

An aerial photograph of a rugged coastline. The sea is a deep blue-green color, with white foam from waves crashing against dark, rocky outcrops. The cliffs are steep and covered in patches of green grass and brown earth. The sky is a clear, pale blue with a few wispy clouds. The overall scene is one of natural beauty and coastal drama.

Seascape Character Assessment for North Devon and Exmoor

**User Guide
November 2015**



Content of this presentation

- Background to this study and key definitions
- Overview of Seascape Character
- The Seascape Character classification
- How to use the Seascape Character Area profiles
- Understanding the visual resource provided by the North Devon and Exmoor seascapes



Background to the study



- **LUC commissioned by a partnership** comprising the National Trust, North Devon AONB, North Devon Council, Torridge District Council, Exmoor NPA and Natural England (June-Nov 2015)
- **Study area** stretches from Marsland Mouth on the Cornish border to the Exmoor NP boundary at Minehead (approx 90 miles). Includes the Taw/Torridge Estuary
- **Also extends offshore** to the national marine planning limits (12 nautical miles), including Lundy Island



North Devon & Exmoor Seascape Character Assessment

Figure 1.1: Study Area Context

- Study Area
 - Local Authority boundary
 - Heritage Coast
 - Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
 - National Park
 - National Trust properties
- Elevation (m)**
- High : 1345.4
 - Low : -119.8

Map Scale @ A3: 1:435,000

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Aim and objectives of the North Devon & Exmoor Seascape Character Assessment



Overall aim to provide a spatial framework, description and analysis of Seascape Character Areas and Seascape Character Types to:

- **Assist in spatial planning** – development at sea and along the coast (including renewables)
- **Feed into the SW marine planning process** which will take place within the next 5 years
- **Help define the 'special qualities'** of the coast and seascape
- **Provide evidence** for future AONB, National Park and National Trust **management plans**
- Support and link to published **Landscape Character Assessments**

What is 'Seascape'?



The UK Marine Policy Statement (2011) recommends that:

"...references to seascape should be taken as meaning landscapes with views of the coast or seas, and coasts and the adjacent marine environment with cultural, historical and archaeological links with each other"

Natural England has taken the above definition in the context of seascape 'character' (in line with the European Landscape Convention definition for 'landscape'):

"An area of sea, coastline and land, as perceived by people, whose character results from the actions and interactions of land with sea, by natural and/or human factors".

What is 'Seascape'?



Aspects that can influence character include:

- Geological bedrock and shifting sediments
- Changing weather patterns, tides and coastal processes
- Ecology – flora and fauna (e.g. sea bird colonies)
- Activities – past (e.g. wars, overseas trade) and present (e.g. fishing, transportation, recreation)
- Views to and from the sea and coast
- Experiences and associations (e.g. notorious wrecking sites)

The seascapes 'wheel' (Natural England, 2012)



Consistent with best practice

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Natural England Commissioned Report NECR105

An Approach to Seascape Character Assessment

First published 11 October 2012

www.naturalengland.org.uk

NATURAL
ENGLAND



Marine
Management
Organisation

Seascape
assessment for
the South Marine
Plan Areas:
technical report



Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

Seascape Character Assessment



Overview of seascape character



North Devon & Exmoor Seascape Character Assessment

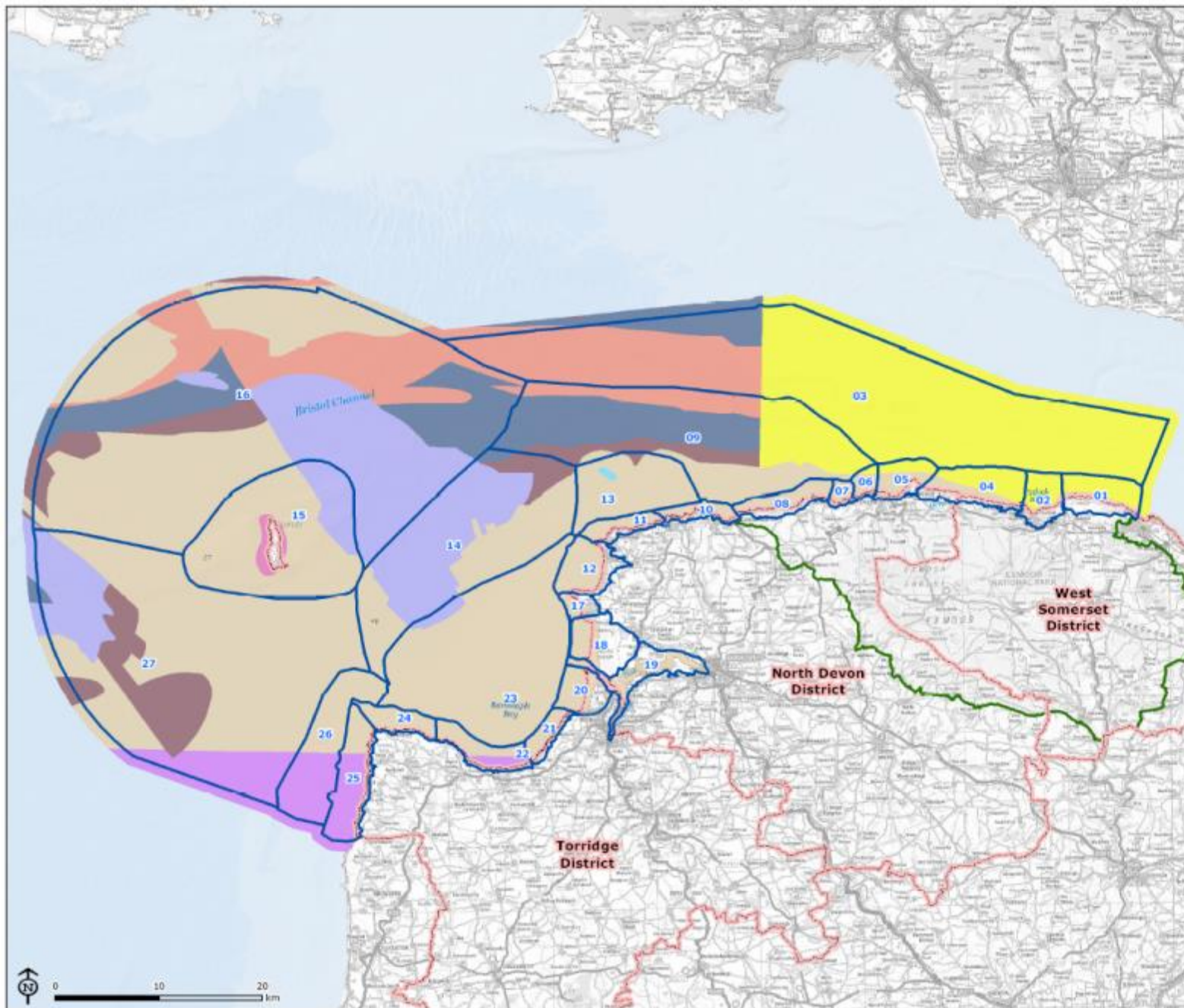
**Figure 3.1: Offshore Bedrock
Geology**

- Local Authority boundary
- Exmoor National Park
- Seascape Character Areas
- 01: Minehead Harbour to Hurlstone Point
- 02: Porlock Bay
- 03: Central Bristol Channel
- 04: Gore Point to Countisbury Cove
- 05: The Foreland and Lynmouth Bay
- 06: Valley of Rocks
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- 17: Croyde Bay & Baggy Point
- 18: Braunton Burrows and Saunton Coast
- 19: Taw-Torridge Estuary
- 20: Northam Burrows and Westward Ho!
- 21: Abbotsham Coast
- 22: Clovelly Coast
- 23: Inner Sidford Bay
- 24: Hartland North Coast
- 25: Hartland Atlantic Coast
- 26: Hartland Race

- Offshore bedrock geology
- Clay, sandstone and limestone
 - Metamorphic rocks
 - Granite
 - Mudstone
 - Mudstone and halite
 - Mudstone and lignite
 - Mudstone and limestone
 - Mudstone and sandstone
 - Mudstone, sandstone and limestone

Map Scale @ A3: 1:360,000

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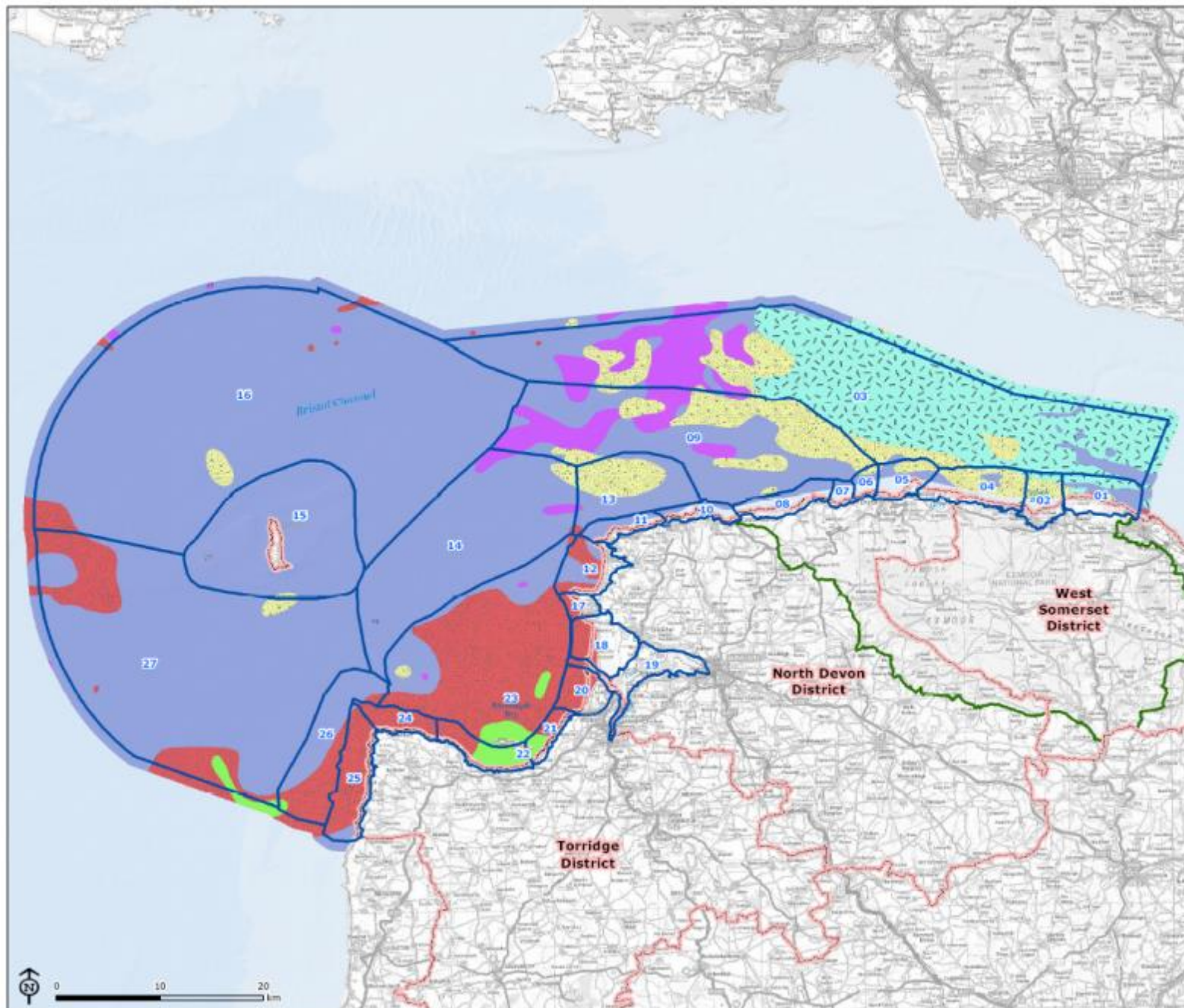
North Devon & Exmoor Seascape Character Assessment

