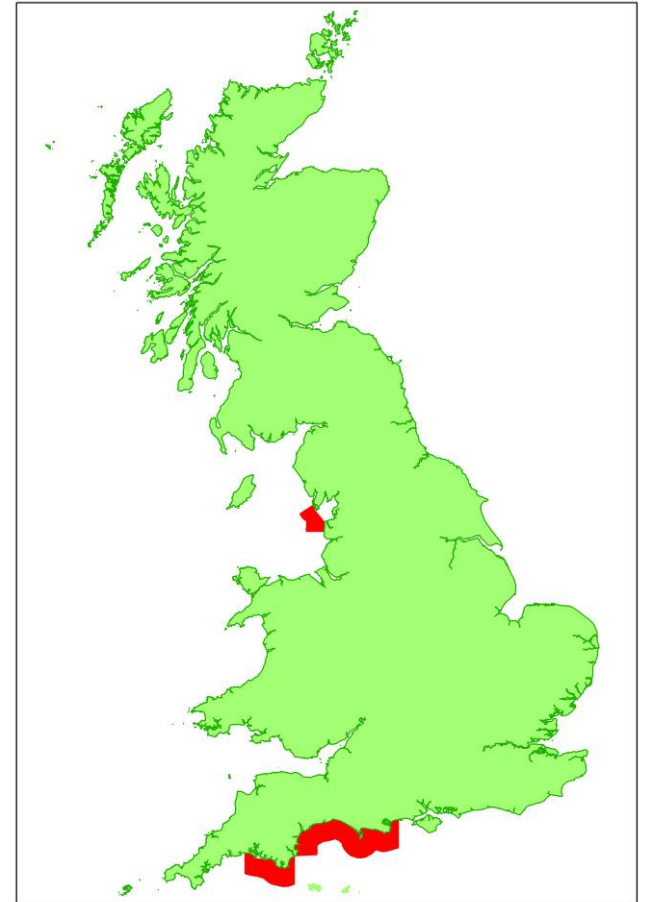


- Natural England, CCW, SNH, EHS and JNCC required to identify potential marine SACs under the EU Habitats Directive
- Currently marine SACs are under represented in UK waters
- Natural England have identified 7 sites within the 0-12nm zone for investigation to help address this
- These 7 sites were selected for their potential to support Annex I reef and sandbank habitats

Royal Haskoning commissioned by Natural England to investigate three of the study sites around the UK:

- Poole Bay to Lyme Bay
- Salcombe to Yealm & Eddystone
- Outer Morecambe Bay



## Objective:

To identify areas to be recommended as possible SACs and report on their Site Attributes in accordance with the Annexe III Site Selection Criteria.

The Site Selection Criteria comprise:

- Representativity
- Relative surface area
- Conservation structure & function
- Global assessment of site value
- UK specific factors (rarity etc)

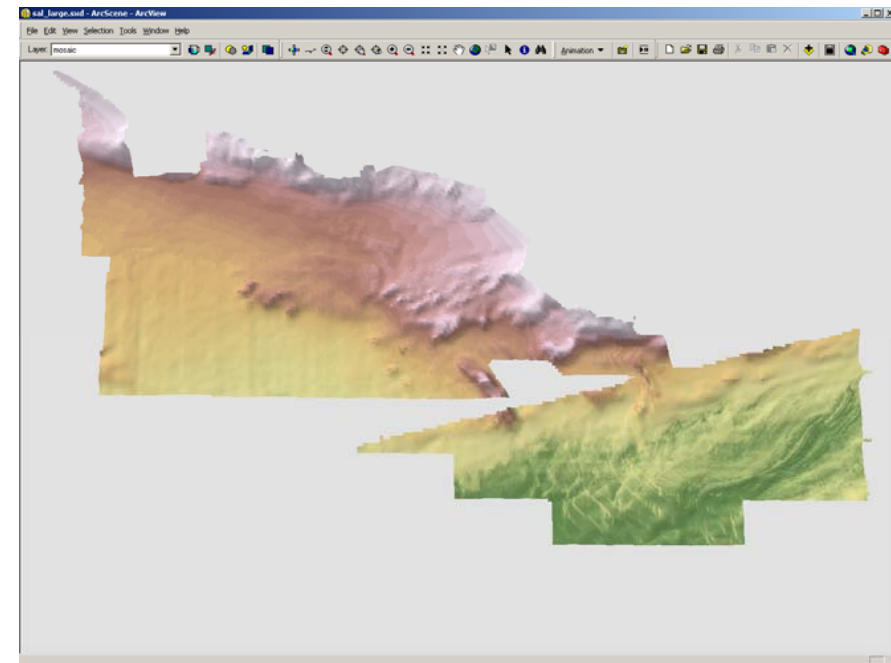
These criteria combine to form the Site Attributes

