The Two Bays initiative is a new wildlife project that aims to study and enhance the habitats and species in the Rye Bay area and across the Channel in the Baie de Somme, Picardy, France. This approach to nature conservation recognises that wildlife does not occur in isolation and moves across borders into neighbouring countries.

The project has four main objectives:

- Identify the main habitats present and the potential for habitat enhancement.
- Study and record the wildlife and maintain a wildlife database (already more than 6000 species).
- Encourage farmers and landowners to manage areas for wildlife and apply for suitable grants, to fund the work.
- Promote understanding of the environmental importance of the Two Bays.

For further information please contact:
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Visit the Two Bays web site: www.yates.clara.net

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Saltmarsh

In Rye Bay, saltmarsh is found along the tidal channels of the rivers Rother, Brede and Tillingham. In some sections it is restricted to a small fringe of vegetation. Historically much of the Romney Marshes was saltmarsh before being drained for agricultural land. Saltmarsh is now declining because of rising sea levels. Fortunately, it can be re-created and this has been carried out at Rye Harbour Nature Reserve.

Plants which grow on these marshes can withstand being covered with salt water up to twice daily. Different species grow on low and high areas within the marsh, forming zones of vegetation. Many special plants can be seen in Rye Bay, including Sea-heath, Marsh-mallow and Sea Aster. One plant formerly present in Rye Bay is Sea-lavender, but it can still be seen in the Baie de Somme.

Invertebrate life is very rich in saltmarshes. Uncommon species such as Starwort moth and Saltmarsh Bee are found in this habitat. This makes saltmarsh areas rich feeding grounds for birds such as Redshank and Rock Pipit.

In the Baie de Somme this habitat is much more widespread. Large saltmarshes form where the rivers Somme and Authie meet the sea.
The **highest zone** of saltmarsh is rarely covered by salt water. In Rye Bay this vegetation is mainly restricted to the flood banks.

In the **middle zone** of the saltmarsh Sea-purslane dominates. This area is periodically inundated with salt water.

Few plants can survive in the **lowest zone** of saltmarsh which is covered by every tide.

When saltmarsh is **grazed** it becomes dominated by grasses and tiny flowering plants.