



ENGLISH HERITAGE

MONUMENTS AT RISK

SOUTH WEST

MONUMENTS AT RISK

Scheduled monuments are our most cherished, nationally important archaeological sites and landscapes. In the South West they include prehistoric burial mounds, stone circles and hill forts, Roman towns and villas, medieval settlements, castles and abbeys and the industrial structures of our more recent past.

They are a unique inheritance that tells the story of many generations of human endeavour and life. They create our sense of time and place, and add greatly to the distinctiveness of our towns and countryside.

Although protected by law, scheduled monuments are vulnerable to a wide range of human activities and natural processes. Survey in the South West region has shown that 3988 (57%) of its 6958 monuments are at risk from damage, decay or loss – unless action is taken. The main threats to our monuments are ploughing for arable crops – mainly in the east of the region – and invasive plant growth, especially in the west and on moorland. Significant numbers of monuments are also at risk from erosion by livestock, neglect, vandalism and animal burrowing.

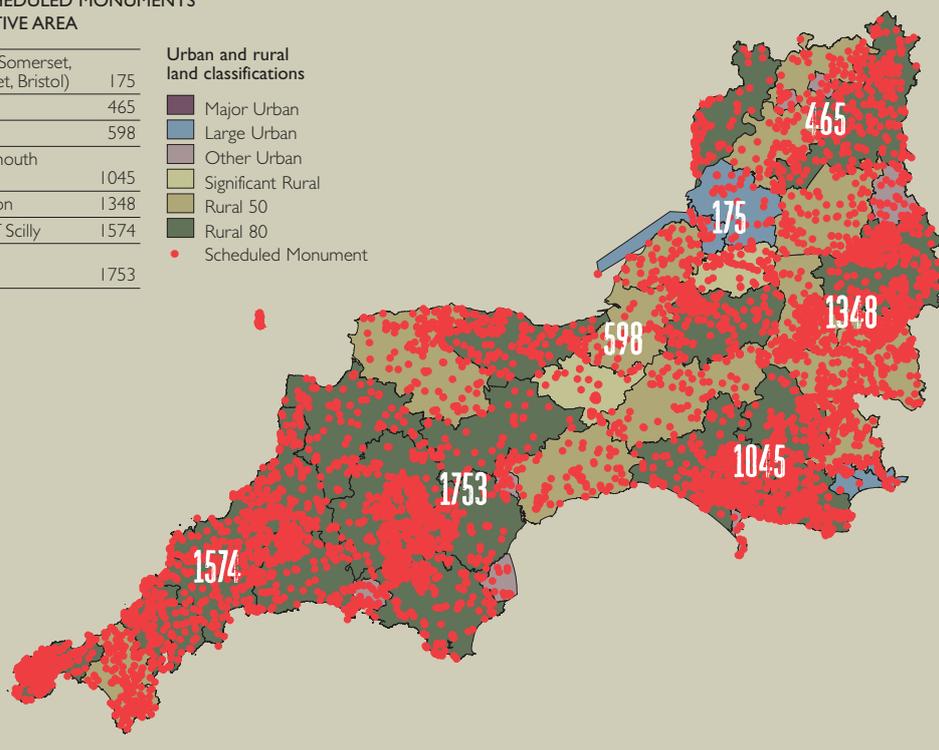
When damaged or lost, scheduled monuments cannot be replaced. Careful management is required if we are to pass them on to future generations in good condition. This requires close co-operation between the owners of scheduled monuments, government, and all organisations charged with care for the environment.

NUMBER OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS BY ADMINISTRATIVE AREA

Avon: (Bath & NE Somerset, S. Glos, N. Somerset, Bristol)	175
Gloucestershire	465
Somerset	598
Dorset & Bournemouth & Poole	1045
Wiltshire & Swindon	1348
Cornwall & Isles of Scilly	1574
Devon, Torbay, Exeter & Plymouth	1753

Urban and rural land classifications

- Major Urban
- Large Urban
- Other Urban
- Significant Rural
- Rural 50
- Rural 80
- Scheduled Monument



Front cover Flower's Barrow hillfort, Purbeck, Dorset – as the cliff erodes the monument is gradually falling into the sea.

