

North East Kent Coast Scientific Research Code

What is the Research Code and who is it for?

This research code aims to safeguard the wildlife and geological interest of the area, and provide a means of registering new research. It is a voluntary code of conduct for anyone carrying out scientific research within the North East Kent coast area between Whitstable and Deal and is complementary to the existing Thanet Coast Codes aimed at recreational coastal users.



Why is the North East Kent Coast important?

This coast is a valued open space used by many people for many activities, from recreation to scientific study. It is internationally important for wintering and breeding birds as well as chalk cliffs, caves and reefs and it forms part of a larger area consisting of several nature conservation designations – two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a Special Protection Area (SPA), a Ramsar site and two Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) – collectively known as the North East Kent European Marine Sites.

How was this code produced?

This North East Kent Coast Scientific Research Code has been produced by the North East Kent Coastal Scientific Advisory Group. This is a group of scientists and researchers based in north east Kent, which aims to:

- Act as a focus for coastal information gathering and dissemination
- Investigate scientific problems and issues affecting the coast
- Influence coastal policy decisions
- Act as an advisory body to the North East Kent European Marine Sites Management Group
- Keep in contact with local stakeholders

How to use this guide

The **General Researcher Seashore Code** applies to all coastal users, and you should read it, in conjunction with the **specific code** for your activity. The **specific codes** include:

- **Activities covered by Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992**
- **General Sciences**
- **Earth Sciences – Geology and Geomorphology**
- **Biological Sciences – Biology and Ecology**
- **Physical Sciences – Hydrology, Metallurgy, Chemistry and Physics**
- **Geography – Landuse, Economics and Human Sociology**

For more specialist research work you should first consult the Joint Nature Conservation Committee Marine Monitoring Handbook

www.jncc.gov.uk/marine/marine_habitat/survey/mmh.htm

The codes are followed by a **useful contacts** list giving details of local organisations you may need to contact regarding your proposed research.

Before commencing your work it is suggested that you forward a brief outline of your research to the North East Kent Coastal Scientific Advisory Group – c/o Thanet Coast Project, PO Box 9, Cecil Street, Margate CT9 1XZ or email it to thanet.coast@thanet.gov.uk to register your research and obtain landowner consent.

Other sources of information

- North East Kent European Marine Sites Management Scheme – summary leaflet
- Thanet Coastal Codes – leaflet
- North East Kent Coastal Scientific Advisory Group – terms of reference

These are available from

The Thanet Coast Project, PO Box 9, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent CT9 1XZ or thanet.coast@thanet.gov.uk or can be viewed on the website www.thanetcoast.org.uk

General Researcher Seashore Code

Respect coastal wildlife

- Try to leave everything as you find it.
- Always carefully replace stones or seaweed when collecting.
- Tread carefully and avoid disturbing wildlife on the shore. Use coastal footpaths where present.
- Take care to avoid fast or erratic movements or noise that may put feeding or roosting coastal birds to flight – **especially between 1st October and 31st March and at high tide or at night.**
- Stay clear of the main bird roosts, and summer breeding grounds (1st April to 31st July). **Turnstone wintering roost maps are available from Thanet Coast Project. For information on other bird roosts/breeding areas, contact English Nature in advance of starting your work.**

Consider our coastline and other users

- Take your rubbish home and report hazards.
- Try to avoid damaging the cliffs or chalk rocks **especially on the lower shore, where it is fragile.**
- Back-fill any holes that you dig to restore the seashore and make it safe for other users.
- Take care to avoid disturbance to archaeological sites on the beach – **notably at St Mildred's and Minnis Bays.**
- Don't block public access
- Respect the rights of all other users.
- Monitoring equipment needs to be adequately marked – **especially at night, and should not cause an obstruction or hazard. Relevant authorities should be informed of its location.**

Stay safe

- Check tide times to avoid being cut off and let someone know where you are going.
- Check bay signs for activity zones, bylaws and local beach safety information. **Keep away from areas that may cause a danger with other priority users, such as at designated launch sites or within moorings.**
- Be aware of local hazards and conditions.
- Wear clothing suitable for the weather or coastal conditions – **such as windproofs, waterproofs, wellies, or sun creams.**

Take care

- near cliffs and don't throw anything over the edge.
- walking on slippery rocks, slopes or near the edge of promenades.
- walking on soft sand and mud.

