

Isle of Wight Biodiversity Opportunity Areas

Southwest Coast



This map is based on Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. 100019229 2008.



Isle of Wight Biodiversity Opportunity Areas

Southwest Coast



Opportunity area description

Coastal strip between Compton Chine and St Catherine's Point, including the higher ground at Southdown and St Catherine's Hill.

Joint Character Area

Landscape descriptive unit

Isle of Wight Joint Character Area: southern coastal farmland, intensive agriculture, chalk downs, sandstone hills.

Landscape types

Predominantly arable farmland, with low sea cliffs, rising to the south to low sandstone hills and rolling chalk downland. Coastal scrub on the sandstone hills and landslip.

Geology (bedrock)

Mustones sandstones and clays of the Wealden and Atherfield series; ferruginous sands, and chalk.

Geology (superficial)

Extensive river terrace deposits between Small Chine and Grange Chine; some blown sand in the vicinity of Ladder Chine.

Topography (landform)

Coastal strip with slumping soft cliffs, incised by small streams which form chines, with arable fields landward. At the southern end, outcrops of sandstone and chalk rise above the plain.

Biodiversity (BAP habitat, Designated sites

UK BAP Species)

SSSIs: Compton Chine to Steephill Cove

SINCs: Compton Marsh, Compton Grange, Sudmoor Dyke, Chilton Chine, Grange Chine, Windmill Copse, South Down, St Catherine's Down, St Catherine's Hill, The Undercliff

BAP habitat

- Maritime cliffs and slopes.
- Chalk grassland.

UK BAP Species

Suite of RBD soft cliff invertebrates including Chestnut click beetle, Cliff tiger beetle and Glanville fritillary; Triangular pigmy moss; Green blackwort; Skylark; Yellowhammer; Linnet; Grey partridge; Water vole; Adder.

Access

Coastal footpath along cliff edge; access to beach at some points but cliff movement makes this difficult in places. Palaeontological interest.

Targets – main opportunities

- Habitat improvement for farmland birds
- Maintenance of slumping cliff as habitat for invertebrates.
- Creation and maintenance of a buffer strip along the cliff top.
- Scrub control and grazing of slumping cliffs around St Catherine's.