**Figure 3.2: Offshore Sediment
Geology**

- Local Authority boundary
 - Exmoor National Park
 - Seascape Character Areas
 - 01: Minehead Harbour to Hurlstone Point
 - 02: Porlock Bay
 - 03: Central Bristol Channel
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 - 20: Northam Burrows and Westward Ho!
 - 21: Abbotsham Coast
 - 22: Clovelly Coast
 - 23: Inner Bideford Bay
 - 24: Hartland North Coast
 - 25: Hartland Atlantic Coast
 - 26: Hartland Race
 - 27: Lundy South
- Sediment Geology**
- Gravel
 - Mud
 - Mud and sand
 - Rock
 - Sand
 - Sand and gravel
 - Sand, gravel, mud

Map Scale @ A3: 1:360,000

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North Devon & Exmoor Seascape Character Assessment

Figure 3.3: Seabed Habitats

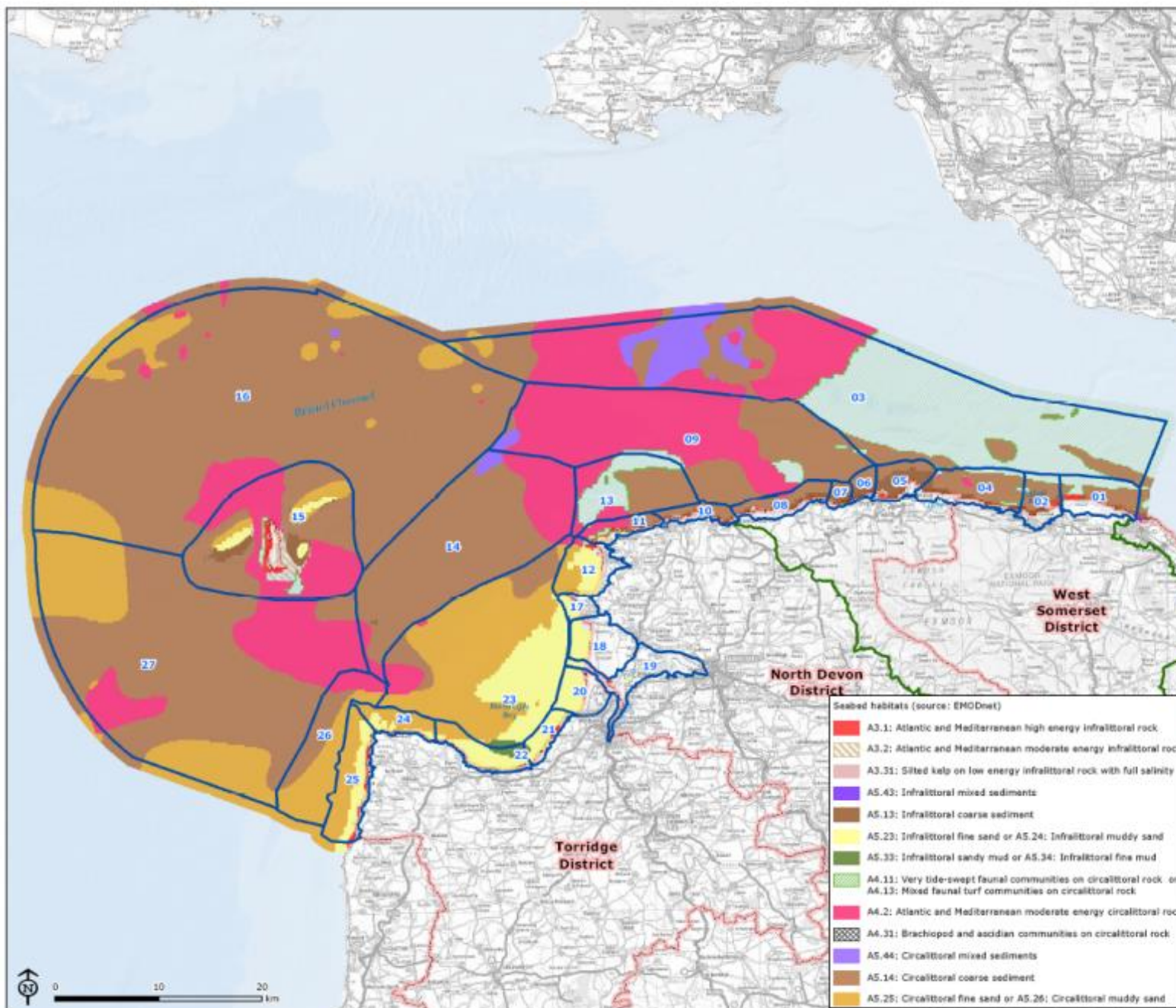
- Local Authority boundary
 Exmoor National Park
 Seascape Character Areas
- 01: Minehead Harbour to Hurlstone Point
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Seabed habitats (source: EMODnet)

- A3.1: Atlantic and Mediterranean high energy infralittoral rock
- A3.2: Atlantic and Mediterranean moderate energy infralittoral rock
- A3.31: Silted kelp on low energy infralittoral rock with full salinity
- A5.43: Infralittoral mixed sediments
- A5.13: Infralittoral coarse sediment
- A5.23: Infralittoral fine sand or A5.24: Infralittoral muddy sand
- A5.33: Infralittoral sandy mud or A5.34: Infralittoral fine mud
- A4.11: Very tide-swept faunal communities on circalittoral rock, or A4.13: Mixed faunal turf communities on circalittoral rock
- A4.2: Atlantic and Mediterranean moderate energy circalittoral rock
- A4.31: Brachiopod and ascidian communities on circalittoral rock
- A5.44: Circalittoral mixed sediments
- A5.14: Circalittoral coarse sediment
- A5.25: Circalittoral fine sand or A5.26: Circalittoral muddy sand

Map Scale @ A3: 1:360,000

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North Devon & Exmoor Seascape Character Assessment

Figure 3.4: Environmental Designations

- Exmoor National Park**
- Seascape Character Areas**
- 01: Minehead Harbour to Hurlstone Point
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Inset map: Lundy Island

Types of designations:

- SAC & SAC with Marine Components
- Marine Protected Area
- Marine Conservation Zone
- SSSI
- Biosphere Reserve

Offshore designations

- SACs with Marine Components
- Marine Protection Areas (OSPAR)
- North Devon Biosphere Reserve (onshore as well)
- Marine Conservation Zone
- Designated
- Recommended

Onshore designations

- Special Areas of Conservation
- National Nature Reserve
- Local Nature Reserve
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Inset Map Scale @ A3: 1:140,000
Map Scale @ A3: 1:360,000

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North Devon & Exmoor Seascape Character Assessment

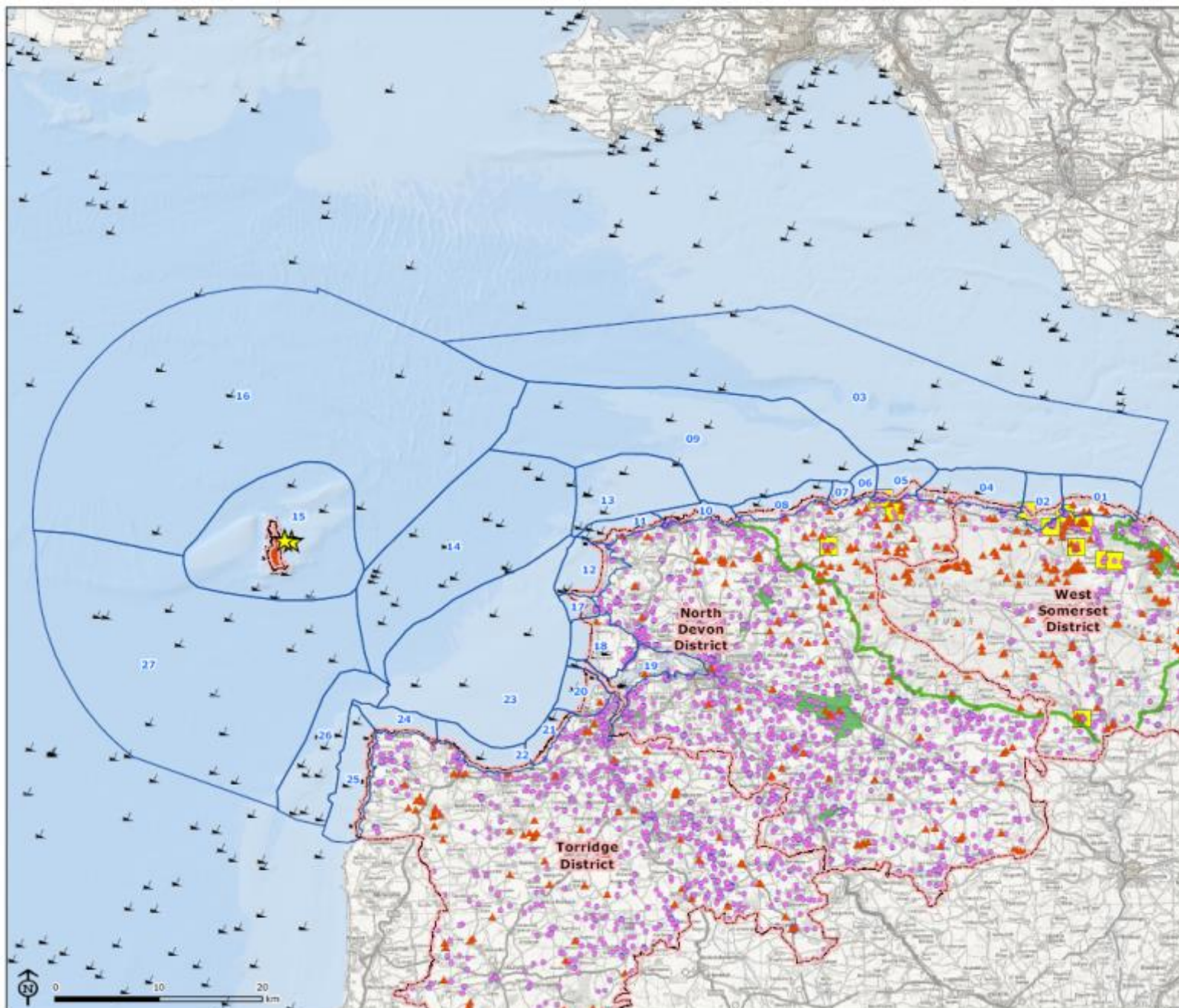
**Figure 3.5: Historic
Features/Designations**

- Local Authority boundaries
- Exmoor National Park
- Seascape Character Areas
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- Heritage designations**
- Listed Buildings
 - ★ Protected wreck
 - ✶ Wreck
 - ▲ Scheduled Monuments
 - Conservation Area
 - Registered Parks & Gardens

Map Scale @ A3: 1:360,000

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The Seascape Character Classification

- **Seascape Character Areas**
- **Seascape Character Types**
- **Link with Landscape Character Assessments**

Definition of Seascape Character Areas (SCAs) and Seascape Character Types (SCTs)



Seascape Character Areas (SCAs)

Single areas of seascape, each with its own unique character and identity.

