

TWO BAYS

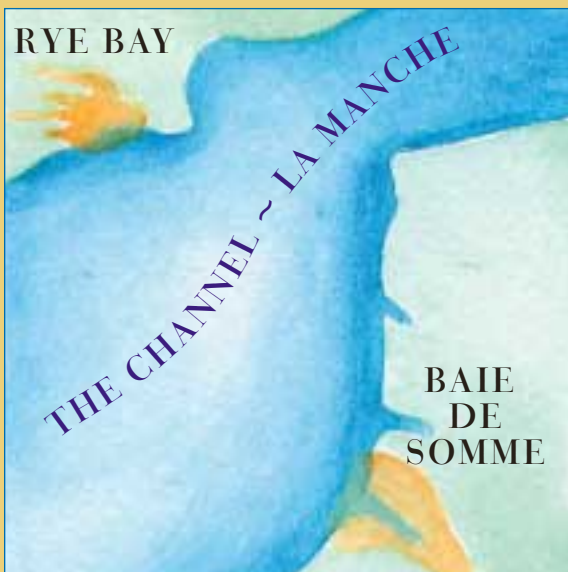
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The Two Bays initiative is a new wildlife project that aims to study and enhance the habitats and species in the Rye Bay area and across the Channel in the Baie de Somme, Picardy, France.

This approach to nature conservation recognises that wildlife does not occur in isolation and moves across borders into neighbouring countries.

The project has four main objectives:

- Identify the main habitats present and the potential for habitat enhancement.
- Study and record the wildlife and maintain a wildlife database (already more than 6000 species).
- Encourage farmers and landowners to manage areas for wildlife and apply for suitable grants, to fund the work.
- Promote understanding of the environmental importance of the Two Bays.



TWO BAYS

one environment

For further information please contact:

Rye Harbour Nature Reserve
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East Sussex TN36 4LU

Visit the Two Bays web site:

www.yates.clara.net



Saltmarsh at Rye Harbour

This project is part funded by the European Community European Regional Development Fund through INTERREG II.

The English lead partner is East Sussex County Council. Other partners: Environment Agency, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, English Nature, Sussex Wildlife Trust, Wetland Trust, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, Sussex Ornithological Society, Rye Harbour Nature Reserve Management Committee, The Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve. The French lead partner is the Syndicat Mixte pour l'Aménagement de la Côte Picarde (SMACOPI).



SMACOPI

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Saltmarsh



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Saltmarsh

Rye

Saltmarsh areas

In Rye Bay, saltmarsh is found along the tidal channels of the rivers Rother, Brede and Tillingham. In some sections it is restricted to a small fringe of vegetation. Historically much of the Romney Marshes was saltmarsh before being drained for agricultural land. Saltmarsh is now declining because of rising sea levels. Fortunately, it can be re-created and this has been carried out at Rye Harbour Nature Reserve.



Grazed saltmarsh near Rye

Saltmarsh forms where sediment is deposited by sea water in sheltered areas. As the mud builds up, salt tolerant plants slowly colonise, which in turn traps more mud and so the saltmarsh gets still higher. Creeks wind their way through the saltmarsh. Saltmarshes are dynamic systems, some areas grow while others are washed away, especially in winter when rough waves remove sediment.

Rye Bay and the Baie de Somme support similar habitats and species. Saltmarsh wildlife survives regular flooding by the sea.



Marsh-mallow

Plants which grow on these marshes can withstand being covered with salt water up to twice daily. Different species grow on low and high areas within the marsh, forming zones of vegetation. Many special plants can be seen in Rye Bay, including Sea-heath, Marsh-mallow and Sea Aster. One plant formerly present in Rye Bay is Sea-lavender, but it can still be seen in the Baie de Somme.

Invertebrate life is very rich in saltmarshes. Uncommon species such as Star-wort moth and Saltmarsh Bee are found in this habitat. This makes saltmarsh areas rich feeding grounds for birds such as Redshank and Rock Pipit.



Redshank

Calais



C. Chambers

Sea-lavender and Glasswort

Saltmarsh is often grazed by sheep and cattle. Grazing can alter the species which form the saltmarsh, especially if it is grazed intensively. In the Baie de Somme, saltmarsh-grazed sheep is a local delicacy (labelled "Estran"). Other animals which feed on saltmarsh plants include hares and geese.

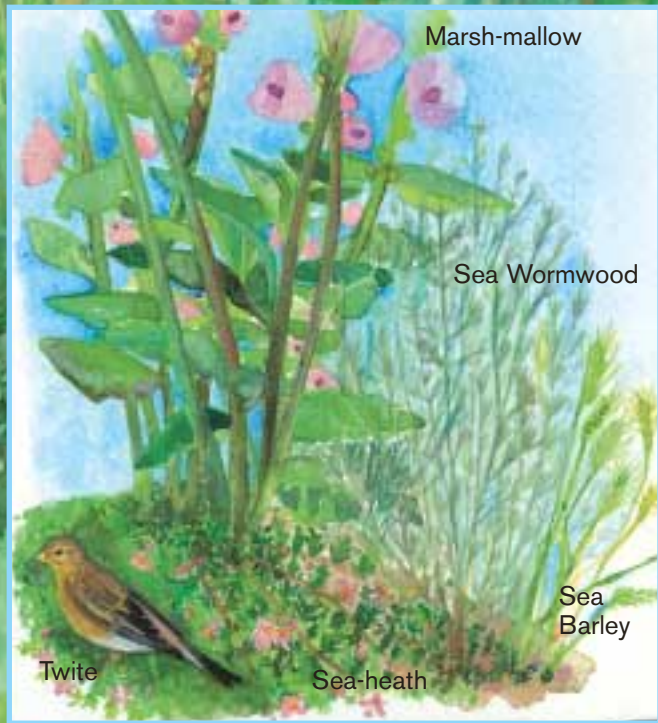


Sheep grazing saltmarsh

In the Baie de Somme this habitat is much more widespread. Large saltmarshes form where the rivers Somme and Authie meet the sea.

St Valery sur Somme

A. Sourmia



Marsh-mallow

Sea Wormwood

Twite

Sea-heath

Sea Barley

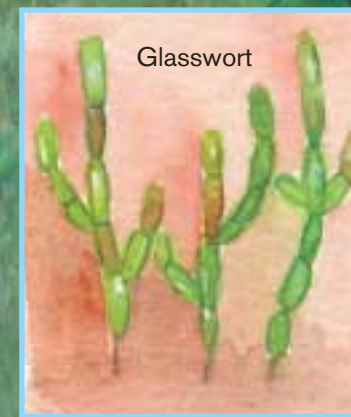
The **highest zone** of saltmarsh is rarely covered by salt water. In Rye Bay this vegetation is mainly restricted to the flood banks.



Saltmarsh Bee

Star-wort moth

A saltmarsh Hoverfly



Glasswort

Brown Hare

In the **middle zone** of the saltmarsh Sea-purslane dominates. This area is periodically inundated with salt water.



Sea Aster

Sea-purslane



Cord-grass

Annual Sea-blite



Sea-spurrey

Few plants can survive in the **lowest zone** of saltmarsh which is covered by every tide.

Saltmarsh Wildlife



Yellow Wagtail



Brent Goose

When saltmarsh is **grazed** it becomes dominated by grasses and tiny flowering plants.

