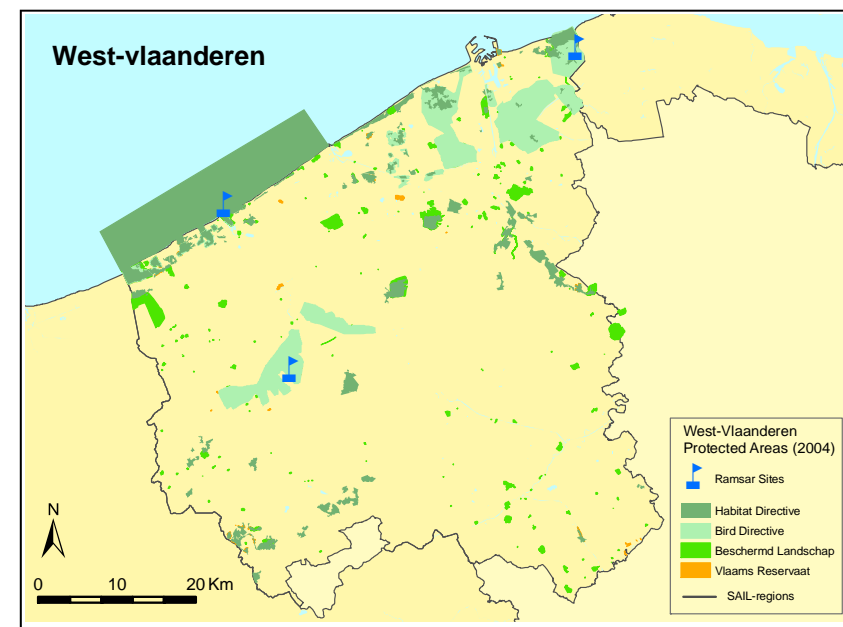
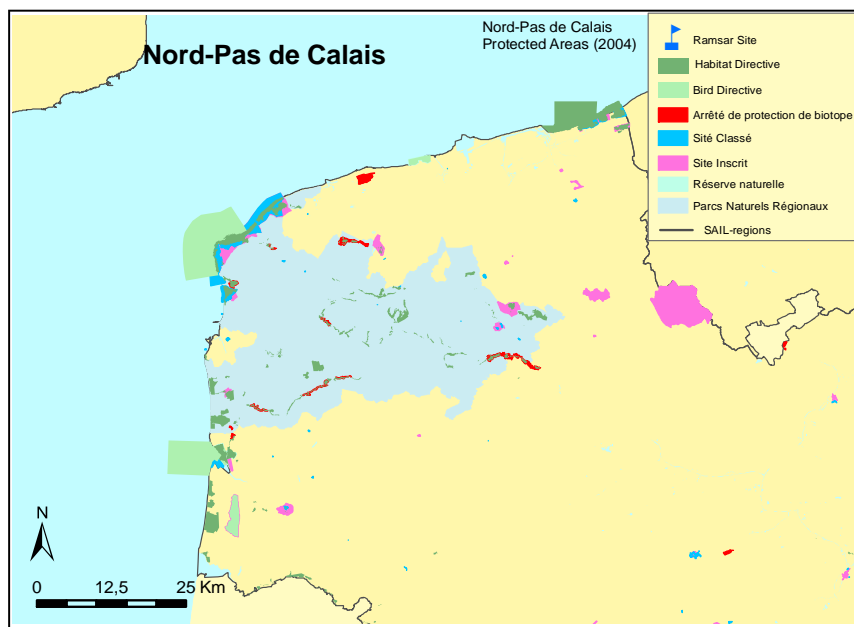
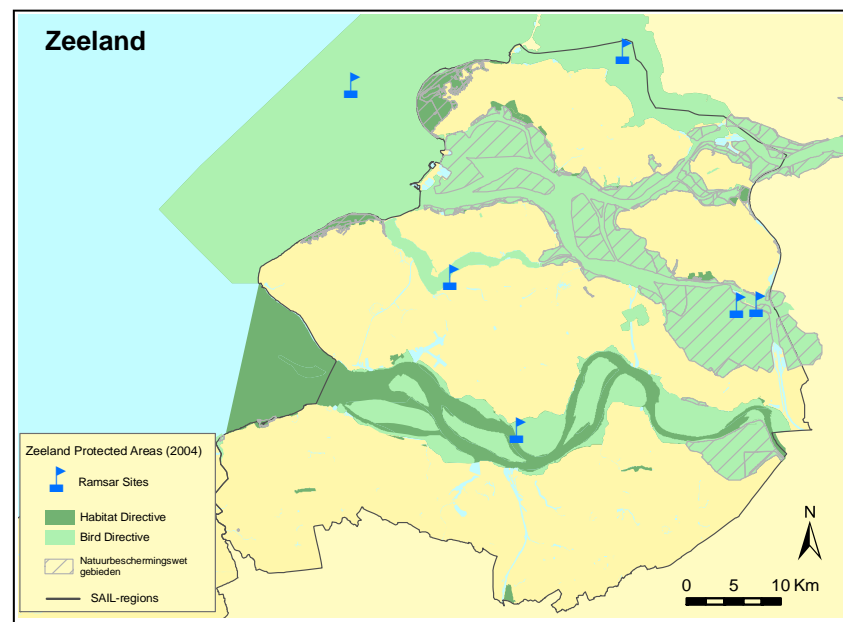
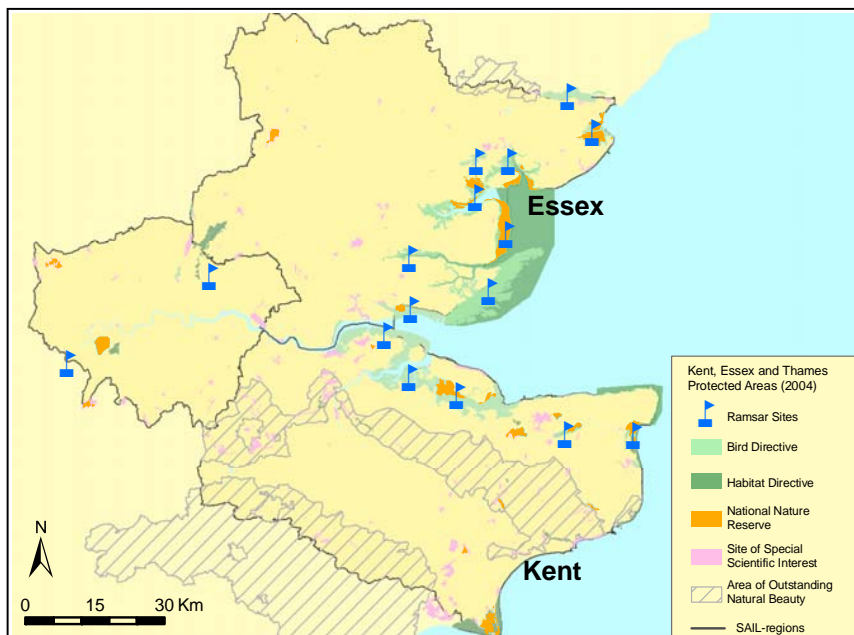