Be scientifically responsible

- **Register your research** with the North East Kent Coastal Scientific Advisory Group. When your work is complete, please provide details of the finished report and where it can be located.
- You may need the **landowner's permission** – contact the local authority to establish land ownership – and always request permission when extracting or removing items.
- Limit your **collecting** to the minimum you need for your work.
- Follow your specific **professional or association guidelines.**

Specific codes

Activities covered by Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992

- The Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992 cover every institution or organisation in England and Wales. Ensure you are aware of them and that you meet the requirements necessary in your field of work.
- Risk assessment involves work activities such as manual handling and operation of equipment, work with chemicals, carcinogenic or biological agents, activities involving radioactive substances or sources, laboratory equipment, electrical appliances etc.
- Ensure you have assessed your research or activity in relation to hazards and risks.
- Measures must then be introduced that minimise and reduce hazards and risks to yourself and others.
- You need to consider what safety impacts these measures might have on the environment
- For more information look on the HSE website www.hse.gov.uk

General Sciences

- Conduct a pilot study to gauge the relevance of your research and any environmental/ecological impacts that may occur.
- Show interest in other coastal users – **always be friendly and approachable, try not to hold pre-conceived ideas – you might learn something relating to your area of study!**
- Show consideration to other coastal users – **inform them of your actions and why your work is necessary.**
- Your area of study and any related activities will impact on the work of other researchers – **be considerate!**
- Contact the relevant authorities and seek clearance concerning any work you wish to conduct. **Do not take it for granted that you can do what you want on any part of the coastline. Parts of the coastline may be under private ownership.**
- Assist future research by ensuring that your research material is available to others.
- The publication of specific locations should be avoided, **especially in vulnerable areas. However, a scientific argument may require these locations to be disclosed.**
- Go one step further! **Remove some rubbish from your area of study and help increase coastal cleanliness.**

Earth Sciences – Geology and Geomorphology

- Avoid damaging substrata especially sensitive types – **cliffs, wave-cut platforms, mudflats, sand dunes.**
- Replace or infill where necessary.
- Avoid disfiguring rock surfaces with **numbers/symbols. Use a GPS and record the location and data necessary.**
- Fossil or rock specimens should not be removed **without clearance from the necessary authorities and only if required for study.**
- Avoid using the same locations to take samples. Use a random approach to collect bore-hole samples and avoid establishing patterns or sampling in a small and defined area.
- **There is more useful information in English Nature's free leaflets: 'Managing geological sites' and 'Fossil collecting and conservation', available from the local office.**

Biological Sciences – Biology and Ecology

- Avoid using scientific equipment that may damage the environment, **for example, mercury thermometers if broken.**
- Always clean boots, sample nets and other sampling equipment **to avoid or minimise the chances of spreading alien species.**
- If working near roosting or feeding birds, wait until environmental disturbances occur – **for example, aircraft, birds of prey, and sirens, before accessing these areas (you usually don't have to wait long!).**
- Do not disturb breeding birds. **If you are unsure about locations of breeding or roosting birds, contact English Nature before starting work.**
- If accessing an area on a regular basis avoid establishing paths across vulnerable vegetation, **such as sand dunes and marshes.**

Physical Sciences – Hydrology, Metallurgy, Chemistry and Physics

- Reduce the risk of spillages. **Work that involves using chemical agents should be conducted in the laboratory where possible.**
- Is your activity necessary? Can outside work be avoided? What safety measures will you use?
- Chemical waste products should be disposed of in the correct manner.

Geography – Landuse, Economics and Human Sociology

- Avoid using brightly coloured markers, or other long-term survey equipment for surveying in sensitive areas.
- Conduct qualitative surveys with respect to other coastal users.

