

Chesil and Fleet Nature Reserve



Formation of Chesil

The formation of Chesil started at the end of the last ice age, some 14,000 – 20,000 years ago. As sea levels rose sediments were pushed up into a barrier beach. Over the next several thousand years the bank was pushed east toward its current position. As the sea levels began to stabilise approx. 5,000 – 7,000 years ago, debris from the surrounding cliffs of Devon and Dorset were added to the bank.

Chesil - A vital habitat

Chesil is a vital habitat for a wide variety of fauna and flora, many of which are shingle specialists and have adapted to survive in this harsh coastal environment. Some examples include: little tern, ringed plover, scaly cricket, darkling beetle, shrubby sea-blite, four-leaved allseed, sea kale, sea purslane and sea ivory.



Four-leaved allseed



Ringed plover



Sea ivory

The Fleet Lagoon

The Fleet is the body of water that sits between Chesil Bank and the land. It is the largest tidal lagoon in Britain, stretching 13km from Portland to Abbotsbury.

The Fleet – A vital habitat

The Fleet's unique seabed, salinity and tidal influence are part of what makes the Fleet so important for many different species of bird, marine life and vegetation. These include Brent geese, wigeon, eelgrass beds, tassel weed, foxtail, starlet anemone, lagoonal shrimp, looping snail, De Folin's lagoon snail, lagoonal worm, *Bledius spectabilis* beetle and *Aeolidiella aiden* (sea slug).



Brent geese



Lagoonal shrimp



Eelgrass