Indicator 6 Area of land and sea protected by statutory designations



- *Area of international statutory designations for nature conservation*
- *Area of European statutory designations for nature conservation (Habitats & Birds Directive areas known as Natura 2000 network)*
- *Area of national and regional statutory designations for nature conservation*
- *Number of statutory designations for the conservation of cultural heritage*

Key Message

- Relatively speaking, the coast is of greater significance than hinterland areas for the protection and conservation of habitats and species of international importance. The Natura 2000 network in the Southern North Sea covers a larger proportion of the coastal area (19%) compared to the hinterland (4%). Zeeland has the largest share of Ramsar Wetland areas and Natura 2000 network in the SAIL region. Natura 2000 sites covers 56% of its coastal zone.
- In Kent and Essex, the coastal zones clearly play a major role in the conservation of priority species and habitats; both European and national statutory designations have a higher percentage of coverage at the coast than in the hinterlands.

Why monitor the area of land and sea protected by statutory designations?

The protection of our natural and cultural heritage is an important objective both at a national and international level. International and European legal frameworks such as the Ramsar Convention (1971), the EU Birds Directive (1979) and the Habitats Directive (1992), oblige Member States to protect areas of land and sea for the conservation of species and habitats which are of EU Community interest.

Area of land and sea protected by statutory designations

In addition, the SAIL countries have developed their own system of designations which provide protection to species and habitats that acquire importance at the local and regional scale. Statutory designations are supported by legal commitments and exclude the 'soft' protection provided by spatial planning.

Statutory designations offer some guarantee against undesirable changes in land use or human activities that could reduce the natural or cultural value. If managed properly, they are a tool for maintaining and restoring existing ecosystems and species. Furthermore, protected sites have a socio-educational function and provide possibilities for recreational usage.