SCHEDULED MONUMENTS AT RISK: SOUTH WEST

In 1998 English Heritage published a national Monuments at Risk Survey (MARS). This showed that since 1945, an average of one archaeological site had been destroyed every day. These losses include scheduled monuments – historic sites designated as being nationally important. As a follow up, English Heritage has now undertaken a more detailed assessment of the risks currently facing scheduled monuments in the South West region.

The survey had two main objectives:

- to evaluate the condition, amenity value and setting of scheduled monuments in the region and the extent to which they are at risk
- to establish priorities for action and monument management.

The South West survey found that with 57% of monuments at risk, there is an urgent need for action before more of our heritage is damaged or lost. Of the 6958 monuments in the region, 1838 (26%) are at high risk, 2150 (31%) at medium and 2970 (43%) at low risk.

1 Whitecliff iron furnace is one of several important furnaces in the Forest of Dean which are slowly decaying to quite a critical position.



FACTS & FIGURES

The South West is the largest region in England, with around 24,000km², 18% of the national land area, and a population of 5,068,000. The region has 35% of England's scheduled monuments. The average density of monuments is 3.4 per km², with the highest in the Isles of Scilly, at 15 per km², and the lowest in Bath and North East Somerset, at 0.2 per km².

OWNERSHIP

5042 scheduled monuments are in private ownership, 716 are owned by government or their agencies, 465 by local authorities, 102 by utilities and 613 by other parties.

FORM AND DATE

The majority of scheduled monuments in the South West are primarily classed as earthworks (65%), mainly of prehistoric and medieval date, or standing structures (25%) that are principally of medieval and later date. 11% are classed as 'other'.

5042
SCHEDULED
MONUMENTS ARE IN
PRIVATE
OWNERSHIP

LAND USE

34% of scheduled monuments are under grassland cover, 20% are on developed or urban land, 10% are under cultivation, 25% are on semi-natural land, 8% are in woodland and 1% are on coastal land with a further 1% in rivers and lakes.

2 Clearance of scrub from Salmonsbury Camp, on the northern Cotswolds, revealed extensive rabbit burrowing. The rampart of the Iron Age enclosure was stabilised using innovative grouting techniques before being re-seeded.

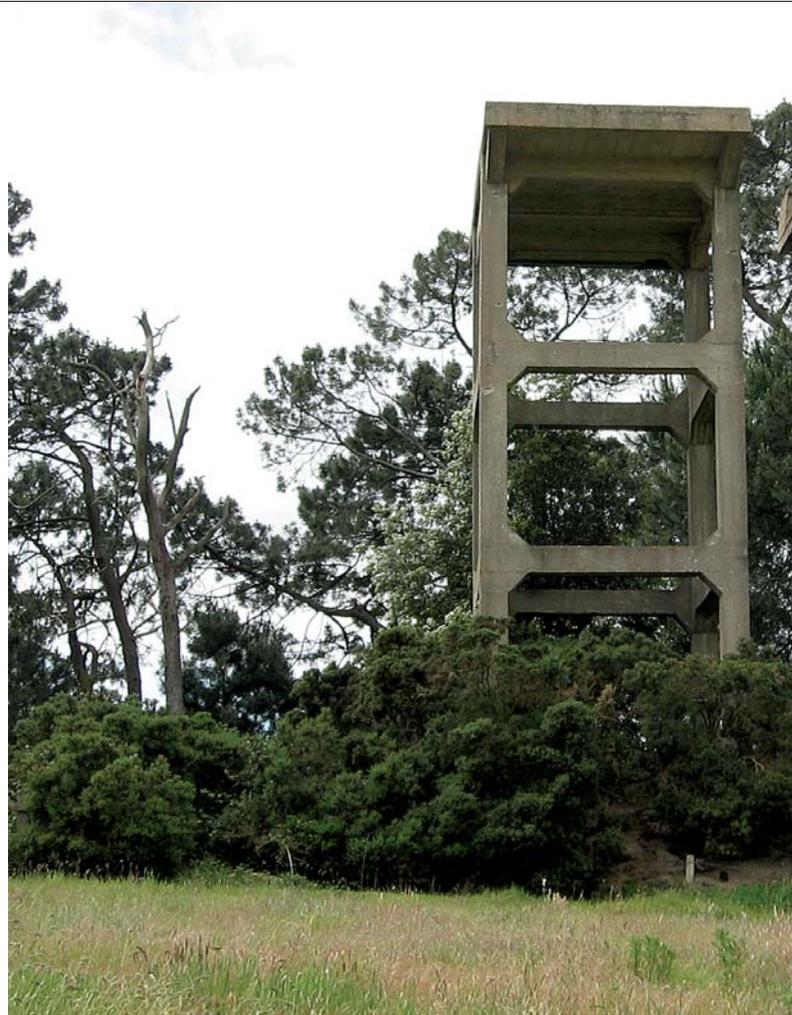
3 This group of round barrows in Dorset, previously under cultivation, is about to revert to grassland under High-Level Stewardship.