Remember to report hazards or unusual items such as canisters, drums or oil-affected birds to help authorities deal with problems quickly.

For **school field trips or organised groups** – see Thanet Coastal Code's Field Trip Code www.thanetcoast.org.uk/cgi-bin/buildpage.pl?mysql=47

Useful contacts

Canterbury Christ Church University College (CCCUC)

www.cant.ac.uk

01227 767700

Canterbury City Council

www.canterbury.gov.uk

01227 862 000: Foreshore: 01227 862533

Durrell Institute for Conservation and Ecology (DICE), University of Kent

www.kent.ac.uk/anthropology/dice/

01227 764000

Dover District Council

www.dover.gov.uk

01304 821199

Ecology Research Group (CCCUC)

<http://business-sciences.canterbury.ac.uk/geography-and-science/>

01227 782663

Emergency Services

www.emergencyservices-uk.com

999 – Coastguard, Ambulance, Police, Fire

English Nature – Kent Office

www.english-nature.org.uk

01233 812525

Environment Agency

www.environment-agency.gov.uk

0800 807060 – shore based hazardous pollution

Greenwich University

www.gre.ac.uk

020 8331 8000

Health and Safety Executive

www.hse.gov.uk

08701 545500

HM Coastguard, Dover

01304 210008 – shipping derived pollution/incidents (weather and tide information)

Kent and Essex Sea Fisheries Committee

01843 585310

Kent County Council

www.kent.gov.uk

08458 247247 (call centre)

Kent County Council – Coastal Officer
01622 221487

Kent County Council – Archaeology
01622 221541

Kent Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) Group
www.kentrigs.org.uk/

Kent Wildlife Trust
www.kentwildlife.org.uk/ (and www.wildlifetrusts.org/)
01622 662012

Joint Nature Conservation Committee
www.jncc.gov.uk

Marine Conservation Society
www.mcsuk.org/
01989 566017

Maritime and Coastguard Agency
www.mcagency.org.uk
0870 600 6505

Natural History Museum
www.nhm.ac.uk/
020 7942 5011

North East Kent Coastal Scientific Advisory Group
c/o Thanet Coast Project

Pegwell Bay Country Park
01843 851137 (or call Kent Wildlife Trust)
part of the Sandwich and Pegwell Bay NNR

Reculver Country Park Visitor Centre
01227 740676 – or call Kent Wildlife Trust

Royal Harbour Ramsgate/Marina
www.ramsgatemarina.co.uk
01843 572100 – Tides and harbour information

Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI)
www.rnli.org.uk
01202 663000

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
www.rspb.org.uk
01767 680551

RSPCA

www.rspca.org.uk

08705 555999 (Injured birds/animals)

Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory Trust (SBBOT)

www.sbbo.co.uk

01304 617341

Thanet Coast Project

www.thanetcoast.org.uk

01843 577672

Thanet District Council (TDC)

www.thanet.gov.uk

01843 577000 (call centre)

Thanet District Council – Foreshore manager

01843 577275 – other items/hazards (9am-5pm Mon-Fri)

Thanet District Council – Visitor Information Centres (Thanet)

www.tourism.thanet.gov.uk

01843 583333

Thanet Leisure Force

01843 227959 – Bay inspectors/lifeguards

Thanet Police

01843 231055 – Other suspicious activities

Thanet Seabird Rescue

01843 862632 – Oil affected seabirds

Thanet Water Users' Group: see TDC Foreshore Manager

University of Kent

www.kent.ac.uk

01227 764000 – see DICE

Reviewing the codes

These codes are voluntary. Individuals and groups are encouraged to support and help to review them from time to time.

Comments

If you would like to comment on any of the codes, please forward these to the Thanet Coast Project on thanet.coast@thanet.gov.uk or telephone 01843 577672, and your comments will be considered when the codes are next reviewed.



Produced by the North East Kent Coastal Scientific Advisory Group. February 2005.
The production of this document has been funded by English Nature.