






Map of features & sub-features of SWMEMS

Habitats of the South Wight Maritime European marine site

-  Sub-tidal faunal turf communities
-  Kelp forest and subtidal red algae communities
-  Rocky Shore Communities
-  EMS boundary
-  Sea cave communities

The intertidal and subtidal area to the south of the Isle of Wight is very special in terms of the environment and has been designated as such by Europe for certain features of interest. The South of the Isle of Wight is used for a variety of activities and interests. There are a number of recreational, educational and commercial activities including Sailing, Power boating, Diving, Kite surfing, Surfing, Fossil collecting, Angling, Fishing and Paragliding. However, such usage is generally not intensive and even on a busy summer's day you can still feel relaxed and enjoy the seclusion and unique environment of the Island.

Much of the coastline is also designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or Heritage Coast. Whilst this management scheme does not apply to areas outside of the intertidal and subtidal environment, links must obviously be maintained to ensure that the overall approach undertaken to manage the Isle of Wight's natural resources is cohesive.

Vertical and horizontal faces and crevices on the limestone reefs off Bembridge and Whitecliff Bay and areas of large boulders off the south coast of the Island provide a range of habitats for a number of marine species.

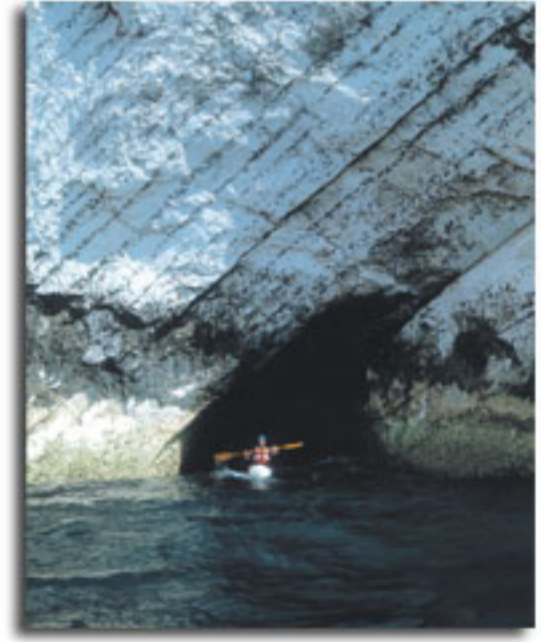


A range of reef types are found within the SWMEMS including chalk, limestone, sandstone, clay/mudstone and greensand bedrock with boulder reefs.

On the reefs, the bedrock is extensively bored by bivalves and sponges, increasing habitat diversity.

Clay exposures or mudstone reefs are not very common in Britain, areas found off Sandown and Shanklin are of particular interest.

One of the main factors influencing the integrity of the SWMEMS is the amount of light penetrating the water. This determines the depth to which species such as red algae and kelp can grow. In the SWMEMS, this is approximately 10 metres.



Large, ecologically important littoral sea caves in the chalk cliffs host rare algal species specific to this type of habitat