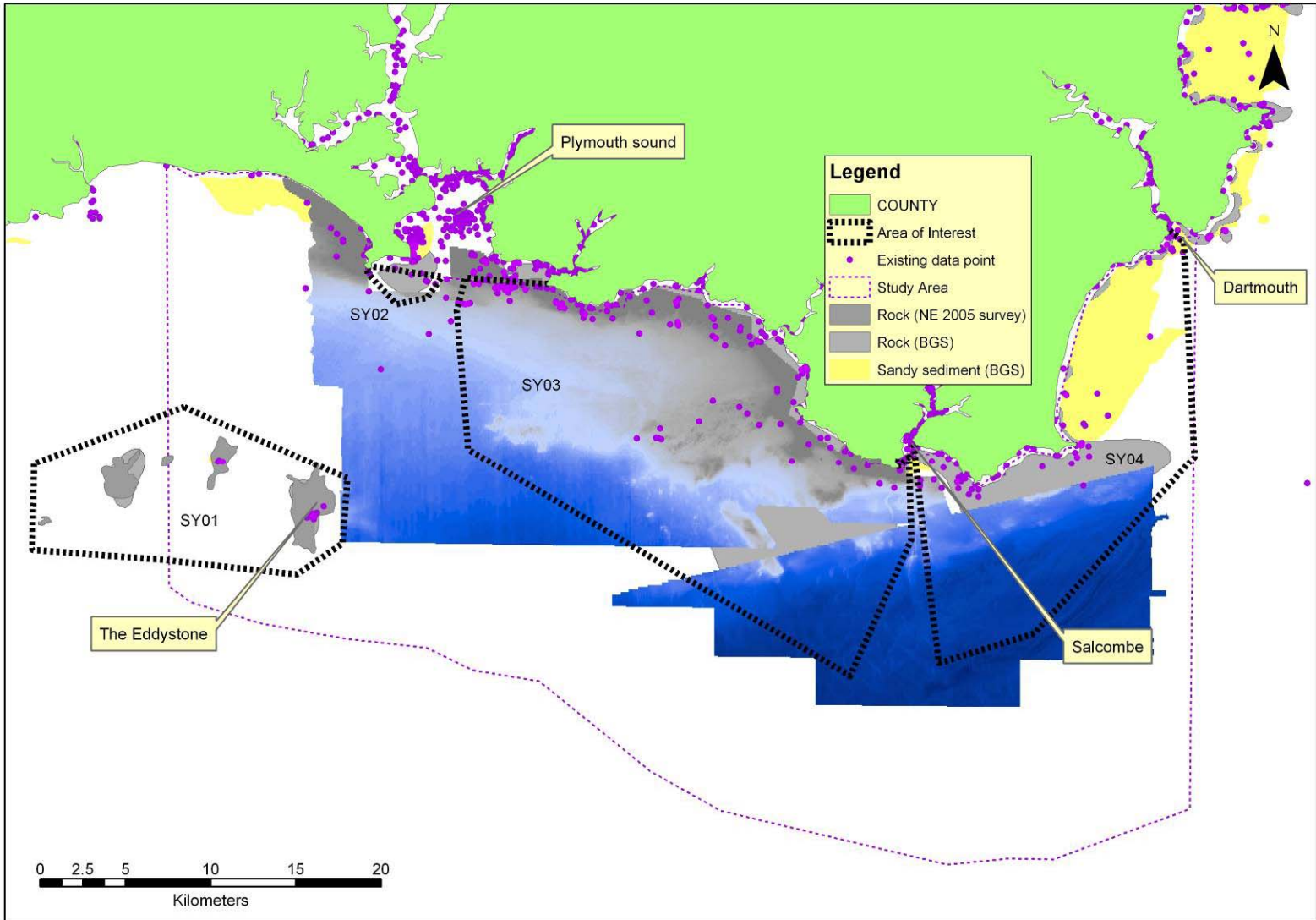
Aim: Combine existing data with new survey data to inform Natural England of the Site Attributes of any areas within our study sites

To identify areas for possible SAC recommendation we:

