## 6.6 Maritime Cliff and Slope

### Main Objectives & Key Actions:

1) **Maintain/ improve and increase the existing maritime cliff and slope biological and geological resource.**
   - Establish and strengthen designation of identified sites where appropriate by 2012.
   - Bring identified unfavourable areas of supralittoral rock into favourable condition through scrub clearance by 2012.
2) **Ensure that natural processes of erosion continue to operate on all areas of conservation interest.**
   - Ongoing
3) **Increase research and monitoring of sites.**
   - Survey SSSI unfavourable areas of supralittoral rock to establish access for management by 2010.
4) **Increase awareness of the importance of the habitat, the threats it faces and actions required by all for its continued well-being.**
   - Ongoing

#### 6.6.1 Background & Current Status

Maritime cliff and slope is defined in the UK BAP as' sloping vertical faces on the coastline where a break in slope is formed by slippage and/or coastal erosion. Extending landward to at least the limit of sea salt deposition and encompasses entire islands or headlands and seaward to the splash zone'. Maritime cliff and slope provide important habitats for plant communities, nesting seabirds and peregrines and are important geologically.

In Torbay there is approximately 22 miles of coastline which includes cliffs, slopes, ledges, rocky/sandy/shingle beaches and caves. The actual amount of maritime cliff and slope resource is unknown.

Maritime cliff and slope form varies according to several factors: the geology, configuration of the coastline, condition of the shore and the nature of wave attack. These factors can lead to a wide range of maritime cliff and slope habitats.

In Torbay the calcareous soils and generally mild climate have led to floristically rich maritime cliff grassland communities with notable rare species (Torbay Wildlife Survey, 1991). All sites surveyed were found to have a dominance of red fescue, thrift (*Armeria maritime*) and bladder campion (*Silene vulgaris* subs *maritima*) - during the survey twelve NVC maritime cliff communities were identified.

**Candidate Species that are highlighted in the Plan are:**
White rock-rose
Whitebeam (*Sorbus rupicola* and *Sorbus porrigentiformis*)
Bloxworth snout
Peregrine
Linnet
British whorl snail (*Truncatellina callicratis*)

### 6.6.2 The Current threats to this habitat:

- Coastal Development – Species are able to retreat with erosion of the cliff line however if it is squeezed between developed or cultivated land then this increases the chance of species loss through habitat loss. Natural erosion is necessary to maintain fresh geological outcrops.
- Scrub encroachment from species such as blackthorn, cotoneaster, holm oak, gorse linked to a reduction in grazing and lack of management. This obliterates habitats and exposures.
- Recreational Pressures – trampling; rock climbers can increase disturbance to seabirds and peregrines, damage rock faces or delicate geological features; increase worrying of grazing livestock.
- Coastal Protection – Re-profiling, stabilising with foreign substrates and disturbance can all lead to a reduction in biodiversity and geodiversity.
- Pollution
- Lack of access to resource – leads to a lack in knowledge and understanding.

**Table 8: Maritime Cliff and Slope Action Plan. Actions shaded in grey indicate further funding is required.**
**High priority actions** are proposed for completion within the next 3 years (to end of 2009).
**Medium priority actions** are proposed for completion within the next 6 years (to end of 2012).
**Low priority actions** are proposed for completion within the next 10 years (to end 2016).

| Actions for Maritime Cliff and Slope | Priority (High, Medium and Low) | Objective | Partners | Ongoing Action |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Policy and legislation** | | | | |
| **MC1** - Ensure all designated sites are detailed within local planning docs | **H** | **1,2,4** | **TC, TCCT** | ✓ |
| **MC2** - Ensure PPS9 is adhered to | **H** | **1** | **TC, NE** | ✓ |
| **Site Management** | | | | |
| **MC3** - Review site specific management plans to ensure integrated geological-ecological approach and to allow natural | **M** | **1,2,4,** | **TCCT, TC, NE** | ✓ |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| erosion to continue | | | | |
| **MC4** - Work to bring all SSSI's into favourable condition | **H** | **1** | **TCCT, NE** | ✓ |
| **MC5** - Ensure all suitable sites are designated as County Wildlife Sites | **M** | **1** | **TCCT, NE** | |
| **MC6** - Promote coastal grazing for nature conservation | **M** | **4** | **TCCT** | ✓ |
| **MC7** - Maintain population of whitebeam *Sorbus rupicola* and *Sorbus porrigentiformis* | **L** | **1,3** | **TCCT** | ✓ |
| **MC8** - Achieve CGS designation of proposed sites | **H** | **1,2,4** | **TCCT, Devon RIGS, TC** | |
| **Communication and Publicity** | | | | |
| **MC9** - Provide information for walkers on any management that is being carried out | **L** | **4** | **TCCT** | ✓ |
| **MC10** - Increase public awareness through events and developing links with schools | **M** | **4** | **TCCT** | ✓ |
| **Advisory** | | | | |
| **MC11** - Advise user groups (climbers, ramblers, geologists, water sport groups) on appropriate and sustainable use of cliff and slope environment. | **M** | **1,4** | **TCCT** | ✓ |
| **MC12** - Liaise on suitable grazing regimes | **M** | **1** | **TCCT, NE, DEFRA** | ✓ |
| **Research and Monitoring** | | | | |
| **MC13** - Ensure audit, research and monitoring information is linked with site protection and management | **H** | **1,2,4,6** | **TCCT, TC, NE,** | ✓ |
| **MC14** - Identify and map population of whitebeam *Sorbus rupicola* and *Sorbus porrigentiformis* | **L** | **3** | **BSBI** | |
| **MC15** - Encourage research of flora and fauna | **M** | **1,2,5,7** | **TCCT, TC, NE,** | |

Abbreviations: Torbay Coast & Countryside (TCCT), Torbay Council (TC), Natural England (NE), Botanical Society of The British Isles (BSBI).

**This action plan should be referred to with the following Action Plans: Lowland Calcareous Grassland, White Rock-Rose, Earth Heritage - Coastal Exposures and Geomorphological features and Seabirds**