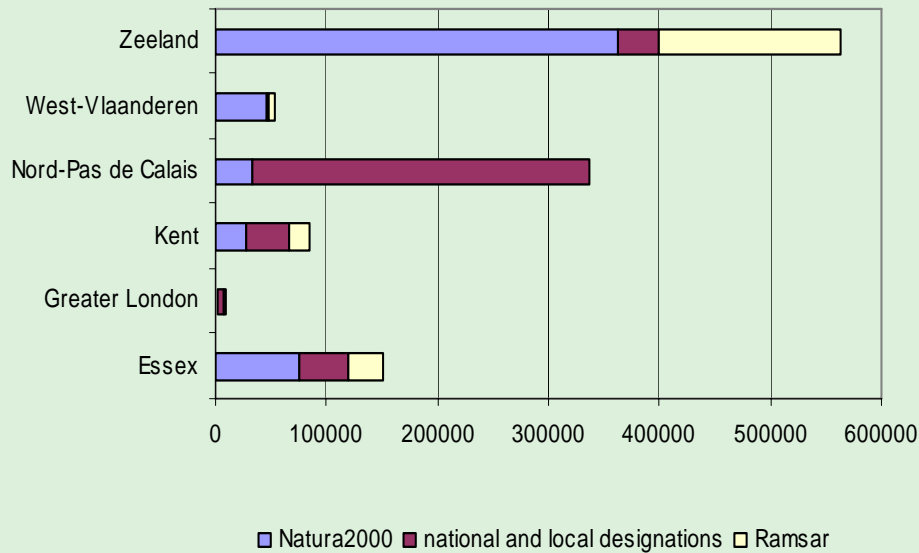
This measurement evaluates the relative importance of the coastal zone in achieving the conservation purposes of specified priority habitat and species at the European, national and local level.

UNESCO Heritage sites in the SAIL region		
Name	Date of Inscription	Region
Béguinage de Bruges (Brugge)*	1998	West-Vlaanderen
Béguinage de Kortrijk (Courtrail)	1998	West-Vlaanderen
Belfort en Hallen*	1999	West-Vlaanderen
Canterbury Cathedral, St Augustine's Abbey, and St Martin's Church	1988	Kent
Historic Centre of Brugge*	2000	West-Vlaanderen
Maritime Greenwich*	1997	Greater London
Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew	2003	Greater London
Tower of London*	1988	Greater London
Westminster Palace, Westminster Abbey and Saint Margaret's Church	1987	Greater London

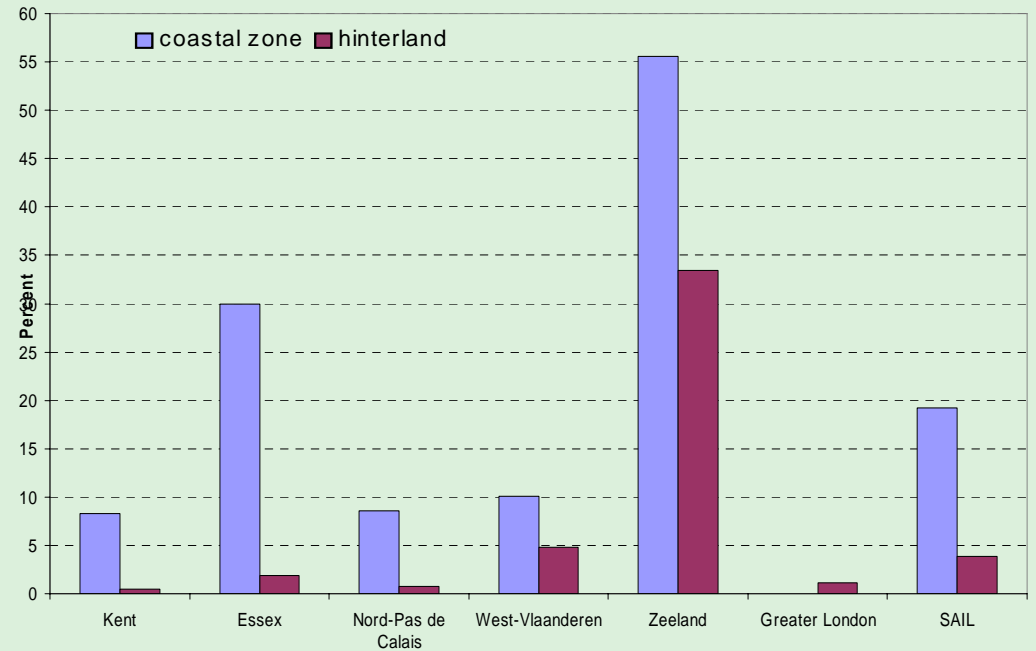
* UNESCO Heritage sites located in the coastal zone