4 Garrison walls on St Mary's, Isles of Scilly. Both this monument and the islands are at risk from coastal erosion and rising sea levels.



MEASURING THE RISKS

The study assessed not only the condition of each monument's fabric (whether its remains are buried or upstanding) but also included an initial evaluation of its setting and amenity value. The setting of a monument is usually fundamental to forming an understanding and appreciation of the site itself. Amenity value is what the visitor can appreciate of the monument when visiting the site. Inappropriate development or land use next to a scheduled monument can be an eyesore, or can lead to the site becoming an island, cut-off from its surroundings. Other impacts such as traffic, noise and dust from nearby mineral extraction can also spoil the enjoyment of visitors.



KEY FINDINGS

CONDITION

Significant problems were noted on 43% of scheduled monuments, and 10% were in a wholly unsatisfactory condition. Condition is in decline for 35% of monuments, and only 8% are improving.

RISK

26% of monuments are at high risk (in the short term) and 31% are at medium risk. Consequently, well over half need urgent action to prevent deterioration, loss or damage.

26% OF
MONUMENTS ARE AT
HIGH RISK

RISK AND LAND USE

32% of high-risk monuments are located in cultivated land, 26% are on semi-natural land, 23% are in grassland, 8% are on developed or urban land, 9% are in woodland, and 2% are on coastal land. Devon and its unitary authorities have the greatest number of high risk monuments in the region (502), of which 351 (70%) are at risk from natural processes, mostly plant growth such as bracken.

VULNERABILITY

20% of scheduled monuments are at risk from agriculture (17% from ploughing and 5% from erosion caused by stock), 26% are vulnerable to unmanaged tree, bracken or scrub growth, 4% are prone to decay, neglect and vandalism, 4% are threatened by animal burrowing and another 4% are threatened by development, mineral extraction and forestry.



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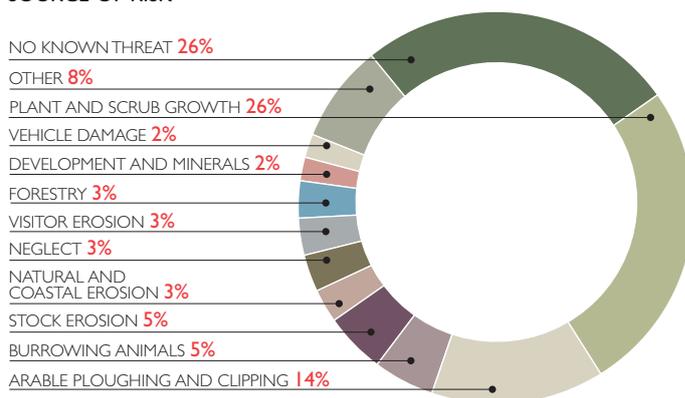
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RISK BY ADMINISTRATIVE AREA	HIGH RISK	MEDIUM RISK	LOW RISK
AVON (BATH & NE SOMERSET, S GLOS, N SOMERSET, BRISTOL)	21	43	111
GLOUCESTERSHIRE	110	121	234
SOMERSET	73	116	409
DORSET & BOURNEMOUTH & POOLE	385	348	312
WILTSHIRE & SWINDON	464	329	555
CORNWALL & ISLES OF SCILLY	283	755	536
DEVON, TORBAY & PLYMOUTH	502	438	813

