

NATURA 2000

STANDARD DATA FORM

FOR SPECIAL PROTECTION AREAS (SPA)
FOR SITES ELIGIBLE FOR IDENTIFICATION AS SITES OF COMMUNITY IMPORTANCE (SCI)
AND
FOR SPECIAL AREAS OF CONSERVATION (SAC)

1. Site identification:

1.1 Type 1.2 Site code

1.3 Compilation date 1.4 Update

1.5 Relationship with other Natura 2000 sites

1.6 Respondent(s)

1.7 Site name

1.8 Site indication and designation classification dates

date site proposed as eligible as SCI	199601
date confirmed as SCI	
date site classified as SPA	
date site designated as SAC	

2. Site location:

2.1 Site centre location

longitude	latitude
03 05 06 W	53 34 51 N

2.2 Site area (ha) 2.3 Site length (km)

2.5 Administrative region

NUTS code	Region name	% cover
UK84	Merseyside	100.0%

2.6 Biogeographic region

Alpine

Atlantic

Boreal

Continental

Macaronesia

Mediterranean

3. Ecological information:

3.1 Annex I habitats

Habitat types present on the site and the site assessment for them:

Annex I habitat	% cover	Representativity	Relative surface	Conservation status	Global assessment
Embryonic shifting dunes	0.2	B	B	A	A

Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> ("white dunes")	3.2	B	B	B	B
Fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation ("grey dunes")	12.6	A	B	B	B
Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (<i>Calluno-Ulicetea</i>)	1.5	B	B	B	C
Dunes with <i>Hippophae rhamnoides</i>	0.4	D			
Dunes with <i>Salix repens</i> ssp. <i>argentea</i> (<i>Salicion arenariae</i>)	2	A	B	B	A
Humid dune slacks	4	B	B	B	B

3.2 Annex II species

Species name	Population				Site assessment			
	Resident	Migratory			Population	Conservation	Isolation	Global
		Breed	Winter	Stage				
<i>Triturus cristatus</i>	Present	-	-	-	C	B	C	C
<i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i>	1001-10,000	-	-	-	B	A	B	B

4. Site description

4.1 General site character

Habitat classes	% cover
Marine areas. Sea inlets	
Tidal rivers. Estuaries. Mud flats. Sand flats. Lagoons (including saltwork basins)	50.0
Salt marshes. Salt pastures. Salt steppes	
Coastal sand dunes. Sand beaches. Machair	30.0
Shingle. Sea cliffs. Islets	
Inland water bodies (standing water, running water)	
Bogs. Marshes. Water fringed vegetation. Fens	
Heath. Scrub. Maquis and garrigue. Phygrana	10.0
Dry grassland. Steppes	
Humid grassland. Mesophile grassland	
Alpine and sub-alpine grassland	
Improved grassland	
Other arable land	
Broad-leaved deciduous woodland	
Coniferous woodland	10.0
Mixed woodland	
Non-forest areas cultivated with woody plants (including orchards, groves, vineyards, dehesas)	
Inland rocks. Screes. Sands. Permanent snow and ice	
Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites)	
Total habitat cover	100%

4.1 Other site characteristics

<p>Soil & geology: Basic, Sand</p> <p>Geomorphology & landscape: Coastal, Open coast (including bay)</p>
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4.2 Quality and importance

<p>Embryonic shifting dunes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • which is considered to be rare as its total extent in the United Kingdom is estimated to be less than 1000 hectares. • for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.

Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* (“white dunes”)

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

Fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation (“grey dunes”)

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

Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (*Calluno-Ulicetea*)

- which is considered to be rare as its total extent in the United Kingdom is estimated to be less than 1000 hectares.
- for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.

Dunes with *Salix repens* ssp. *argentea* (*Salicion arenariae*)

- which is considered to be rare as its total extent in the United Kingdom is estimated to be less than 1000 hectares.
- for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.

Humid dune slacks

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

Triturus cristatus

- for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.

Petalophyllum ralfsii

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

4.3 Vulnerability

Sefton Coast is primarily owned and managed by Sefton Council, with other major landowners including English Nature (Ainsdale Sand Dunes and Cabin Hill NNRs), the National Trust, Ministry of Defence, and a number of international standard golf clubs. The extensive sand dunes and intertidal areas attract large numbers of summer tourists. This impact is addressed in Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council's Beach Management Plan. Co-ordinated management of the coast is achieved through the long-standing Sefton Coast Management Scheme (now the Sefton Coast Partnership), in which all key landowners play a part. Golf course management achieves a positive balance between play areas and important habitats.

Concerns have been raised regarding water abstraction on the coast. This is being addressed through detailed modelling of the dune aquifer by the Environment Agency. The coniferous plantations are also a source of debate, with a balance needed between restoration of dune habitats and public enjoyment of the woodlands. Work on this is being carried out on Ainsdale Sand Dunes National Nature Reserve, which holds a significant proportion of these woodlands.

5. Site protection status and relation with CORINE biotopes:

5.1 Designation types at national and regional level

Code	% cover
UK01 (NNR)	11.3
UK04 (SSSI/ASSI)	100.0