27 SCAs have been identified for this study

Seascape Character Types (SCTs)

Distinct types of seascape that are relatively homogenous in character. They may occur in more than one Seascape Character Area.

27 SCTs have been identified for this study

Compatible with existing Landscape Character Assessments



JOINT LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT FOR NORTH DEVON & TORRIDGE DISTRICTS

Prepared for North Devon & Torridge District Councils, Devon County Council
and
Natural England

by
Land Use Consultants

November 2010

Exmoor Landscape Character Assessment

Commissioned by Exmoor National Park Authority

Prepared by Emma Jane Preece
July 2007

Available from Exmoor National Park Authority
Exmoor House, Dulverton, Somerset, TA22 9HL

www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk

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devon's landscape
character assessment

- Meet the NDABS team
- Biodiversity
- Walking and Cycling
- Coasts
- Volunteers
- Country Parks and Nature Reserves
- Events & Guided Walks
- Press Releases
- Estuaries
- Flooding Emergencies
- Biosphere

Devon's Landscape

- Landscape and UNESCO designations
- Projects
- Tarka Trail
- Geology
- Wildlife and Geology
- Planning Guidance

Devon's Landscape

Devon's landscape character assessment



Devon's landscape character assessment describes the variations in character between different areas and types of landscape in the county. It provides an evidence base for local development frameworks and plans, articulating what people perceive as distinctive and special about all landscapes in Devon. It also sets out strategies and guidelines for the protection, management and planning of the landscape.

You might be interested in...

A map of Landscape Character Types that covers the geographical county of Devon (excluding Exmoor National Park) is now available. The map merges together the maps produced by each Devon planning authority as part of its local Stage 2 landscape character assessment. Preparation of the map has involved collaborative working between officers of neighbouring authorities and Devon County Council through the Devon Landscape Policy Group.

Work has focused on ironing out inconsistencies across administrative boundaries and ensuring a consistent naming and numbering system based on a shared **Menu and key characteristics of Landscape Character Types in Devon** (71KB - pdf help). The map will allow each planning authority to update their landscape character assessment evidence base to achieve full cross-boundary consistency.



...the qualities that make Exmoor special

Printed on recycled paper

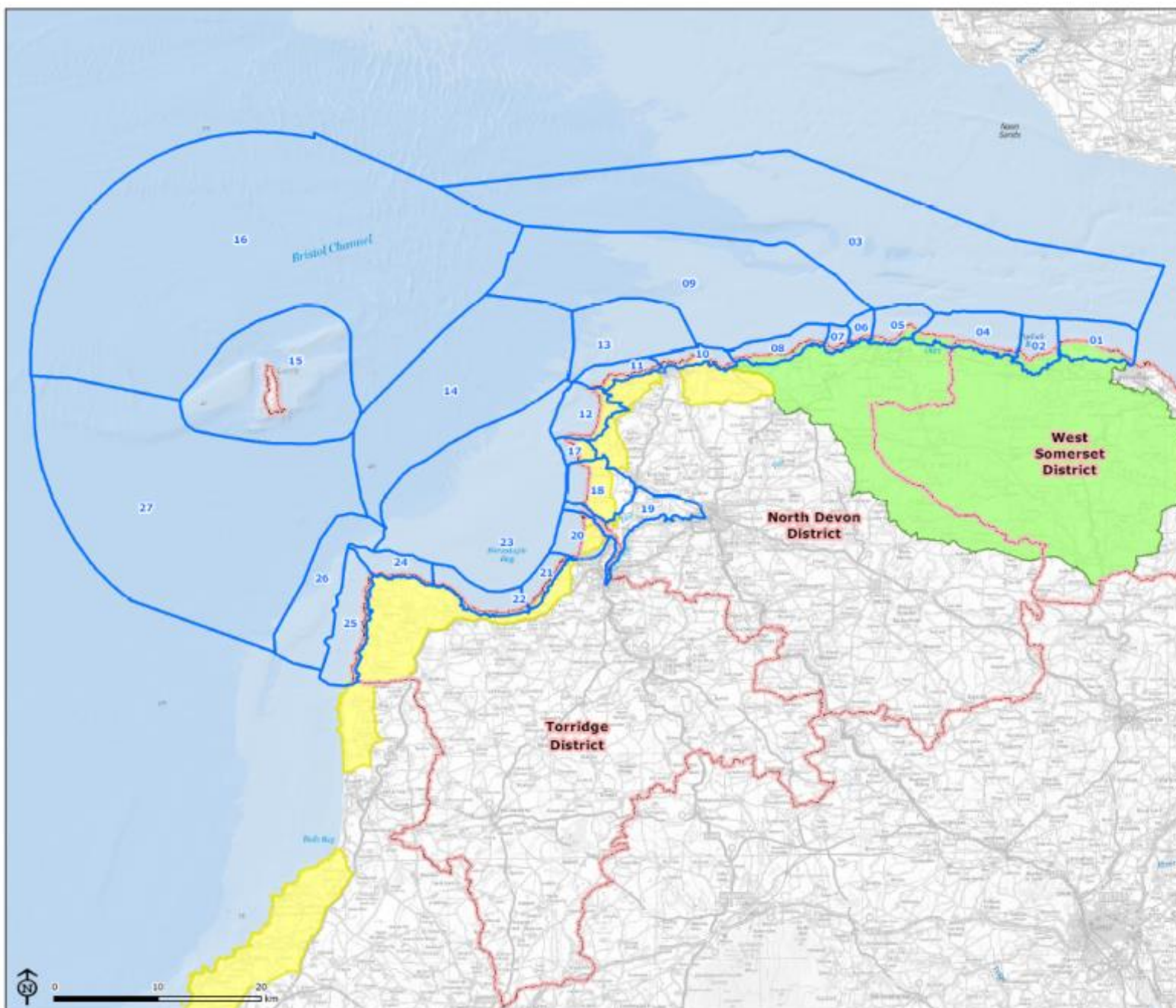
North Devon & Exmoor Seascape Character Assessment

Figure 4.1: Seascape Character Areas

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 - Exmoor National Park
 - AONB
 - Seascape Character Areas
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Map Scale @ A3: 1:360,000

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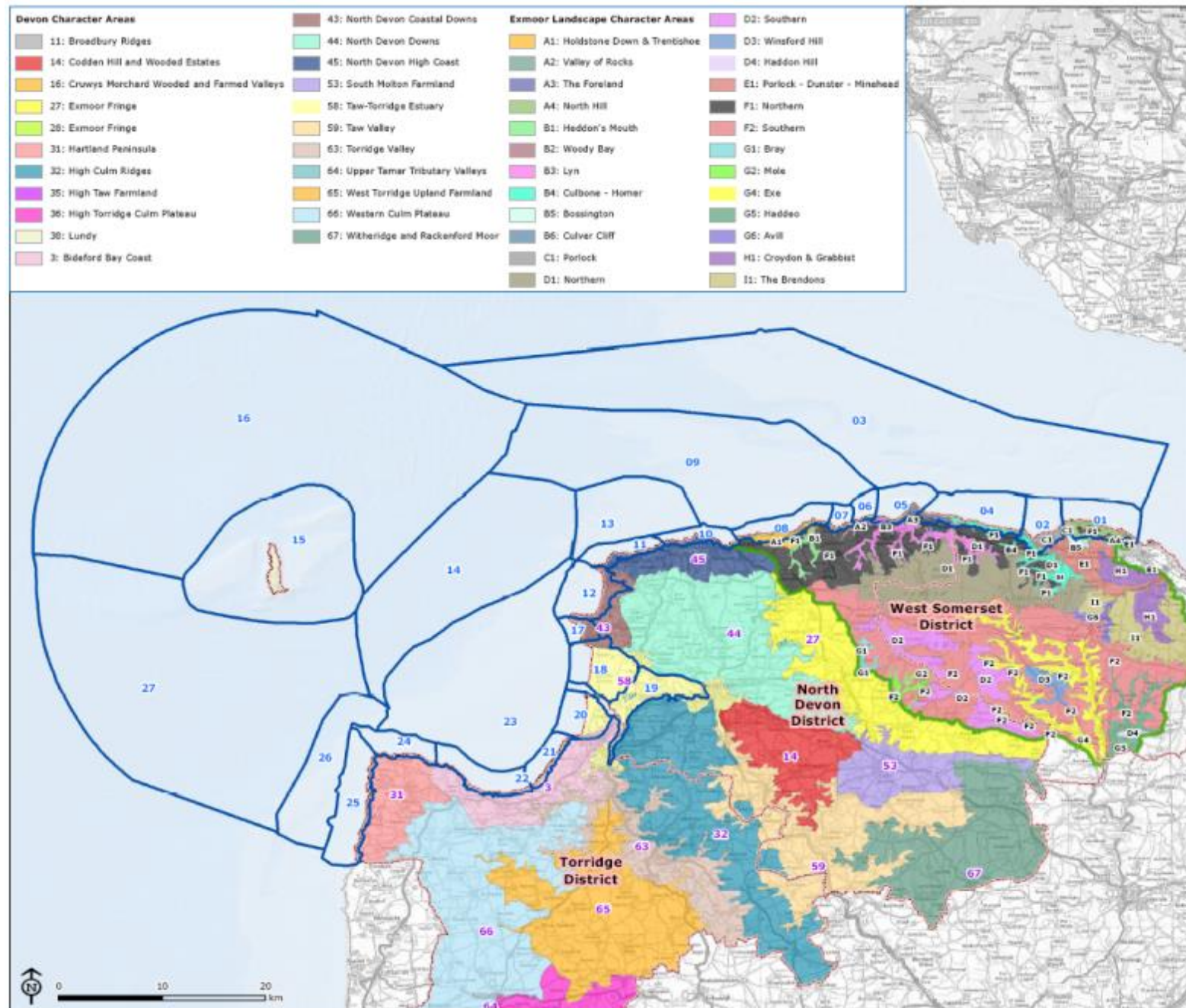
North Devon & Exmoor Seascape Character Assessment

