Annex I Sandbanks in the UK

Type	Composite of multiple datasets	**Scale**	Various
Coverage	UK subtidal (where data available)	**Shape type**	Polygons
Current version	2 (released December 2016)	**Previous version**	1 (released 2012)
Classification system	Habitats Directive Annex I Sandbanks[1].		
Purpose	To present the best available information on the distribution of Annex I Sandbanks in UK waters. Created for use in assessments, reporting and marine spatial planning.		
Specification	Process should be auditable, transparent, easy to explain and understand, objective, fully documented, appropriate for the variety of types of data available. The final product should contain a measure of confidence in the evidence supporting the described data.		
Data sources	Field surveys and desk studies by JNCC, NRW, SNH, NE, Cefas.		

Compilation: Data are manually added, removed and modified from the previous version of the dataset (v1) as new evidence becomes available. CNCBs are invited to supply new data and reassess confidence values for the described data.

Distribution and extent, and range: The data are split into two datasets: one describing the current evidence for the distribution and extent of the habitat and one describing the habitat's range.

The current evidence for the distribution and extent is presented as polygons. Point records contained within the previous version have been superseded by polygonal data in this update.

[1] http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1452

Descriptor suitability:
The Interpretation Manual of European Union Habitats – EUR28[2] provides guidance on the definition of an Annex I Sandbank, listing several key descriptors of a sandbank. These descriptors can be categorised as corresponding to the **1) topography** and **2) substrate** composition of, and **3) biological communities** contained within a Sandbank.

Each delineated Sandbank was analysed against key datasets and expert knowledge, resulting in a suitability attribution for each of the three descriptors of one of three levels:

- **Suitable**: Background evidence is supportive of the descriptor;
- **Less suitable or need more information**: The background evidence is inconclusive or more information is required to prove suitability.
- **Not suitable**: Background evidence underlying the record does not fulfil the descriptor.

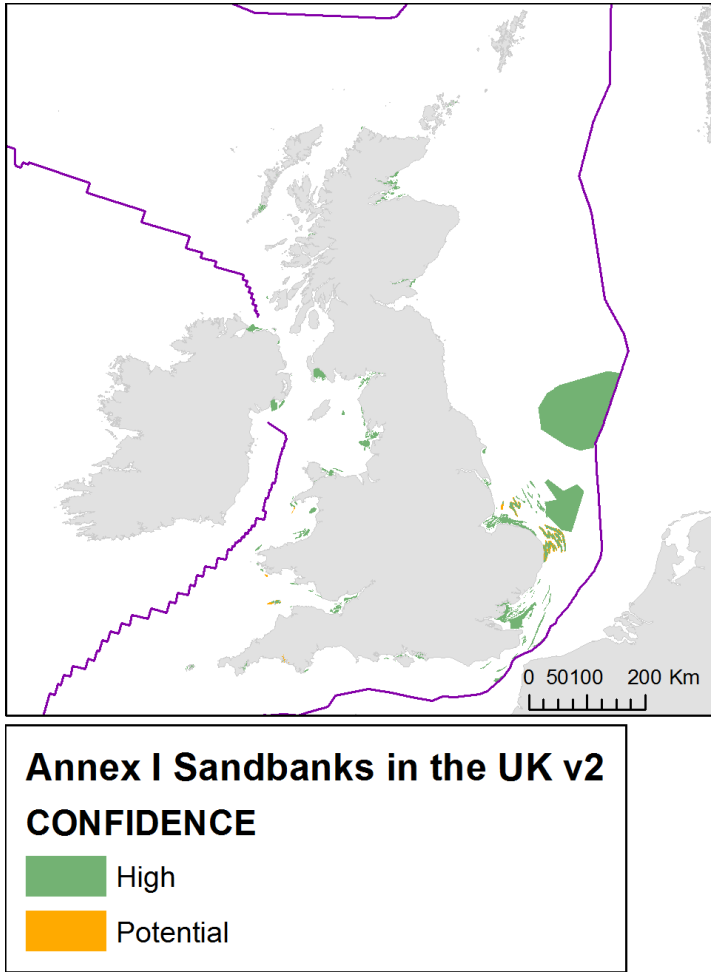
Confidence assessment:
A qualitative score has been assigned to the extent data, describing the level supporting information describing the presence of the habitat based on the suitability levels of the habitat descriptors. The final confidence values are as follows:

- **High**: High level of supporting background evidence.
- **Potential**: Background evidence indicates Annex I Sandbank is present but is insufficient to support high confidence.