SOURCE OF RISK



5 Subsidence of the right-hand tower of this anti-aircraft battery at Wareham, Dorset, was caused by animals burrowing below the foundations.

6 Grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Gloucestershire County Council and English Heritage have recently been used to repair the erosion caused by walkers to this Cotswold escarpment hillfort near Painswick in Gloucestershire.

7 An ongoing project between English Heritage and the Defence Estates has targeted round barrows on Salisbury Plain severely affected by rabbit burrowing, using a variety of innovative repair methods.

8 Sandsfoot Castle, Weymouth is gradually collapsing at the head of an eroding sea cliff.

9 The Neolithic long barrow at Hawkesbury in the Cotswolds is now under arable reversion but with issues of sheep erosion encouraged by shelter from trees.

LEGISLATION

Current ancient monument legislation permits potentially damaging activities (ploughing, horticulture, forestry, gardening) on all or parts of 14% of scheduled monuments.

62% OF MONUMENTS ARE VISIBLE

AMENITY VALUE

62% of monuments are visible and 30% are partly visible. Buried remains alone survive for 6%. 40% are fully accessible to the public, 30% have restricted access and 26% have no public access. Detailed on-site interpretation is available at only 2% of monuments, 13% have some interpretation, and 78% have none available on-site.

SETTING

An initial appraisal of the setting of monuments suggests that 17% include many features of more recent date, 41% have some modern features, and 40% have few or no modern features. In 36% of cases, the monument's setting has changed substantially since the monument was constructed or in use. Partial changes in setting have occurred at 50% of sites. For 13% of monuments it can be considered to be unchanged. Setting was not assessed in 2% of cases.

DESIGNATION

Scheduled monuments within Sites of Special Scientific Interest or National Parks are generally at lower risk than the regional average. However, monuments within Environmentally Sensitive Areas, World Heritage Sites and National Nature Reserves are at a higher risk. For the sites with nature designations, this is probably as a result of management regimes that, although beneficial for biodiversity, can be detrimental to scheduled monuments.

IMPROVED AREA CONSERVATION

Many of our landscapes and townscape are recognised as being of special importance because of their historic, natural, or aesthetic qualities – or because they are in need of economic regeneration. These areas normally benefit from strong safeguards against unsympathetic development, and can be eligible for grant schemes that could significantly help to reduce the extent to which scheduled monuments within their boundaries are at risk.

10 A standing stone in the Carbis Bay area, West Cornwall, with stock erosion at its base.



In some cases the risks to scheduled monuments can be reduced simply by good land management, or by informed planning policies and decisions that take full account of the national importance of historic sites. However, some monuments do require significant resources in order to stabilise their condition, to carry out repairs, or to change the way in which the land on and around the monument is used.

High numbers of monuments at risk in the region have provided the incentive to start development of a strategy to reduce those numbers. Key to this strategy are partnerships with other bodies.

Scheduled monument management schemes: these annual grant schemes, run jointly between English Heritage, County Councils and National Park authorities, aim to improve the management of monuments.

In the last two years these schemes have been targeted on reducing the risk levels of monuments.

Environmental Stewardship: this grant scheme, run by Natural England, encourages good land management for the main environmental concerns. In the South West Region English Heritage and archaeologists in local authorities have been discussing with Natural England how their grant schemes, particularly Higher Level Stewardship, could assist with targeting monuments at risk on agricultural land.

Major land owners with large numbers of scheduled monuments: discussions have started with bodies with a conservation remit, like the National Trust. In the longer term it would be helpful to agree site management statements for monuments at risk with owners who have several monuments.