Figure 2.1: Relationship between Seascape and Landscape Character Areas

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 - Exmoor National Park
 - Seascape Character Areas
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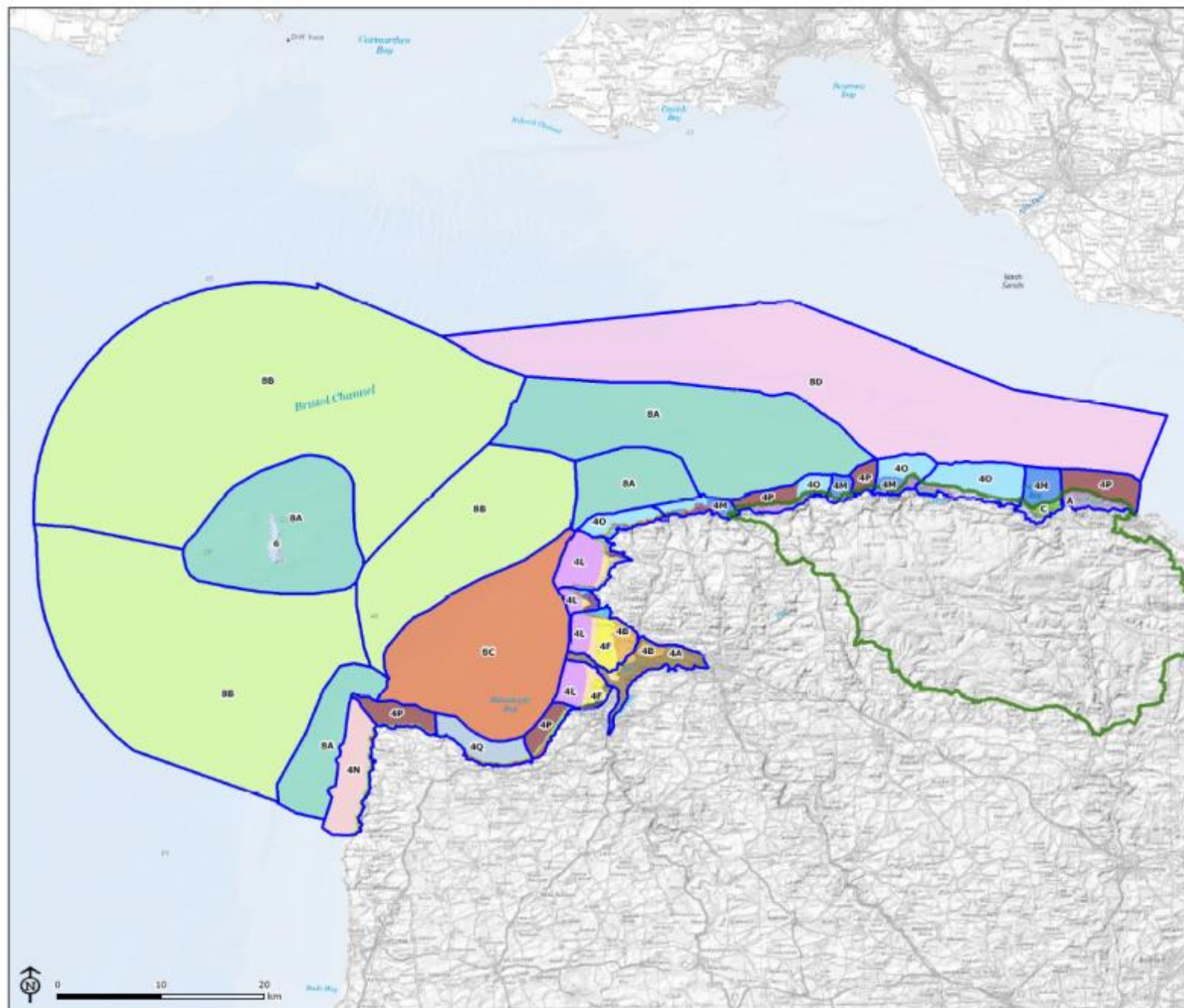
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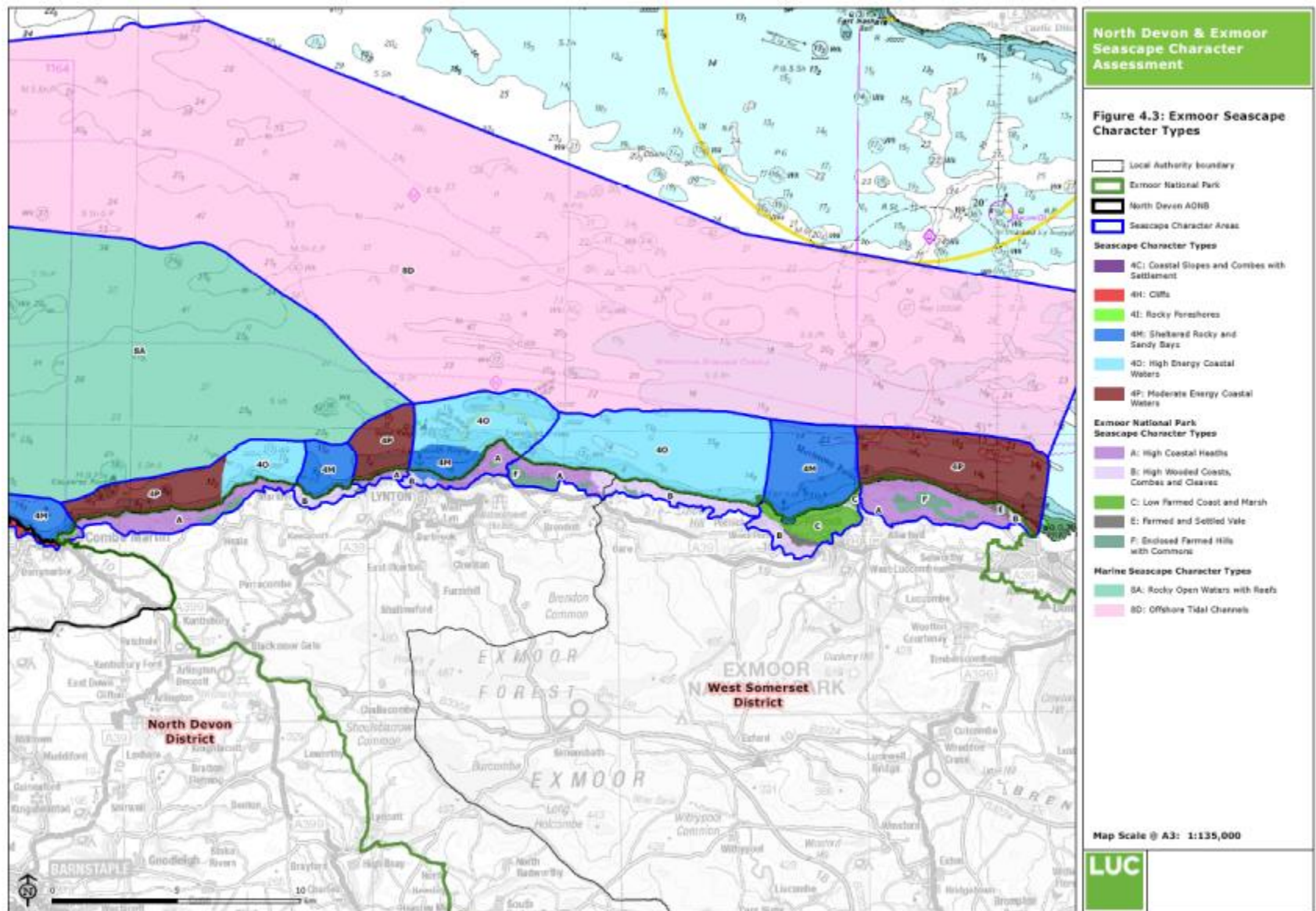
**Figure 4.2: Seascape Character
Types**

- Exmoor National Park
 - Seascape Character Areas
- Seascape Character Types**
- 2C: Steep Open Slopes
 - 4A: Estuaries
 - 4B: Marine Levels & Coastal Plains
 - 4C: Coastal Slopes and Combes with Settlement
 - 4E: Extensive Inter-Tidal Sands
 - 4F: Dunes
 - 4H: Cliffs
 - 4I: Rocky Foreshores
 - 4L: Exposed Sandy Bays
 - 4M: Sheltered Rocky and Sandy Bays
 - 4N: Exposed Coastal Waters
 - 4O: High Energy Coastal Waters
 - 4P: Moderate Energy Coastal Waters
 - 4Q: Sheltered Coastal Waters
 - 5B: Coastal Undulating Farmland
 - 5C: Downland
 - 7: Main Cities and Towns
- Exmoor National Park
Seascape Character Types**
- A: High Coastal Heaths
 - B: High Wooded Coasts, Combes and Cleaves
 - C: Low Farmed Coast and Marsh
 - E: Farmed and Settled Vale
 - F: Enclosed Farmed Hills with Commons
- Marine Seascape Character Types**
- 6: Offshore Islands
 - 8A: Rocky Open Waters with Reefs
 - 8B: Coarse Open Waters
 - 8C: Shallow Inshore Bays
 - 8D: Offshore Tidal Channels

Map Scale @ A3: 1:360,000

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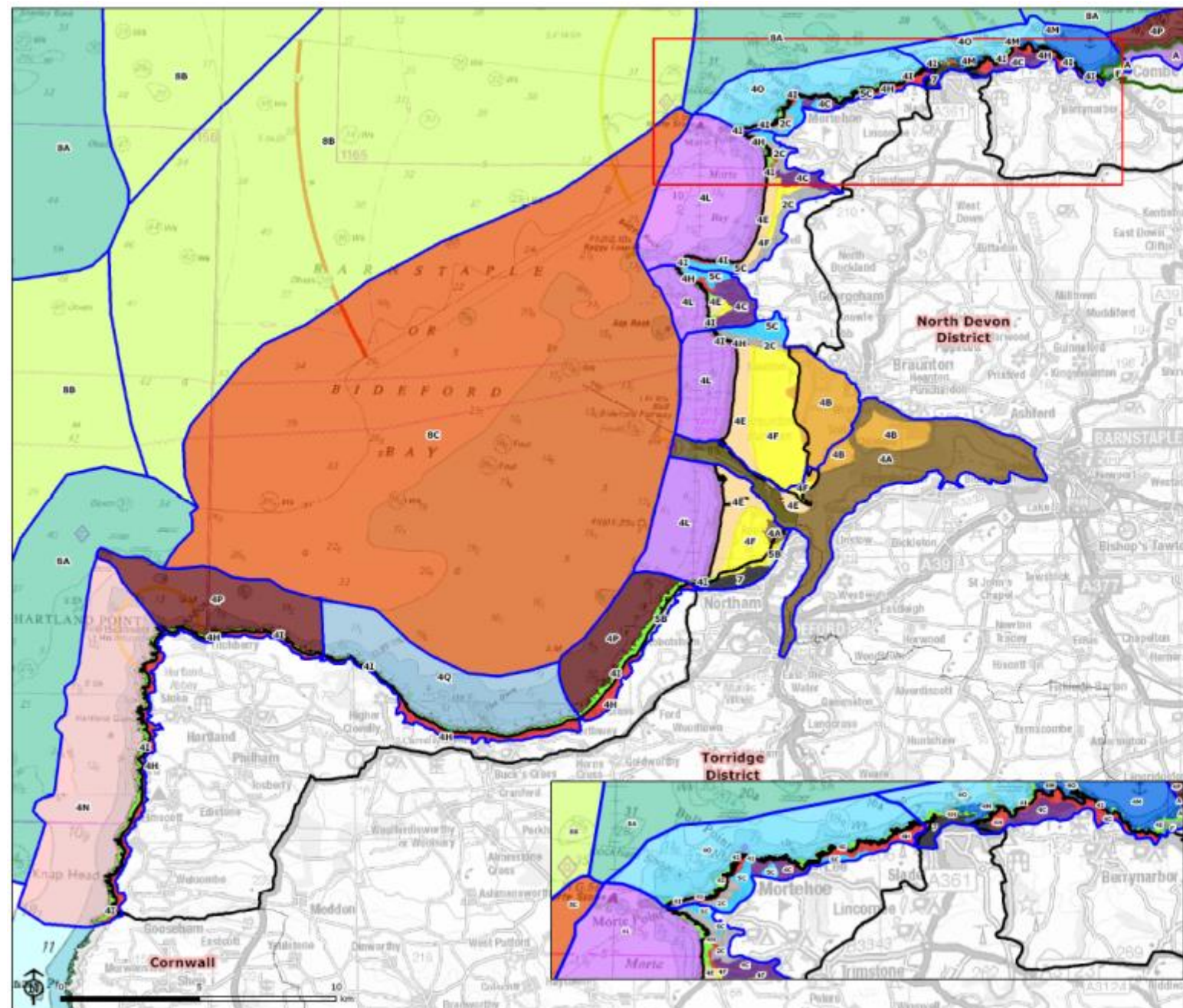
North Devon & Exmoor Seascape Character Assessment