* Belfort en Hallen*: includes 8 sites in France and Belgium

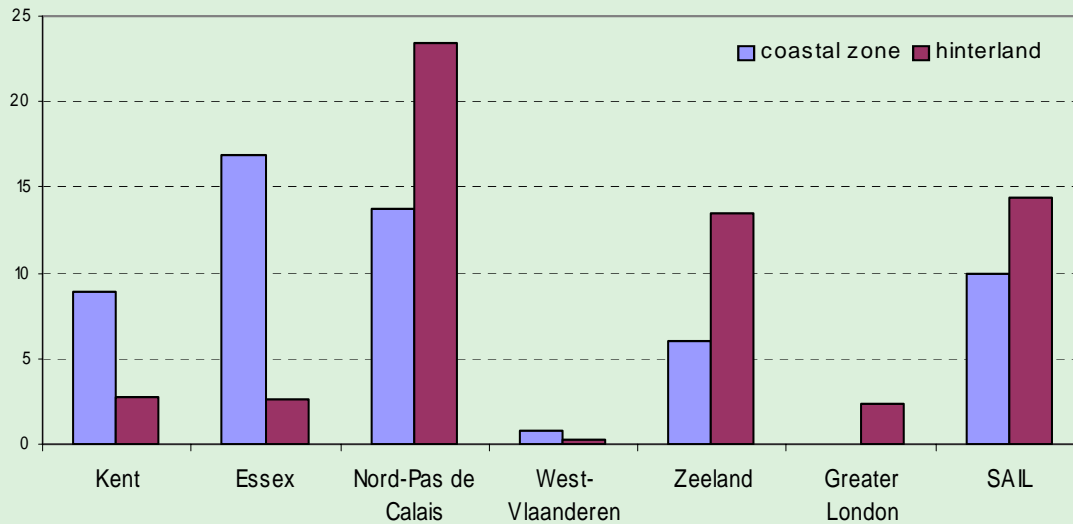
Total area protected (ha) in the SAIL sub-regions by type of designation (2004)



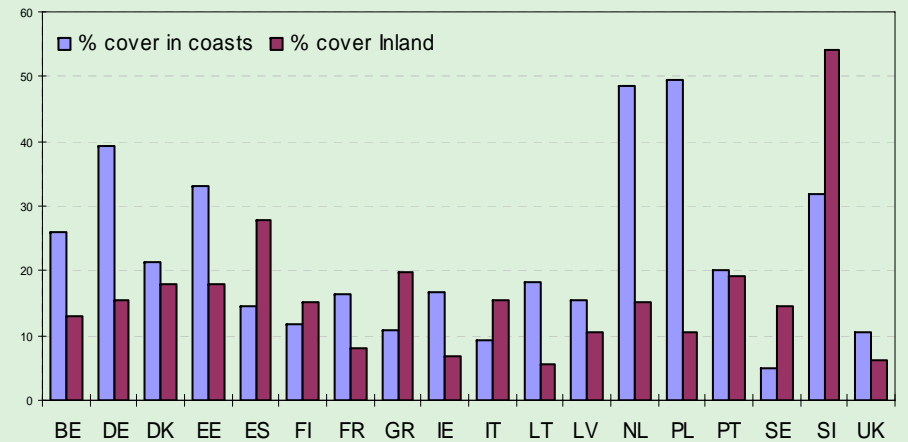
Percentage of coverage by Natura 2000 in the SAIL sub-regions (2004)



Percentage of coverage by national and local statutory designations in the SAIL sub-regions (2004)



Natura 2000 in coastal and inland zones EU countries source: pSCIs and SCIs database, March 2005, ETC/BD



Where do the data come from?

Spatial data for the Natura 2000 network and Ramsar were provided by the national environmental authorities. For further analysis at the SAIL level: English Nature in the U.K., the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature, Management and Fisheries (MinLNV), the Institute for Nature and Forest Research (INBO) in Belgium, and DIREN-Ministry of Ecology and Sustainable Development in France.

Data for protection categories at the local and regional level were provided by a wide number of officially recognized sources. Due to the differences in definitions and methodologies, an inventory of designations, protection levels and objectives is a helpful tool prior to analysis (see Metadata).

What does the indicator show?

In the Southern North Sea, the total area covered by the Natura 2000 network is 545,489ha (overlapping Habitats and Birds designations). The percentage of the coverage of Natura 2000 in the coastal zone is nearly 5 times higher than in the wider region.

Within the SAIL region, Ramsar sites are mostly located in the marine and coastal zone; 217,685ha are 'marine' wetlands of international importance, while only 3,086ha correspond to wetlands located inland. There are no Ramsar designations located yet in Nord-Pas de Calais, although efforts are underway to expand the Ramsar Somme Estuary in Picardie northwards to include the Bay d'Authie in Nord-Pas de Calais.