For the first time, the priorities for improved scheduled monument management have been identified throughout the South West region. At the strategic level, the major sources of risk to the condition of monuments in the region have been identified. At the individual site level, practical management needs have been identified.

Practical advice on the management of scheduled monuments is available from the Historic Environment Local Management website at www.helm.org.uk

11 A round barrow on the North Wessex Downs. Archaeological excavation undertaken for an English Heritage research project revealed extensive badger damage.



12 A West Somerset hillfort with severe animal burrowing in the rampart.



13 Bracken encroachment is gradually masking this prehistoric enclosure on Dartmoor. On present trends the monument will not be visible in 10 years' time.



THE RISKS TO SCHEDULED MONUMENTS CAN BE REDUCED BY GOOD LAND MANAGEMENT

Grant aid from English Heritage and Somerset County Council has been used to prop up the most dangerous part of this ruined medieval building at Kilve in Somerset. Discussions about how to stabilise the structure are continuing.

THE WAY FORWARD

There will be no easy or overnight solution to the issues identified by the South West Scheduled Monuments at Risk study. Although English Heritage has a statutory duty to promote the conservation of ancient monuments, our financial resources can only solve a small fraction of the problems. Other partners will also play a vital role in improving the condition of these important sites and, in some cases, legislative change is required.

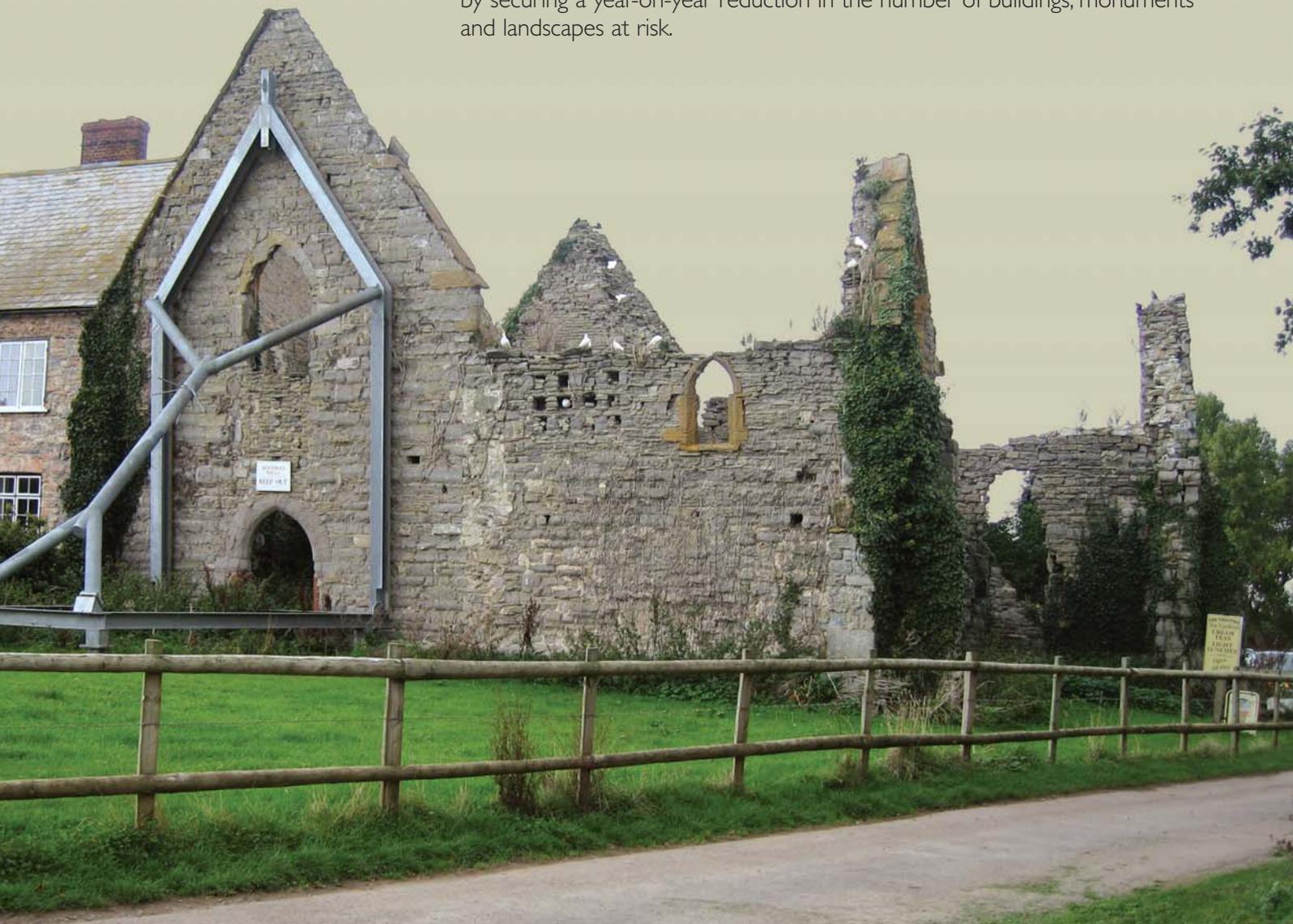
If we are to pass on this fragile heritage to future generations, the current level of risk to scheduled monuments must be reduced. Over half are in need of management action to prevent further deterioration, loss or damage. English Heritage believes that no monuments legally protected in the public interest should be at high risk.