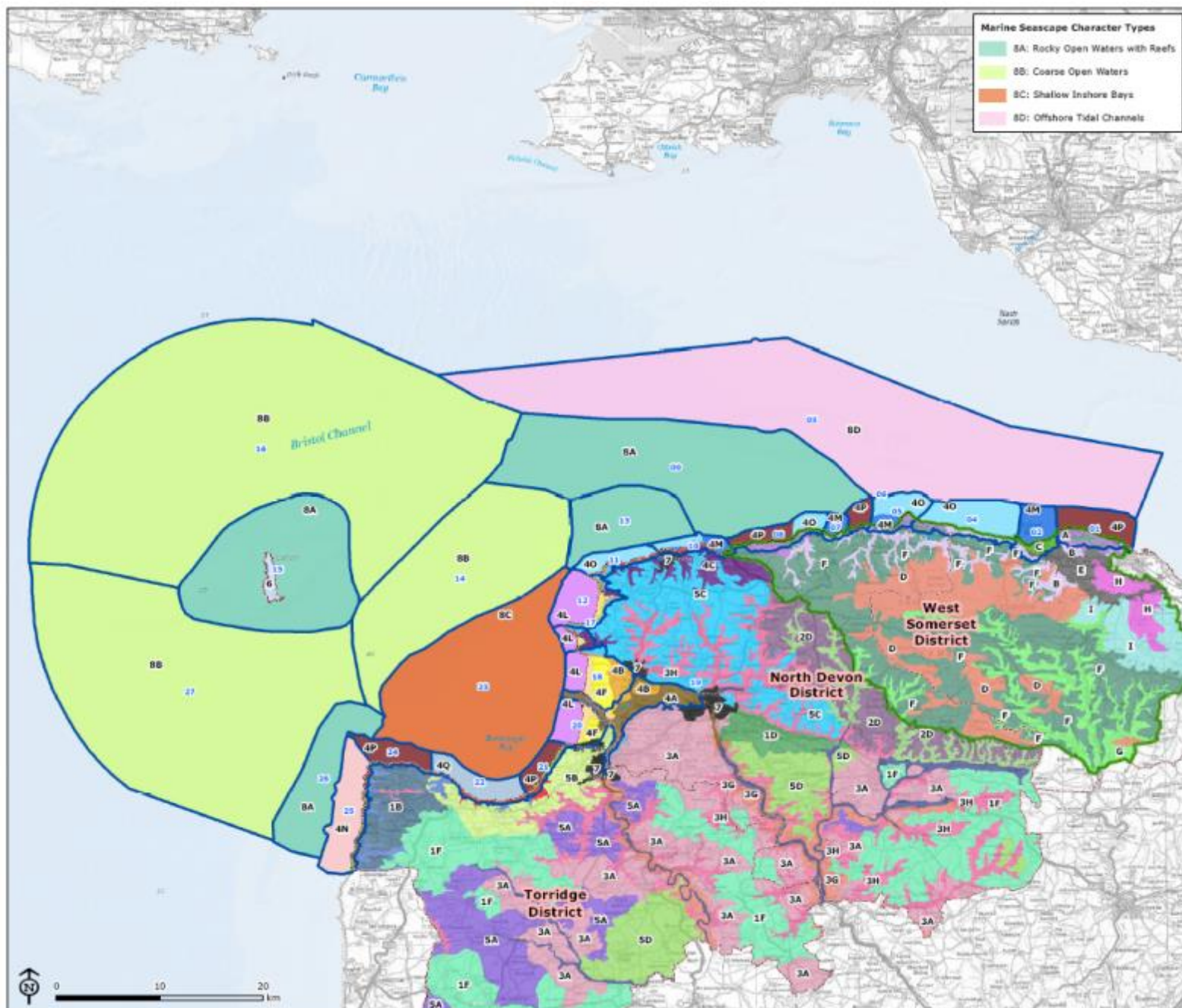
Figure 4.4: North Devon Seascape Character Types

- Exmoor National Park
 - Seascape Character Areas
 - North Devon AONB
 - Local Authority boundary
- Seascape Character Types**
- 2C: Steep Open Slopes
 - 4A: Estuaries
 - 4B: Marine Levels & Coastal Plains
 - 4C: Coastal Slopes and Combes with Settlement
 - 4E: Extensive Inter-Tidal Sands
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- Marine Seascape Character Types**
- 8A: Rocky Open Waters with Reefs
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 - 8C: Shallow Inshore Bays

Map Scale @ A3: 1:135,000

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North Devon & Exmoor Seascape Character Assessment

Figure 2.2: Relationship between Seascape and Landscape Character Types

01 Seascape Character Areas

Coastal, Intertidal & Landscape Character Types

- 1B: Coastal Open Plateau
 - 1D: Estate Wooded Ridges & Hilltops
 - 1F: Farmed Lowland Moorland and Cull Grassland
 - 2C: Steep Open Slopes
 - 2D: Moorland Edge Slopes
 - 3A: Upper Farmed & Wooded Valley Slopes
 - 3C: Sparsely Settled Farmed Valley Floors
 - 3D: Upland River Valleys
 - 3G: River Valley Slopes & Combes
 - 3H: Secluded Valleys
 - 4A: Estuaries
 - 4B: Marine Levels & Coastal Plains
 - 4C: Coastal Slopes and Combes with Settlement
 - 4E: Extensive Inter-Tidal Sands
 - 4F: Dunes
 - 4H: Cliffs
 - 4I: Rocky Foreshores
 - 4J: Exposed Sandy Bays
 - 4K: Sheltered Rocky and Sandy Bays
 - 4L: Exposed Coastal Waters
 - 4M: High Energy Coastal Waters
 - 4N: Moderate Energy Coastal Waters
 - 4O: Sheltered Coastal Waters
 - 4P: Inland Elevated Undulating Land
 - 4Q: Coastal Undulating Farmland
 - 4R: Downland
 - 4S: Estate Wooded Farmland
 - 4T: Offshore Islands
 - 4U: Main Cities and Towns
- Exmoor National Park**
- A: High Coastal Heaths
 - B: High Wooded Coasts, Combes and Cleaves
 - C: Low Farmed Coast and Marsh
 - D: Open Moorland
 - E: Farmed and Settled Vale
 - F: Enclosed Farmed Hills with Commons
 - G: Incised Wooded Valleys
 - H: Plantations (with Heathland) Hills
 - I: Wooded and Farmed Hills with Valleys

Map Scale @ A3: 1:360,000

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COMPLETE LIST OF CHARACTER TYPES FOUND IN THE STUDY AREA

COASTAL/INTERTIDAL CHARACTER TYPES

(FOUND IN BOTH LANDSCAPE & SEASCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENTS)

North Devon and Torridge

2C: Steep Open Slopes

4A: Estuaries

4B: Marine Levels & Coastal Plains

4C: Coastal Slopes and Combes with Settlement

4E: Extensive Inter-Tidal Sands

4F: Dunes

4H: Cliffs

5B: Coastal Undulating Farmland

5C: Downland

6: Offshore Islands

7: Main Cities and Towns

Exmoor National Park

A: High Coastal Heaths

E: Farmed and Settled Vale

B: High Wooded Coasts, Combes and Cleaves

F: Enclosed Farmed Hills with Commons

C: Low Farmed Coast and Marsh

NEW COASTAL/INTERTIDAL SEASCAPE CHARACTER TYPES (IDENTIFIED BY THIS STUDY)

4I: Rocky Foreshores

4L: Exposed Sandy Bays

4M: Sheltered Rocky and Sandy Bays

4N: Exposed Coastal Waters

4O: High Energy Coastal Waters

4P: Moderate Energy Coastal Waters

4Q: Sheltered Coastal Waters

NEW MARINE SEASCAPE CHARACTER TYPES (IDENTIFIED BY THIS STUDY)

