

Introduction to the Kent Coast



The Kent Coast is one of the longest and most varied coastlines in England. It is not only home to many internationally important coastal habitats but also has the busiest passenger ferry port in Northern Europe and the largest installed offshore wind farm in the UK. The Kent coast has long been a popular tourist destination and offers many coastal and marine recreational opportunities. In addition, Kent's coast has played a vital role in England's history and many fine relics from its defensive past can still be seen today. However, Kent's coast is under pressure. Traditional coastal industries are in decline and many of the coastal towns are showing signs of deprivation. Coastal settlements are under additional threat from rising sea levels and an eroding coastline, and pressures for new housing is resulting in further urbanisation of the coast, threatening the natural coastal environment. It is therefore vital that all issues concerning the coast are holistically considered when addressing the management of this dynamic environment.

The Kent Coast Fact Sheets look at these issues, providing background information and facts and figures. Below is a selection of interesting facts for the Kent coast - to find out more, see overleaf for details of the Kent Coast Fact Sheets.

Kent Coast Facts and Figures

- Of the national coastal resources, Kent holds approximately 35% of the chalk, 16% of the saline lagoons and 40% of vegetated shingle.
- The 8km of undefended coastline between Dover and Kingsdown represents the best example of vegetated chalk cliff in the country.
- Nelson's flagship "The Victory" was built at Chatham Dockyard.
- Kent has one of the largest collections of wrecks off its shores in the country.
- In the past ten years, the sea level in Kent has risen by 115mm.
- In the 2003/04 financial year, over £18 million was invested in coastal defence in Kent.
- Almost a third of Kent's population lives in a coastal district.
- The 2004 indices of multiple deprivation showed all of Kent's coastal and estuary districts to have higher deprivation than the non-coastal districts.
- Total fisheries landings in Kent for 2003 were valued at £2.02 million.
- The values of fish and shellfish landings at Kent's ports have declined by 40% in the past five years.
- In 2004, there were 2,123 items of litter per km in Kent, a 28% reduction on the previous year.
- In Kent, beach users are the largest source of litter, contributing 45.25% of beach debris.
- 3 beaches in Kent have the Blue Flag (all in the Margate area), 17 beaches are a MCS Recommended Beach and 15 beaches have the ENCAMS Seaside Award.
- The first Kent offshore wind farm was commissioned in 2005, north of Whitstable and Herne Bay, and is the largest offshore installation in the UK.
- The Kentish Flats wind farm has an installed capacity of 90MW - enough energy for 70,000 homes.
- Dover Port is the largest international passenger ferry port and busiest ro-ro port in Northern Europe.
- Kent's tourism industry is worth over £6million to the county's economy and coastal towns contribute over 70% of this income.
- Kent has 27 designated bathing waters and, in 2005, 25 sites met the stricter guideline standard and all met the mandatory standard.

For more detailed information on the Kent coast see the Kent Coast Fact Sheets, available at: www.coastalkent.net/facts.php

Introduction to the Kent Coast

Providing some facts and figures for the Kent coast and an index of the Kent Coast Fact Sheets.

Biodiversity

Providing an introduction to biodiversity and the Kent Biodiversity Action Plan. The fact sheet also includes information on Kent's coastal habitats and the important coastal and marine biodiversity they support.

Coastal Heritage

Providing an overview of Kent's coastal heritage, including castles, wrecks and archaeology.

Coastal Management

A look at coastal erosion and sea level rise in Kent. The fact sheets also provides an overview of the management put in place including shoreline management plans, coastal strategies, coastal defence and the bodies responsible.

Coastal Towns

A look at the issues facings Kent's coastal towns, including deprivation, employment, population and property.

Fisheries

Providing an overview of Kent's fishing industry including values and weights of landings and an introduction to fisheries management.

Integrated Coastal Zone Management

An introduction to ICZM in Europe and the UK and a look at some of the bodies and organisations working along the ICZM process in Kent.

Marine and Coastal Litter

A review of coastal and marine litter in Kent. The fact sheet also provides details of beach award schemes and the Kent beaches that have met their criteria.

Offshore Renewable Energy

Providing an introduction to renewable energy, focussing on offshore wind farms, including details of current and proposed offshore wind farms for Kent.

Ports

A look at the important role that ports play in the local economy and trends in port traffic. The fact sheet also provides an overview of Kent's main commercial ports.

Recreation

A look at the coastal and marine recreational opportunities in Kent.

Tourism

A look at Kent's tourism industry and the importance of the coast to this economy, particularly in relation to wealth generation, provision of accommodation and transport links across the Channel.

Water Quality

A look at water quality, pollution effects and monitoring efforts. The fact sheet also provides details of designated bathing waters in Kent and the results for 2004.

Further information:

- www.coastalkent.net/facts.php
- www.vliz.be/projects/SAIL/