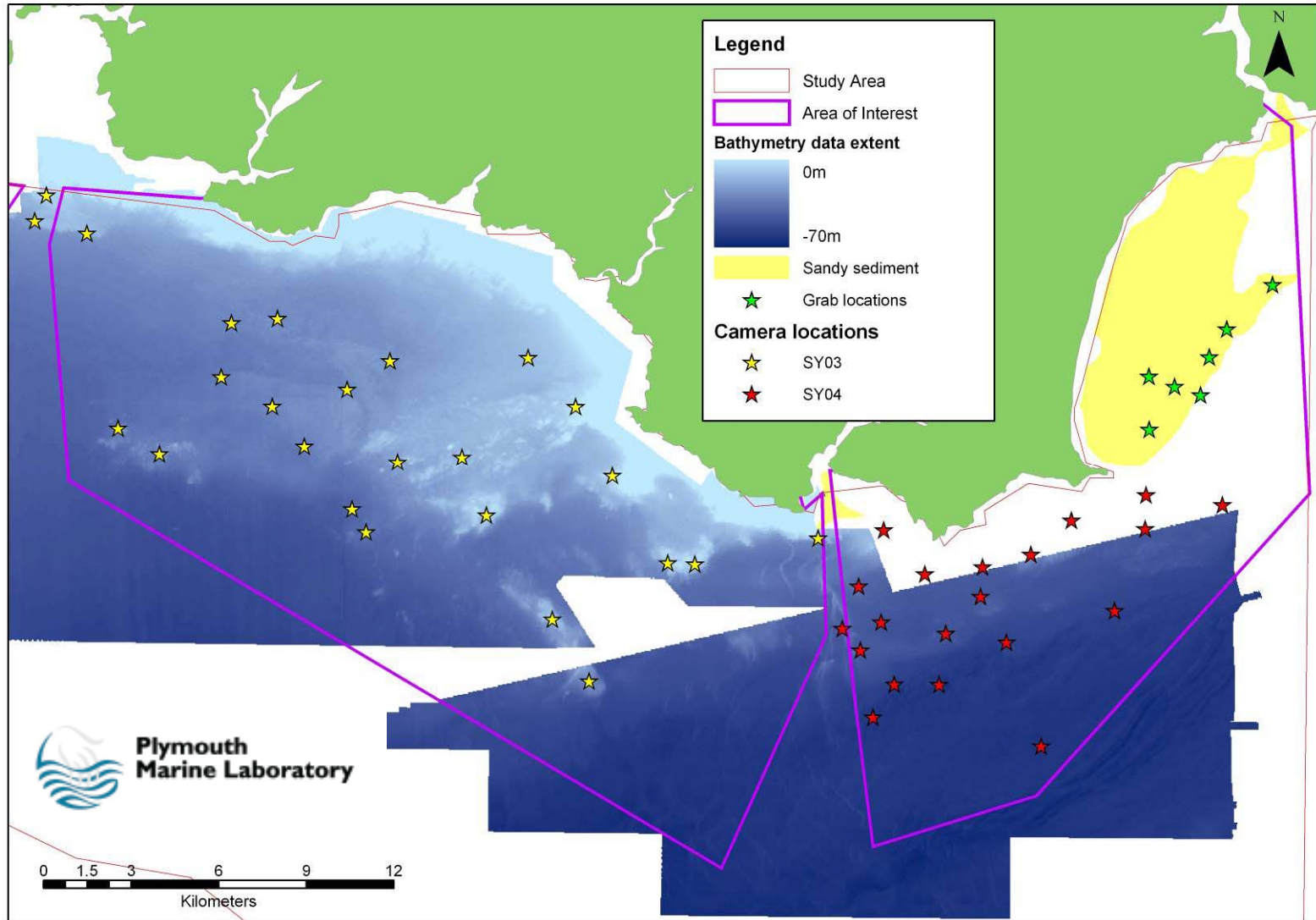
- Produced a guidance manual
- Undertook extensive data gathering
- Collated and processed all data
- Overlaid seabed texture, bathymetric and ecological data

The output of this was a mapped understanding of the existing baseline data.