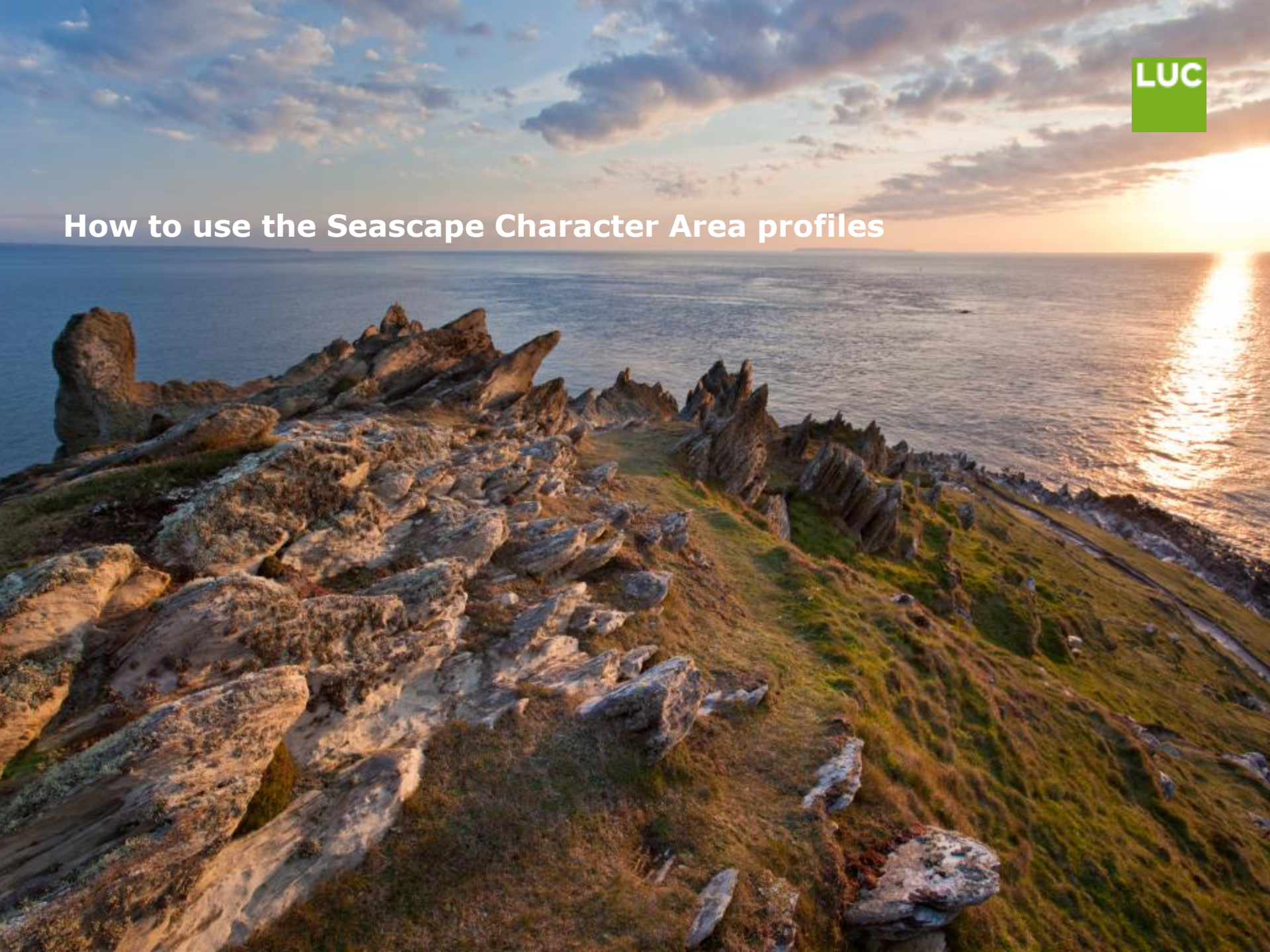
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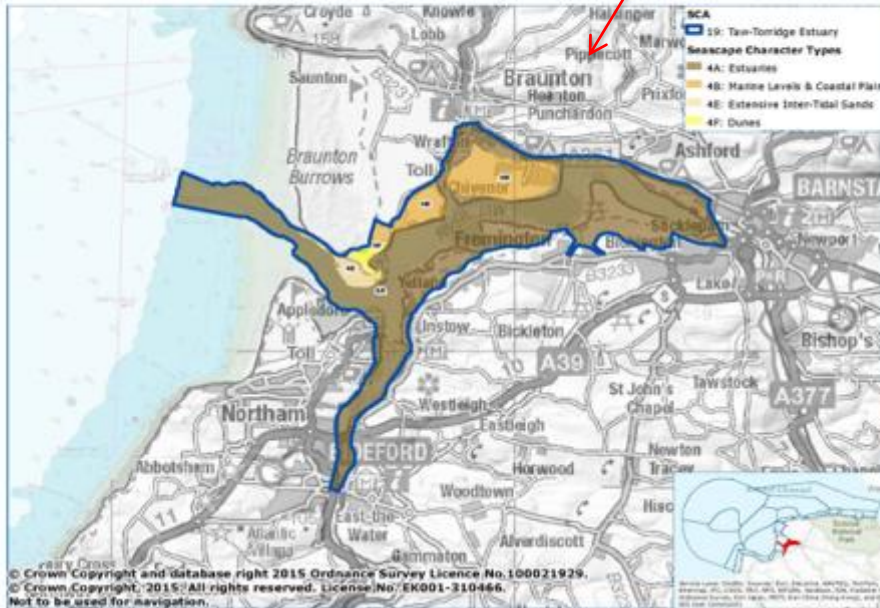
How to use the Seascape Character Area profiles



Seascape Character Area profiles (intro page)

Map showing SCA location and component SCTs

SCA 19: Taw-Torridge Estuary



Representative photographs of the SCA



SCTs within the SCA: 4A Estuaries; 4E Extensive Intertidal Sands; 4B Marine Levels and Coastal Plains; 4E Extensive Intertidal Sands and 4F Dunes.

This SCA comprises the combined estuary system of the rivers Taw and Torridge draining into Bideford Bay, defined by a broad sweep of expansive mud flats and sandbanks. It is nationally important for biodiversity, attracting large colonies of birds feeding on the rich intertidal habitats, and provides nursery areas for fish. The estuary has a long and rich maritime history dating back to the Vikings, with historic working ports and fishing harbours lining its banks. This is a large, expansive and dynamic landscape, formed by a complex tidal system which changes rapidly hour to hour.

The area is located immediately adjacent to the North Devon AONB.

List of component SCTs (also allowing reference to Landscape Character Assessment information)

Summary snapshot of overall character

Seascape Character Area profiles (key characteristics)



Key characteristics

Natural / physical influences

- **A complex estuarine system with contrasting geomorphology.** The Taw flows through a broad valley, rising up steeply to the north to Saunton Down. The Torridge estuary is narrower and deeper occasionally enclosed by rocky, often wooded cliffs.
- **Underlain by a solid geology of Upper Carboniferous rocks,** predominantly sandstones and mudstones, but mostly defined by large deposits of estuarine clays and accumulations of marine sand.
- **Dynamic landscape formed by a complex tidal system** including rapid inundation, with a tidal range of 7.5 metres where the estuary drains into Bideford Bay.
- **Notorious shallow sand bank of the Bideford Bar,** forming the crossing point from the bay into the estuary, dangerous in heavy weather and when winds oppose the strong tidal flows.
- **Numerous navigation features marking safe passage;** estuary approached through a buoyed channel, with further guidance provided by the steel lighthouse at Crow Point (1954) and the beacons on the hills near Instow.
- **Nationally important for biodiversity,** designated as a SSSI, including salt-marsh, mud and sand-flats and lagoons supporting a wide range of intertidal and marine wildlife, including nursery areas for fish and the endangered European eel.
- Parts of the estuary are a **Recommended Marine Conservation Zone,** with areas around its mouth within the wider Bideford to Foreland Point Recommended Marine Conservation Zone, including its unique **tide-swept channels.**
- **Taw fringed by tidal grazing marsh, areas of reclaimed saltmarsh and rough grassland and arable fields** protected by embankments and walls and divided by brackish ditches.
- **Colonies of waders, wildfowl and seabirds,** the RSPB reserve at Isley Marsh Nature Reserve and Gja Trust bird reserves at Rottington and Home Farm Marsh providing opportunities for bird watching.

Cultural and social influences (past and present)

- **Long seafaring history,** including the legend of 23 Viking ships landing in Appledore. The invaders were eventually defeated by the Saxon army at the Battle of Cynuit.
- Bideford was the largest tobacco importer after Bristol, and has long associations with famous Elizabethan sea captains such as Drake, Raleigh and Grenville.

- **Boat yards, dry docks, numerous jetties** (including two between Yelland and Instow) and slipways dotted along the banks.
- **19th century Exemington Quay,** formerly a significant port served by rail, developed when access to Barnstaple became difficult due to siltation. Today it is a popular visitor attraction.
- **Legacy of the notorious Bideford Bar.** Braunton sailors, adept at negotiating the bar, came to be known as 'bar men'. Several wrecks are dotted around the estuary, some visible at low tide.
- **Bridge crossings form** Long Bridge in Bideford themselves affording local access.
- **18th century Tapeley,** skyline above the Torridge the Taw opposite Exemington.
- **Working historic port** vessels transporting timber sight until the industry's decline.
- **Appledore once house** historic port town still has ships for the Irish Navy.
- **Regionally important** and seafood (including oysters and squid) from the estuary.
- **Commercially and recreationally** nurseries and mussel bed flourishes, as well as sum are also popular for bait.
- **Traditionally the water** restrictions are now in place.
- **Chivenor Airfield,** site the Taw. Dating from the works and areas of brown.
- **Ongoing military activity** Instow and Zeta berth at the estuary.
- **Valued as an important** populations, including v Cycleway. The Tarka Trail local ports to Barnstaple closure in 1964).
- The estuary also provides recreational activities, including

- North Devon Yacht Club is based in Instow, and Bideford is the embarkation point for trips to Lundy on the MS Oldenburg.
- The Appledore Ferry operates in the summer between Instow and Appledore, often used by SW Coast Path walkers. A ferry previously operated for hundreds of years from Crow Point.

Perceptual and aesthetic influences

- **A sheltered estuarine environment** contrasting with the adjacent open and exposed coast.
- **Rapid and ever-changing tidal character,** with expansive mudflats exposed at low tide quickly disappearing as the estuary fills with water.
- **Rural setting** provided by the banks of the Taw Estuary and the wooded hills slopes enclosing the Torridge to the east.
- **Adjacent development at Westward Ho!** influencing views within the west and Fullbrook wind farm and other turbines often form moving structures on landward horizons.
- **Range of contrasting views,** from channelled views within the estuary to open coastal vistas at its mouth across Bideford Bay, framed to the west by the protruding form of the Hartland Peninsula.
- **Expansive views across the flat marshes,** sometimes obscuring the estuary itself to give the impression of being able to walk across a complete expanse of marsh.
- **Rugged expansive sand dunes and golden beaches framing the estuary mouth,** with contrasting views to the settled enclosing hills and development at Appledore, Instow and Bideford.
- **The sounds and movements of thousands of birds** and the expansive intertidal habitats contrasting with nearby human activities and noise.
- **Strong sensory characteristics:** changing colours and qualities of light, sunlight reflecting on the water and rich textures of the salt marshes and exposed sand flats.
- **Seascape providing artistic and literary inspiration;** perhaps most famously as the setting for Henry Williamson's Tarka the Otter, its setting focused on the marshes around Horsey Island.

Help to understand what is 'key' to seascape character

Use of 3 sub-headings for ease of reference and comparison between profiles:

- Natural/physical influences
- Cultural and social influences (past and present)
- Perceptual and aesthetic influences

Seascape Character Area profiles (*special qualities and key seascape sensitivities*)

Special qualities and key seascape sensitivities

The special qualities of this seascape that would be most sensitive to development-led change include:

- Dynamic landscape which changes quickly and dramatically from exposed mudflats fast-flowing tides.
- The sheltered, safe haven of the estuary once the notorious Bideford Bar has been crossed.
- Nationally important coastal and intertidal habitats, supporting a wide variety of plants and animals.
- Ease of access to take part in a wide range of activities, including sailing, walking or cycling along the Tarka Trail, or simply enjoying the view.
- Rich maritime heritage associated with the historic working ports at Bideford and Appledore, still home to regionally important fishing fleets.
- Strong sensory characteristics, with constantly shifting colours, smells and textures and the sound and movements of thousands of birds.
- High levels of relative tranquillity, on the doorstep of development and urban populations.
- Range of contrasting views linking land and sea, from enclosed views within to open vistas at the estuary mouth across Bideford Bay.



Black Point and Bideford Bay



St. Michael's Head

Key information to assist in development management and the design of proposals:

These are the aspects/features of fundamental importance to seascape character and therefore sensitive to change.

