

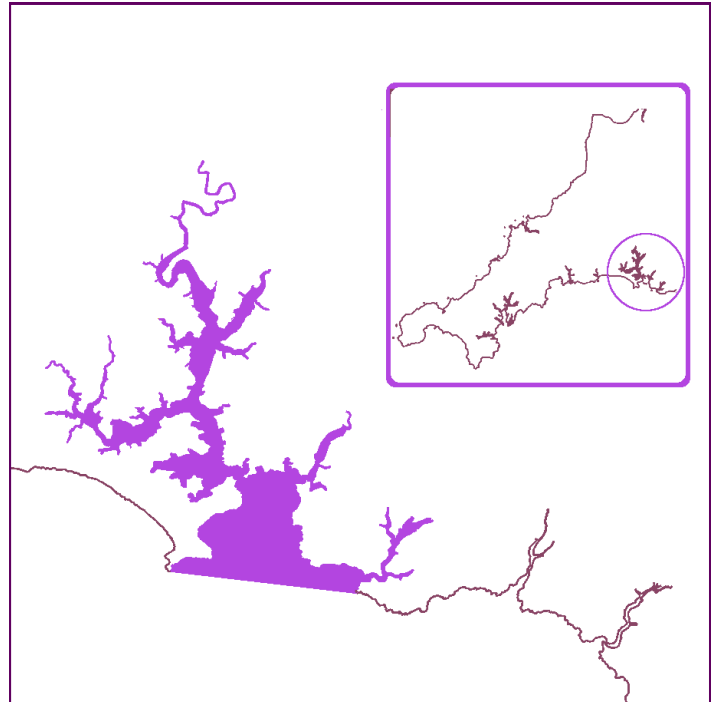
Plymouth Sound and Estuaries SAC (Special Area of Conservation)

Main site areas:

Sea inlets (50%)
 Tidal rivers. Estuaries. Mud flats. Sand flats.
 Lagoons (including saltwork basins) (40%)
 Salt marshes. Salt pastures. Salt steppes (5%)
 Coastal sand dunes. Sand beaches. Machair
 (2%)

Plymouth Sound and Estuaries SAC is located on the south coast of England and straddles the border between Devon and Cornwall. Plymouth Sound and its associated tributaries comprise a complex site of marine inlets. The high diversity of reef and sedimentary habitats, and salinity conditions, give rise to diverse communities representative of ria systems and some unusual features. These features include abundant southern Mediterranean-Atlantic species rarely found in Britain. It is also the only known spawning site for the Allis shad (*Alosa alosa*).

The site is of particular importance for its reef communities which are home to a number of species of note. The nationally rare sponge (*Dysidea pallescens*) and the Weymouth carpet coral (*Hoplangia durotrix*) are found on sublittoral reefs in the site. Nationally scarce species; pink sea fan (*Eunicella verrucosa*), trumpet anemone (*Aiptasia mutabilis*), latticed corklet anemone (*Cataphellia brodricii*), scarlet and gold star coral (*Balanophyllia regia*) and orange light seasquirt (*Pycnoclavella aurilucens*) have all been recorded on reefs in the site. The nationally scarce hydroid (*Hartlaubella gelatinosa*) forms clumps on mixed substrata in the upper Tamar estuary.



Plymouth Sound and Estuaries SAC falls within the jurisdiction of both Cornwall IFCA and Devon and Severn IFCA.

Devon and Severn IFCA: <http://www.devonandsevernifca.gov.uk/>

More information: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/protectedsites/sacselection/sac.asp?EUCode=UK0030374>

Relevant Cornwall IFCA Byelaws: [Closed area \(European Marine Sites\) No.2](#)

Habitats that are the primary reason for selection of this site
Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time
Estuaries
Large shallow inlets and bays
Reefs
Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>)
Habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site
Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide
Species that are a primary reason for selection of this site
Shore dock
Species that are a primary reason for selection of this site
Allis shad