The Natura 2000 network of 361,921 ha covers 56% of the coastal zone in Zeeland. It contributes 67% of the total Natura 2000 network in the SAIL region. Nearly half of this area is also protected under the Wetland Convention (165,150ha), 74% of the share in the total Ramsar designated wetlands in the SAIL region.

Regional and national statutory protected areas for nature conservation cover 429,640 ha within the SAIL region. Although Nord-Pas de Calais contributes only modestly to the Natura 2000 network (6%), it accounts for the largest surface area of regionally and nationally protected area with 304,187ha, or 71% of the total regional/national designations in the Southern North Sea.

In Essex, 30% of the coastal zone is protected by Natura 2000 compared to only 2% in the wider sub-region. Except for Kent and Essex, the national and regional statutory protected areas cover a slightly larger proportion of the hinterland (14%) compared to the coast (10%). In the

UK, the designation of the EU Natura 2000 is largely based on the national conservation category Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI).

There is a plethora of definitions, categories and procedures for statutory designations for cultural heritage in the countries bordering the Southern North Sea. Many of these designations combine cultural and natural elements in the criteria for eligibility. The "Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty"(AONB) is an important category in Kent (High Weald and Kent Downs) and Essex (Dedham Vale). In England, 'Heritage Coast' is a specific designation for coastal landscapes; the White Cliffs of Dover are a national symbol. "Site classé" and "site inscrit" in Nord-Pas de Calais (118) also include cultural and natural elements. Protected landscapes in rural and urban (villages) areas are well-represented designations for cultural heritage in Zeeland (14) and West-Vlaanderen (463 elements- 6760ha).

Some of the World Heritage sites (UNESCO) in the Southern North Sea are major tourist attractions; the Tower of London and Westminster Palace, Maritime Greenwich, the Béguinages of Flanders, the Belfort and the historic centre of Bruges, are just a few examples. More than half of these sites are located in the coastal zone.



Area of land and sea protected by statutory designations



What are the implications for planning and managing the coast?

The strong legal provisions of the Habitats and Birds Directives oblige Member States to integrate the requirements of the conservation targets. For sites of international significance, designations cannot be modified except in cases of 'overriding public interest'. This has halted further development of coastal and estuarine sites, at least where natural values of priority at the EU level have been identified. Also, the integration of 'Favourable Conservation Status' (FCS), into sectoral policies and the delivery of common criteria for measuring FCS represent an enormous effort to level standards for effective management and conservation of species and habitats of community interest, among Member States.

The area of newly designated habitat has levelled off in Western Europe during the last decade. Increasing demand for intensive land-use has diminished the remaining semi-natural areas available for conservation. On the other hand, concern for biodiversity is becoming more and more integrated into sector policies. Agro-environmental schemes and sustainable forestry policies are new mechanisms that contribute to halt the decline of biodiversity.

The indicator also addresses the 6th Environmental Action Plan and the European Community Biodiversity Strategy, both requiring the protection and conservation of natural and semi-natural habitats and wild animal and plant species.

The World Heritage site, established by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is the best known international system for the protection of cultural heritage. UNESCO seeks to encourage the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity. This is embodied in an international treaty called the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted by UNESCO in 1972.

In addition, each country has developed its own system of designation-types for both natural and cultural heritage areas and sites. This allows countries to set their own priorities for protecting local values, while contributing to the implementation of international and EU legal frameworks.

How reliable is the indicator?

The indicator reflects the importance of the coastal zone in achieving conservation purposes at the European, (inter) national and local level. For the purpose of calculating the total area and percentage of coverage of designations, the 'coastal zone' was arbitrarily defined as a buffer of 20km land-and seawards from the coastline.

Official digital shapes of the Natura 2000 network and national/local categories were utilized to calculate the area of designated sites in this coastal buffer. Different designations, established to target different conservation purposes, may overlap in one particular site. Therefore, the area of land and sea protected under cumulative statutory designations may differ from the sum of the totals for each category. The inventory may also be underestimated because the spatial data do not always fully represent the current legal situation of the designations.

Further reading

EEA (2003) Europe's environment: the third assessment. Environment Assessment Reports no 10.

Chape, S. (2003) Monitoring global commitment. World Conservation, no 2:8-9.

<http://www.iucn.org/bookstore/Bulletin/Vth-WPC.htm>

EC Birds and Habitats Directives

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/nature/legis.htm>

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

<http://www.ramsar.org>

IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas

<http://www.uicn.org/themes/wcpa/wpc2003/>