These also reflect what local people feel is particularly important – information gauged through consultation

Seascape Character Area profiles (forces for change affecting seascape character and condition)

Forces for change affecting seascape character and condition



Coastal land / marine resource management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some fields fringing the estuary suffering from a lack of grazing, with a spread of brambles and scrub changing the character conveying an 'urban fringe' feel. Deterioration of the estuary's water quality due to diffuse pollution from surrounding agricultural land, as well as sewage rainfall. Nutrient loading can impact on the seascape's characteristic mussel beds, with periodic E. coli breakouts linked to rainfall. Changing frequency and extent of dredging within the estuary (including due to cost) leading to the silting up of entrances on Crow Point. Restricted access by larger vessels could impact on the economic sustainability of the working ports at Crow Point.
Aquaculture and fishing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncertainty surrounding future Marine Conservation Zone designation (recommended sites awaiting a decision by Defra and the wider waters frequented by local fishermen. This is particularly in terms of the impacts any future designation activity – both commercial and recreational. Fixed netting restrictions are already in place across much of the SCA. Perceived conflicts between the conservation of the marine resource and the economic importance of fishing activity to the South Wales economy. This is being addressed across North Devon by ongoing dialogue and research by the Devon and Cornwall Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA), the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), Natural England, the North Devon Fishermen's Organisation and the Devon Biosphere Marine Working Group. Uncertainty over the long-term economic viability of the remaining commercial fishing fleet at Bideford and Appledore, the community, local economy and heritage of the area. The Estuary is currently being investigated as a potential location for a Marine Conservation Zone.
Access, recreation and tourism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further growth in popularity of the area and the surrounding coast for both coastal recreation and tourism, leading to increased levels of tranquillity (for example through an increased use of jet skis), leading to increased pressure on the landscape. Lack of a marina to support the growing water-based tourism economy of the area have come attached with larger housing development requirements to maintain the special qualities of the estuary and its wider rural setting. Concerns regarding wildlife disturbance as a result of increased use of the estuary being addressed by a voluntary Code of Conduct developed and promoted by the local community.

An understanding of forces for change to guide management and planning response to help conserve and enhance seascape character. Organised under headings to allow ease of reference and comparison:

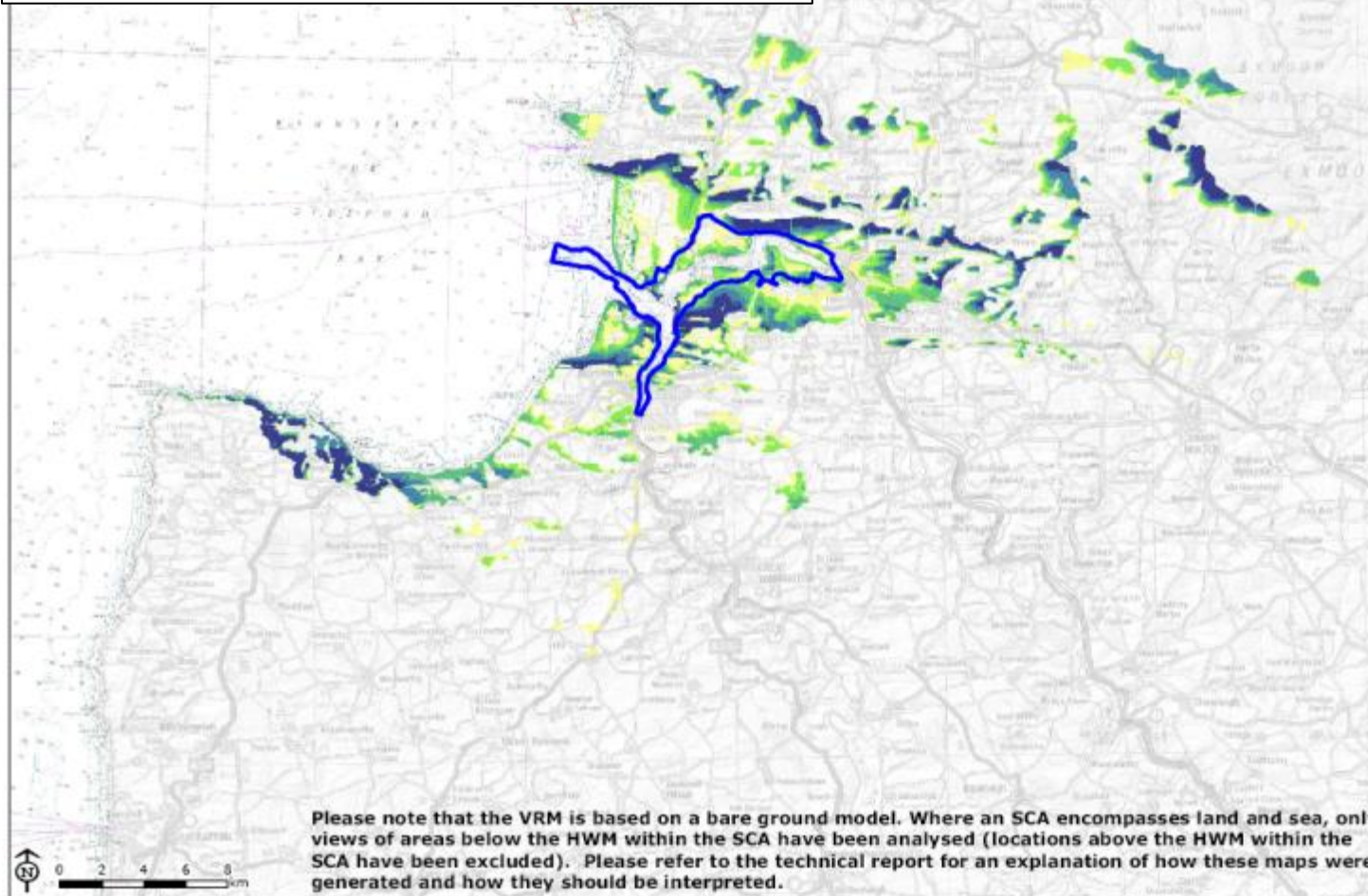
- Coastal land/marine resource management
- Aquaculture and fishing
- Access, recreation and tourism
- Other development pressures/impacts
- Natural processes and climate change

Other development pressures / impacts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development pressures and new development proposals on brownfield land fringing the estuary (e.g. the former Yelland power station site), impacting on the estuary's naturalistic and tranquil qualities, levels of light pollution, and potentially its wildlife. The setting of the North Devon AONB and the nearby Braunton Burrows (SCA 18), known for its 'wild' qualities, may also be affected by future development. Future growth of Barnstaple, Braunton and Bideford/Northam/Appledore as the main towns serving the two districts, extending into the open estuary landscape and on its open skylines. Particular pressure for housing development in southern areas where there are good existing links to transport networks. This could lead to the coalescence of Bickington, Fremington and Yelland. Present uncertainties relating to planning policy – the current Torridge District Local Plan includes their part of the estuary within the Coastal Preservation Area; whilst the North Devon side falls outside. A specific 'Coast and Estuary Policy' is proposed within the emerging Joint Local Plan for North Devon and Torridge, to help guide development to take account of the special qualities of the whole Estuary. Wind turbine developments on the elevated hills that form a distinctive rural setting to the estuary, particularly the large-scale development at Fullabrook. Skylines are also marked by overhead powerlines, particularly along the Great Bank/Toll road on Braunton Marsh and around Fremington and Yelland. Ongoing national demand for alternative sources of renewable energy production, including tidal energy. The strong tidal resource of the estuary may see particular interest from developers in future (e.g. barrage/lagoon/tidal stream devices) – with potential impacts on the special landscape, seascape and ecological characteristics of the area.
Natural processes and climate change
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sea level rise and coastal erosion as a result of climate change, potentially seeing a significant rise in the estuary's water levels and a consequential widening of its channels, with possible loss of habitats, coastal archaeology and flooding of settlements. Uncertainty over the impacts of managed realignment within the estuary – currently the Shoreline Management Plan recommends 'managed realignment' across much of its length, although a 'hold the line' policy is recommended where assets are at risk, such as along existing defended sections at Yelland, Fremington, Braunton, Barnstaple and Bickington. Divisions in opinion, both expert and local, regarding the future of Crow Point and Neck – a fast-eroding spit linking to Braunton Burrows. Ongoing debates include whether the feature should be left to fully breach, and if so, the impacts this might have on the landscape and its surrounding communities (e.g. storm surges travelling up the River Taw).

Seascape Character Area profiles (*land with views of the SCA*)

These maps give a general indication of land with views into the Seascape Character Area.

Note these are based on a bare ground model and it is important that the limitations for their use are understood (see Chapter 3 of the report)

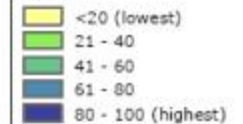


North Devon & Exmoor
Seascape Character
Assessment

Land with Views of: 19 :
Taw-Torridge Estuary

19: Taw-Torridge Estuary

Value



This Visual Resource Map (VRM) provides a more detailed spatial representation of the visibility of this SCA from the surrounding land in England and Wales.

This map shows land with views to this SCA. The darker shading (blues) indicates land from where more of the SCA is visible. Lighter shades (yellows) indicate that there are views of the SCA from those locations, but they are not extensive.



SOURCE:

Map Scale @ A4: 1:300,000



Understanding the visual resource provided by the North Devon and Exmoor Seascapes

- Land with views to the study area
- Sea surface visibility

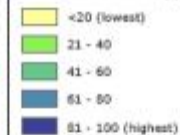


North Devon & Exmoor Seascape Character Assessment

**Figure 3.6: Land with Views of
the North Devon & Exmoor SCAs**

01 Seascape Character Areas

Land with sea views (quintile)



This Visual Resource Map (VRM) provides a more detailed spatial representation of the visibility of the SCAs from the surrounding land in England and Wales.

This map shows land with views to the SCAs. The darker shading (blues) indicates land from where more of the study area is visible. Lighter shades (yellows) indicate that there are views of the SCAs from those locations, but they are not extensive.

Map Scale @ A3: 1:400,000

LUC

Please note that the VRM is based on a bare ground model. Where an SCA encompasses land and sea, only views of areas below the HWM within the SCA have been analysed (locations above the HWM within the SCA have been excluded). Please refer to the technical report for an explanation of how these maps were generated and how they should be interpreted.

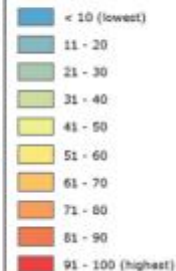


North Devon & Exmoor Seascape Character Assessment

Figure 3.7: Relative Visibility of the Sea Surface from Viewers on Land

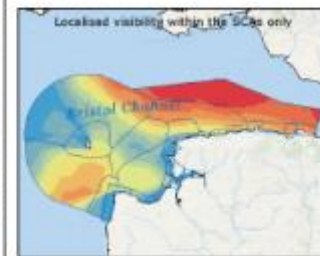
01 Seascape Character Areas

Visibility of the sea from land (percentile)



This Visual Resource Map (VRM) provides a more detailed spatial representation of the visibility of the sea within the study area from the surrounding land in England and Wales (up to 20km from the High Water Mark).