- The three study sites were very different, in terms of the level of existing data
- A total of 14 Areas of Interest identified within 3 sites
- Some areas had sufficient existing data to address the Site Selection Criteria and required no further work
- Other sites required new survey work to allow the Site Attributes to be described
- Survey work prioritised to accommodate time & budget constraints

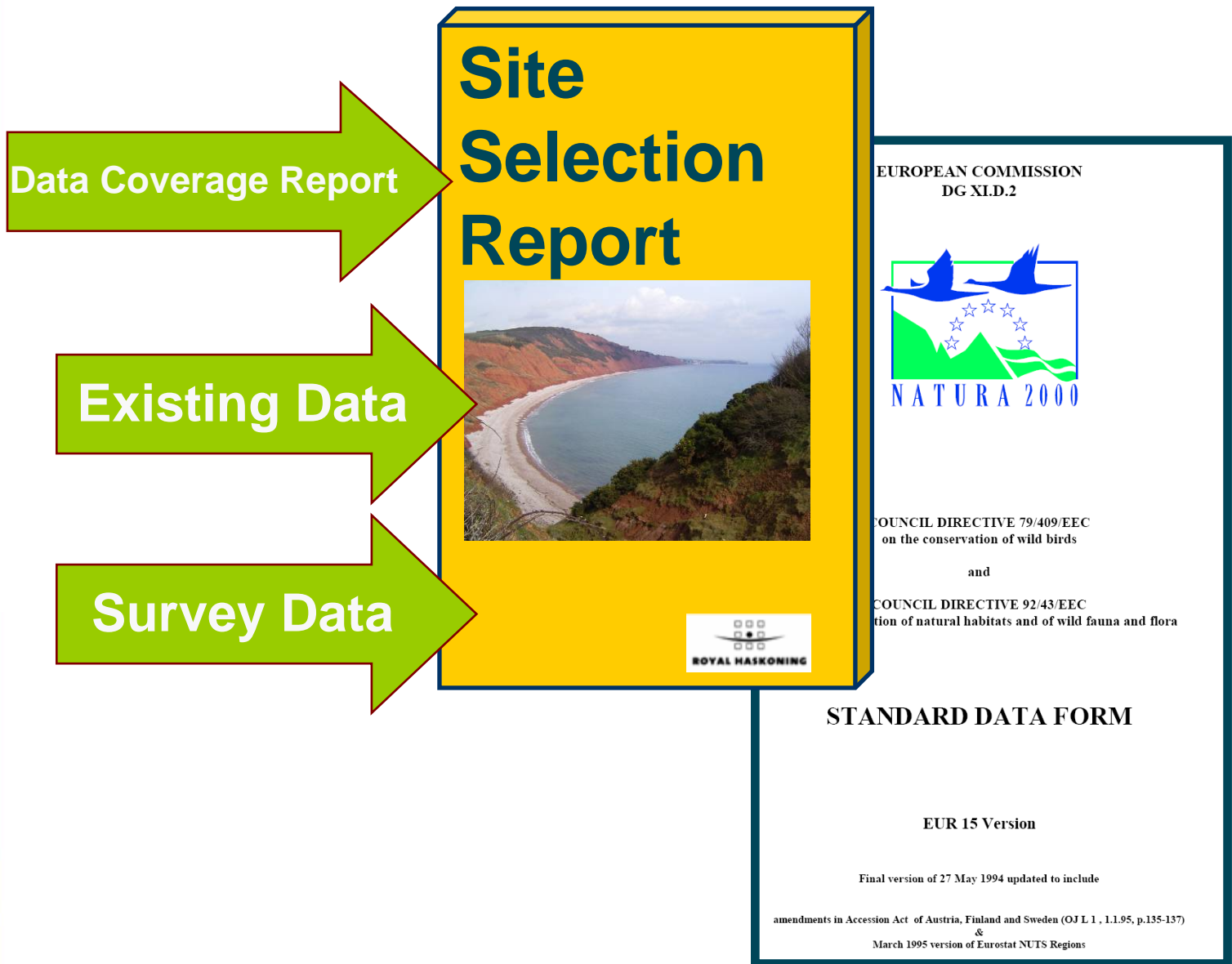


- Lyme to Poole Bay completed.
- Salcombe to Yealm & Eddystone started.
- Morecambe planned for October.

Mussel beds on reefs off Portland.

Weymouth  
50:28.68N 2:24.56W 0.0M  
18-09-07 09:23:47 00:00:00

Weymouth  
50:30.36N 2:25.17W 0.0M  
18-09-07 09:41:14 00:00:00



This exercise can inform the MPA debate in three key areas:

- Focused data collection to address specific criteria (Site Selection Criteria etc);
  - Collaborative working
  - Focus effort on data-poor areas
- Providing (in part) the ecological basis for an MPA network, supported by robust science;
- Lack of perfect knowledge is not a reason not to make decisions.

For further details of Royal Haskoning's work on the Marine SAC project for Natural England, please contact:

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