One of the impediments to efficient and effective management of scheduled monuments has until now been England's overly complicated system of heritage legislation. We therefore welcome government's commitment to reform the current arrangements for the protection of the historic environment in the context of the draft Heritage Protection Bill presented to Parliament in April 2008.

We particularly encourage public sector funding bodies to achieve a balance between historic, natural and other environmental issues when deciding grant priorities and we welcome the enhanced profile of heritage within the new Environmental Stewardship Scheme.

We believe that reducing the risk to scheduled monuments should be accorded a similar priority to the achievement of biodiversity targets, and that these efforts can often be mutually supportive.

English Heritage is committed to measuring its success as an organisation by securing a year-on-year reduction in the number of buildings, monuments and landscapes at risk.



**SCHEDULED MONUMENTS
RISK CATEGORY**

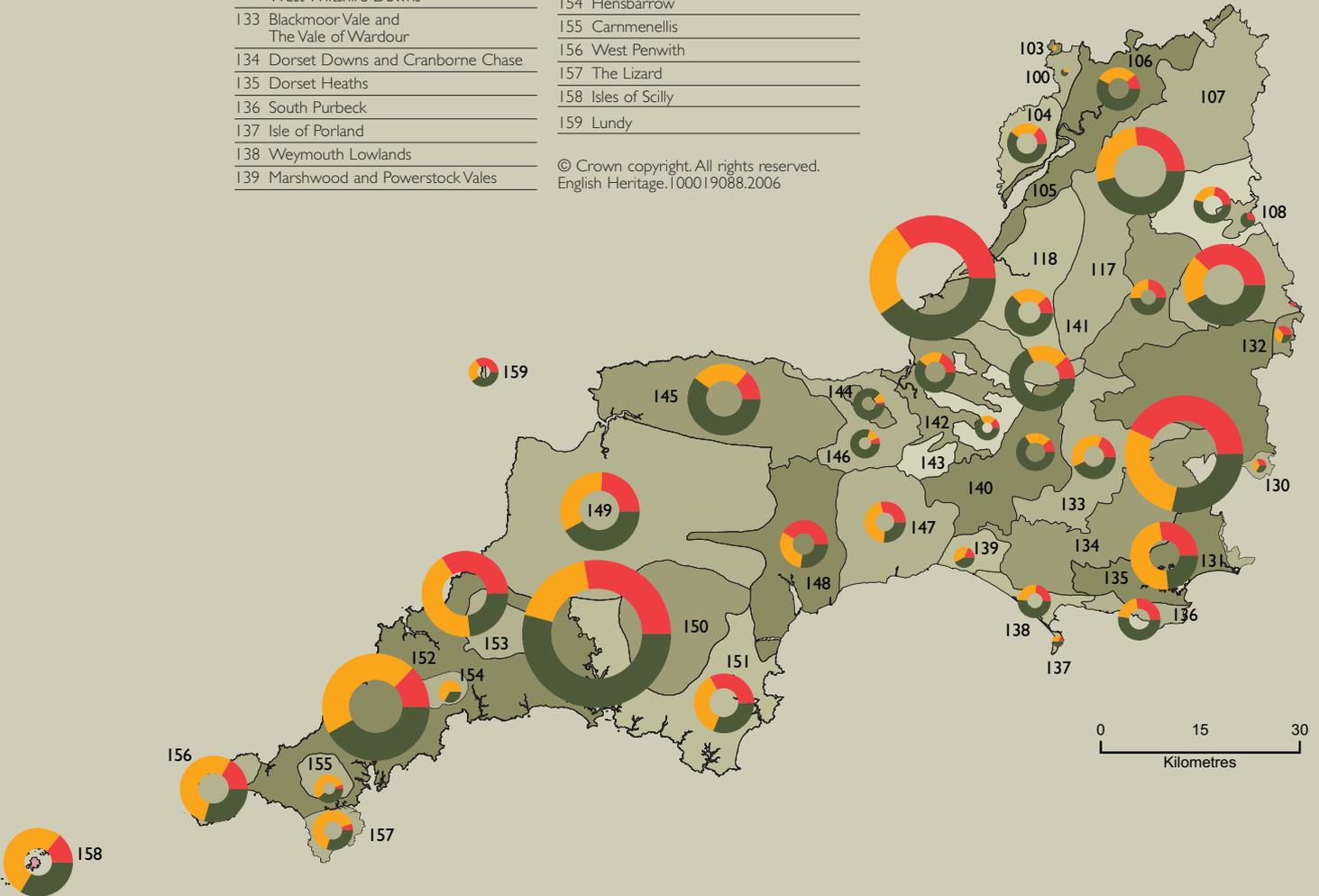
- High Risk
- Medium Risk
- Low Risk

**COUNTRYSIDE CHARACTER AREAS
Number refers to CCA reference code**

100 Herefordshire Lowlands	140 Yeovil Scarplands
104 South Herefordshire and Over Severn	141 Mendip Hills
105 Forest of Dean and Lower Wye	142 Somerset Levels and Moors
106 Severn and Avon Vales	143 Mid Somerset Hills