Areas showing high suitability for two of the three descriptors and less suitable for the third were given a confidence of "High". Areas where the biological communities are continuous with "High" confidence polygons were attributed "High" confidence themselves.

For further information on confidence and descriptor suitability, please read the full-length report.

[2] Available from: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/habitatsdirective/docs/Int_Manual_EU28.pdf [Accessed December 2016]



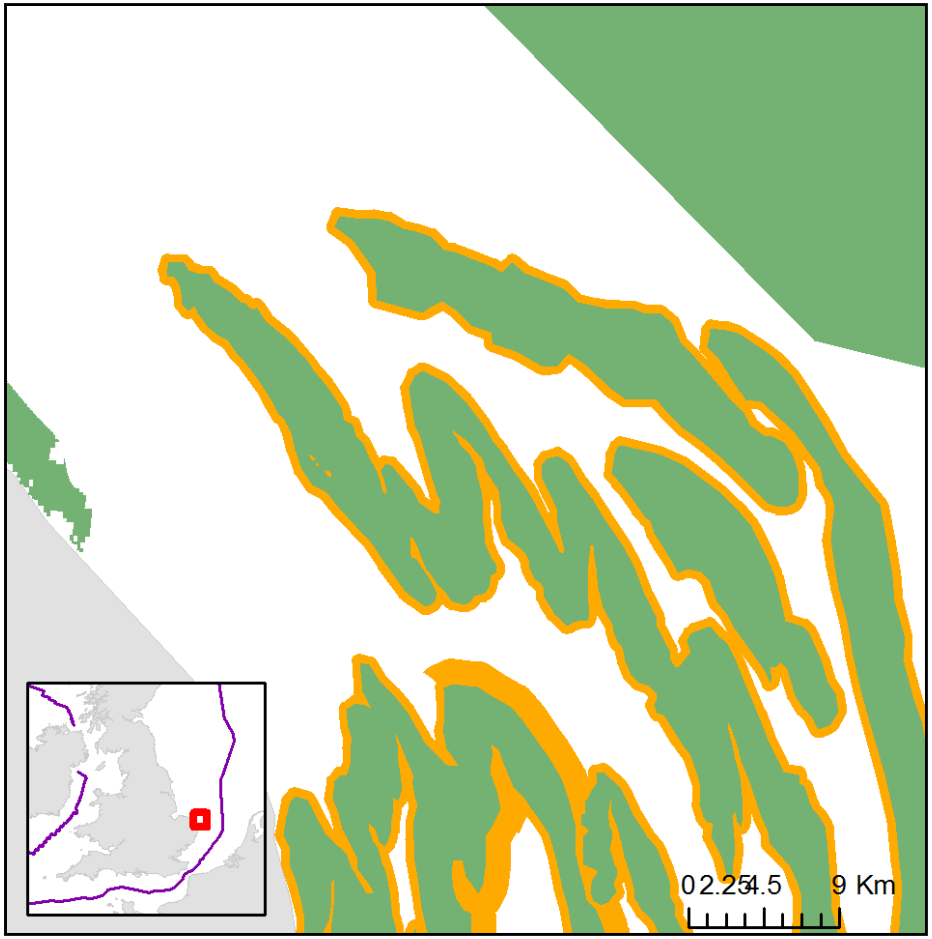


Figure: Left: Annex I Sandbanks in UK waters. Right: close-up example showing “High” and “Potential” confidence Sandbank in Haisborough, Hammond and Winterton SAC. The legend applies to both figures.

Please refer to the full-length report for all references, full method and confidence assessment method for the product.