R WB

Table 7 **Summary of the assessments and agreed management measures taken from the evaluation tables in 6.4 - 6.13**

Plans and Projects: These are not on-going and therefore outside the remit of this management scheme (see section 1.10)

On-going activities for which assessments are to be carried out: These activities are ongoing but have not yet been reviewed to assess the effects they are having on the features of interest. This is because the activities have to be formally reviewed under other parts of the Habitats Regulations. In the meantime no firm conclusions can be reached about whether or not they are causing disturbance or deterioration to features of interest. The management measures are that the assessments and formal reviews of consented activities will be carried out.

On - going activities which have been assessed: Assessments have been made of the possible effects of each activity on the features of importance and the likelihood of that effect happening. The assessments were based on what is currently known about the activity ie the scale or numbers involved, the locations and the time of year at which it occurs. Resulting management measures include codes of conduct, research on the effects and the gathering of further information.

Human activity (Numbers refer to the section number)	New Plans and Projects	On-going activities but assessment to be carried out	On-going activities which have been assessed.		
			Effect on features of interest: NONE. Management measures: NONE No deterioration or disturbance occurring from this activity - no additional management measures considered necessary	Effect on features of interest: POSSIBLE Management measures: PRECAUTIONARY No known deterioration or disturbance occurring but considered possible so precautionary measure to be taken eg codes of conduct	Effect on features of interest: LIKELY Management measures: NECESSARY Some deterioration or disturbance likely. Management measures to be taken (✓) and/or research to take place to ascertain extent (R).
6.4 Shoreline Management					
6.4.1 Redistribution and re-profiling	✓	✓			
6.4.2 Renourishment	✓	✓			
6.4.3 Management of cliffs and hard defences	✓				R (extent of erosion of reef)
6.5 Fishing and harvesting					
6.5.1 Commercial fishing			✓		
6.5.2 Commercial and non - commercial bait digging and collection				✓	R (effect on wintering birds)
6.5.3 Sea Angling from boats			✓		
6.5.4 Shore Angling and Angling Competitions					✓ R (disturbance to breeding birds)
6.5.5 Large scale shell fishing and harvesting					✓ R (Possible competition with turnstone and effects on reef)
6.5.6 Small scale shell fishing and harvesting				✓ (past damage to reef)	
6.5.7 Shore fishing with nets				✓	R (effect on wintering birds)

Human activity (Numbers refer to the section number)	New Plans and Projects	On-going activities but assessment to be carried out	On-going activities which have been assessed.		
	New activities will be subject to Regulation 48 or Regulation 19 and 20	Management Measures: Assessment to take place. This includes formal review of consents under Regulations 19, 48 & 50	Effect on features of interest: NONE. Management measures: NONE No deterioration or disturbance occurring from this activity - no additional management measures considered necessary	Effect on features of interest: POSSIBLE Management measures: PRECAUTIONARY No known deterioration or disturbance occurring but considered possible so precautionary measure to be taken eg codes of conduct	Effect on features of interest: LIKELY Management measures: NECESSARY Some deterioration or disturbance likely. Management measures to be taken (✓) and/or research to take place to ascertain extent (R)
6.6 Shore Based Recreation					
6.6.1 Bathing			✓		
6.6.2 Cycling			✓		
6.6.3 Dog Walking					✓ R (disturbance to birds)
6.6.4 Horse riding and hunting				✓	R (effect on wintering birds)
6.6.5 Land sailing				✓	R (effect on wintering birds)
6.6.6 Motorbikes					✓ R (disturbance to birds)
6.6.7 Recreational events				✓ (potential disturbance to wintering birds)	
6.6.8 Walking, rockpooling, informal beach combing				✓	R (effect on wintering birds)
6.7 Water Based Recreation					
6.7.1 Recreational Hovercrafts				✓ (potential disturbance to birds)	
6.7.2 Diving			✓		
6.7.3 Surfing			✓		
6.7.4 Water based powered and sail craft				✓ (in past damage to reef)	R (effect on wintering birds)
6.8 Air based activities					
6.8.1 Microlights, other small light aircraft and large kites					✓ (disturbance to birds)
6.9 Ports and harbours					
6.9.1 Anchoring of large vessels			✓		
6.9.2 Dredging	✓		✓		

Human activity (Numbers refer to the section number)	New Plans and Projects	On-going activities but assessment to be carried out	On-going activities which have been assessed.		
			Effect on features of interest: NONE Management measures: NONE No deterioration or disturbance occurring from this activity - no additional management measures considered necessary	Effect on features of interest: POSSIBLE Management measures: PRECAUTIONARY No known deterioration or disturbance occurring but considered possible so precautionary measure to be taken eg codes of conduct	Effect on features of interest: LIKELY Management measures: NECESSARY Some deterioration or disturbance likely. Management measures to be taken (✓) and/or research to take place to ascertain extent (R).
6.9.3 Navigation buoys			✓		
6.9.4 Ports and harbours operations	✓		✓		
6.10 Research and education					
6.10.1 Archaeology				✓ (cliff and reef)	
6.10.2 Geology and geomorphology				✓ (cliff and reef)	R (effect on wintering birds)
6.10.3 Biology and ecology				✓ (cliff and reef)	R (effect on wintering birds)
6.10.4 Interpretation and promotion of wildlife				✓ (cliff, reef and birds)	
6.11 Water Quality					
6.11.1 Nutrients and organic matter		✓			
6.11.2 Synthetic and non-synthetic compounds		✓			
6.11.3 Plastics and non-biodegradable waste			✓		
6.12 Species management					
6.12.1 Non-native species - Japweed					? R
6.12.2 Mosquito control			✓		
6.12.3 Seaweed collection		✓			R (effects on food source for turnstone?)
6.13 Extraction of materials					
6.13.1 Flints/curios and other materials				✓ (cliff and reef if activity happens)	

6.3 Explanation of activity assessment tables in Section 6.4 - 6.13

Stakeholders requested that the evaluation of each activity should be recorded and made available as part of this management scheme. This is so that all parties could have access to the evaluation relevant to their own interests. This has made for a lengthy document and so the two summary tables 6 and 7 have been produced for quick reference.

6.3.1 Order of tables in section

For ease of reference similar types of human activities have been grouped together in each section. Within each group the activities are listed alphabetically. The evaluation tables can be found in sections 6.4 to 6.13 and a section index has been provided for quick reference to any given activity.

6.3.2 Inclusion of all regular operations

The purpose of the management section is to consider the management of on-going activities. Operations which need consents or permissions are considered 'plans or projects' (see 1.10) and are subject to a different process. However some 'plans or projects' are carried out on a regular basis eg certain shoreline management operations, and for the operators it is helpful that these are mentioned in the relevant table.

6.3.3 Layout of table

Each table has been divided into 3 columns one for each of the three districts: Thanet, Dover, and Canterbury. This is because the management issues and measures differ from district to district and not all activities or all features occur in each district. (See section 6.2 for more detail).

To understand each human activity as it is carried out in a given district it is necessary to read down the table (not across) through the following sequence:

- Location of activity
- Timing and frequency
- Other information
- Potential impact on features of nature conservation interest (based on English Nature's formal Regulation 33 advice).
- Organisations responsible for management
- Existing management
- Gaps in management
- Management measures (please note these are taken forward to the action plan - Section 7 - which identifies who will carry out the action and by when)

Rows which run across the columns - denote that the information applies to more than one district.

Shaded boxes - Denote that the information is not relevant for that district.

Blank boxes - Denote that the relevant information was not available at the time of writing.

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