107 Cotswolds	144 Quantock Hills
108 Upper Thames Clay Vales	145 Exmoor
109 Midvale Ridge	146 Vale of Taunton and Quantock Fringes
116 Berkshire and Marlborough Downs	147 Blackdowns
117 Avon Vale	148 Devon Redlands
118 Bristol, Avon Valleys and Ridges	149 The Culm
129 Thames Basin Heaths	150 Dartmoor
130 Hampshire Downs	151 South Devon
131 New Forest	152 Cornish Killas
132 Salisbury Plain and West Wiltshire Downs	153 Bodmin Moor
133 Blackmoor Vale and The Vale of Wardour	154 Hensbarrow
134 Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase	155 Cammenellis
135 Dorset Heaths	156 West Penwith
136 South Purbeck	157 The Lizard
137 Isle of Portland	158 Isles of Scilly
138 Weymouth Lowlands	159 Lundy
139 Marshwood and Powerstock Vales	

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English Heritage.100019088.2006

The distribution of scheduled monuments at risk in the South West analysed using Countryside Character Areas. The Joint Character Areas, defined jointly by the statutory conservation agencies, are used alongside other datasets in the targeting of environmental farming schemes.



This document is one of a series of publications produced as part of English Heritage's new national Heritage at Risk campaign. More information about Heritage at Risk and other titles in the series can be found at www.english-heritage.org.uk/risk

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