

Saltmarsh in the Taw Torridge Estuary Site of Scientific Special Interest (SSSI)



Saltmarsh is a mix of salt tolerant plants which includes marsh samphire* (known as glasswort) and sea purslane**

Marsh samphire is an annual plant of coastal muds and sands. It binds together the sediments and blown sand. This helps to create the saltmarsh habitat with its mix of plants and build an area of new 'land' within an estuary

The plant's abundant seeds are an important source of food for the birds that visit estuaries during the winter and spring.

There are areas of saltmarsh within the Taw Torridge Estuary and it is vital that these beds survive because they can provide a natural flood prevention service for local communities, as well as being a resource for birds.

Saltmarsh habitat is a designated feature of the SSSI and is protected from damaging activities such as removal of the plants under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Foraging on the saltmarsh

Hand gathering of saltmarsh plants in the SSSI is not illegal, but it is essential you seek the permission of the landowner. The landowner is required to gain consent by Natural England who will assess whether the harvesting activity will impair the condition of the habitat. Features of the SSSI are surveyed regularly to see if their condition changes, so please be aware this may alter your ability to gather the plants.

Recommended harvesting method

If you do want to gather samphire on the Taw Torridge Estuary please follow these good practice guidelines to ensure the areas of saltmarsh are not damaged by your harvesting:

- Do not uproot the whole of the plant
- Use scissors to cut only the top leaves
- Leave at least 90% of the plants untouched in the patch you are in
- Vehicular access on the saltmarsh should be avoided
- Plants should only be harvested during July and August

* Salicornia species

**Halimione portulacoides

In order to protect this important habitat Natural England and NDBR should be contacted if you see any activity which appears to be damaging the saltmarsh habitat.

If you see someone harvesting irresponsibly please contact:

Natural England
County Hall
Spetchley Road
Worcester
WR5 2NP

Telephone 0300 060 3900

Email: enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

Or

North Devon Biosphere
Taw View
North Walk
Barnstaple
Devon
EX31 1EE

01271 388894

Email: biosphere-mailbox@devon.gov.uk