This map shows which parts of the sea in the study area are most visible from land (up to 20km from the High Water Mark).

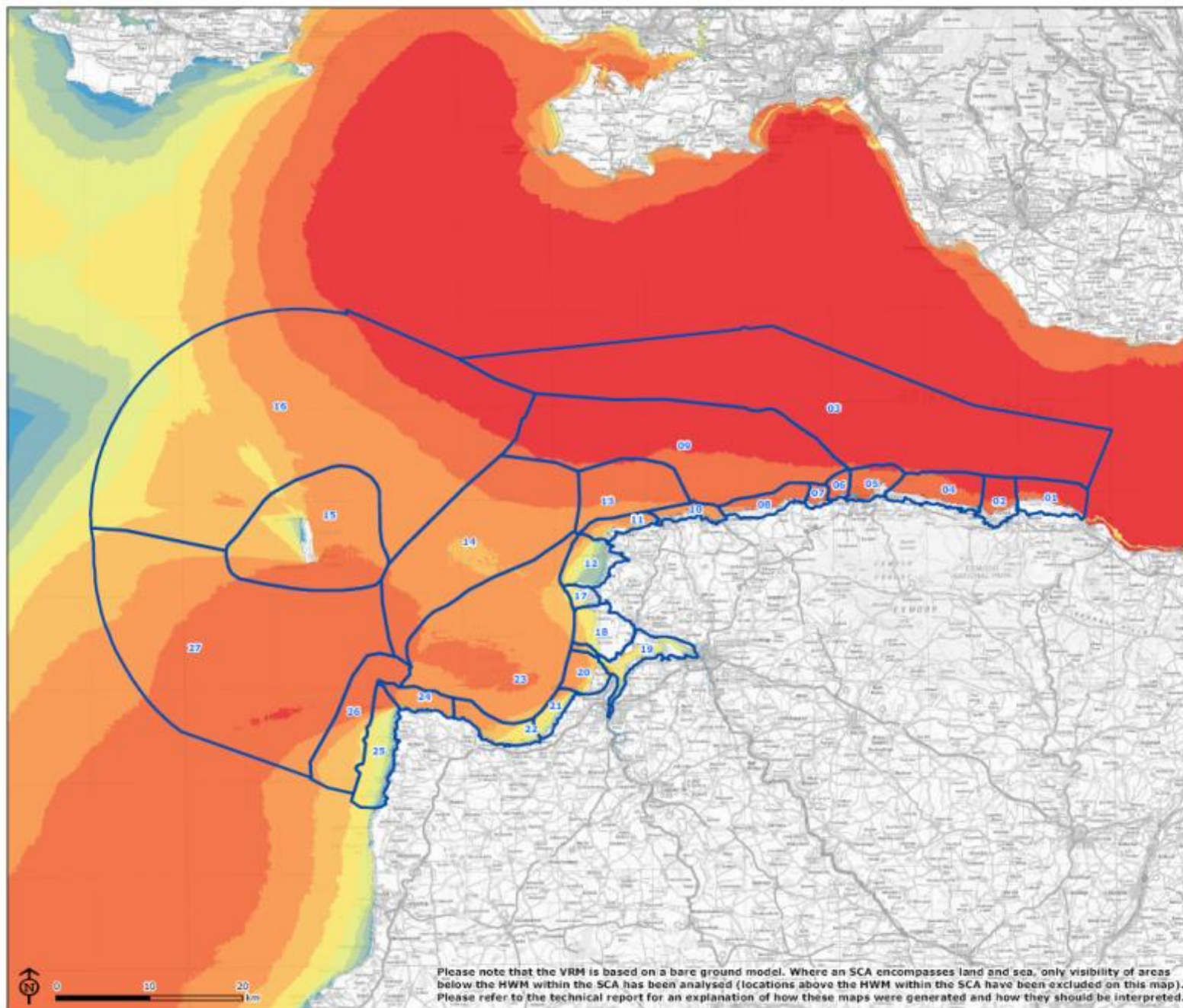


Source Layer Credits: Esri, DeLorme, GeoBC, NOAA/NGDC, and other contributors
Sources: Esri, GeoBC, NOAA, National Geographic, DeLorme, HERE

Map Scale @ A3: 1:400,000

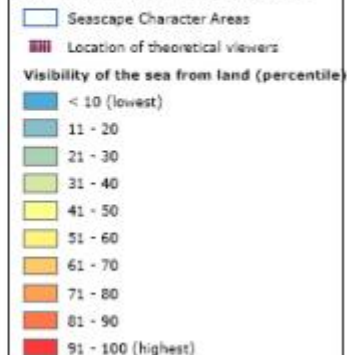
LUC

Please note that the VRM is based on a bare ground model. Where an SCA encompasses land and sea, only visibility of areas below the HWM within the SCA has been analysed (locations above the HWM within the SCA have been excluded on this map). Please refer to the technical report for an explanation of how these maps were generated and how they should be interpreted.



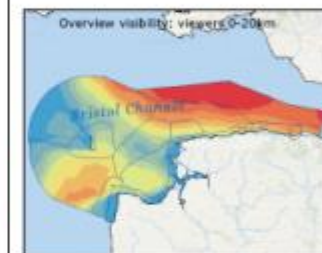
North Devon & Exmoor Seascape Character Assessment

Figure 3.8: Relative Visibility of the Sea Surface from Viewers on Land at Various Distances



This Visual Resource Map (VRM) provides a more detailed spatial representation of the visibility of the sea within the study area from the surrounding land in England and Wales (up to 20km from the High Water Mark).

This map shows which parts of the sea in the study area are most visible from land at various distances from the High Water Mark (up to 20km from the High Water Mark).

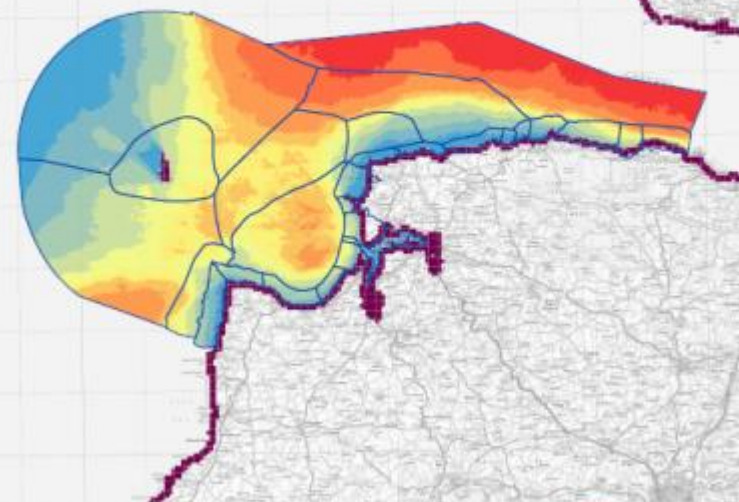


Source Layer Credits: Ordnance Survey, OSGB, NOAA/NOAA, and other contributors
Source Data: OSGB, NOAA, National Geographic, Ordnance Survey, HERE.

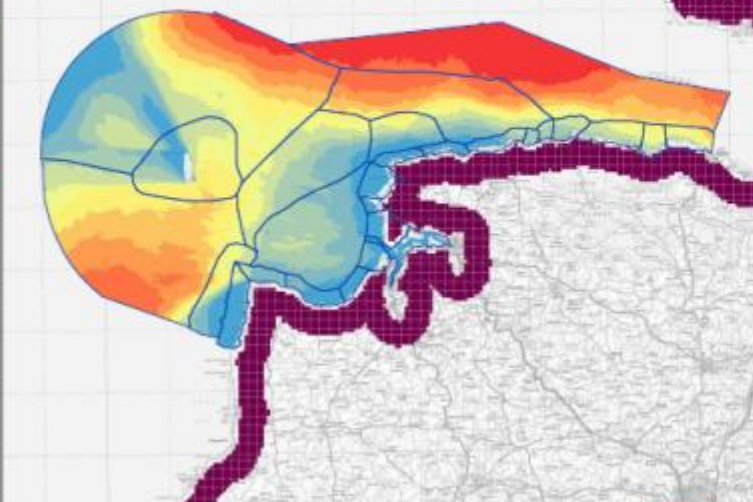
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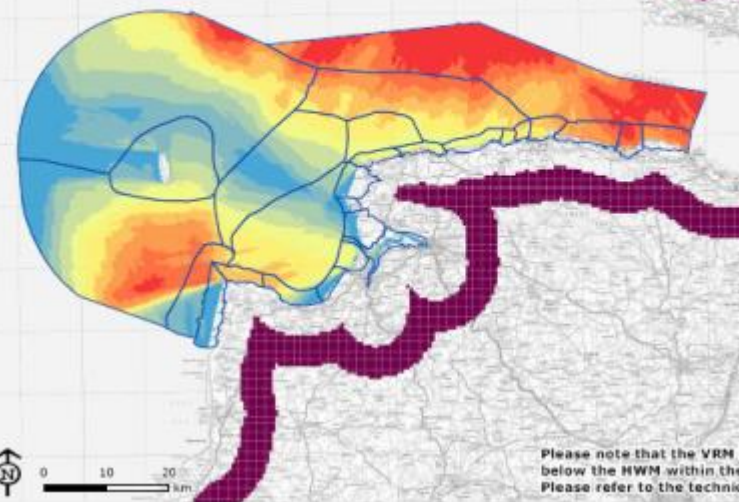
Viewers 0-1km from the High Water Mark



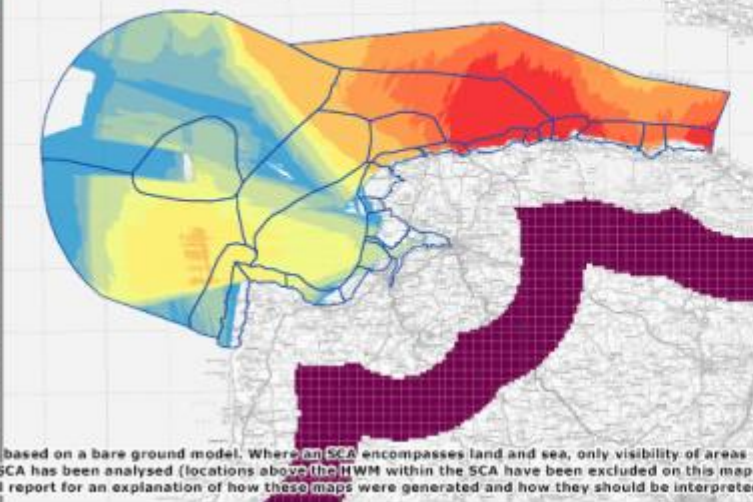
Viewers 1-5km from the High Water Mark



Viewers 5-10km from the High Water Mark



Viewers 10-20km from the High Water Mark



Please note that the VRM is based on a bare ground model. Where an SCA encompasses land and sea, only visibility of areas below the HWM within the SCA has been analysed (locations above the HWM within the SCA have been excluded on this map). Please refer to the technical report for an explanation of how these maps were generated and how they should be interpreted.

