

December
2025

State of Dorset

Natural and Historic Environment



Dorset's natural and historic environment plays a vital role in supporting health, wellbeing, and the local economy.

Natural systems provide essential goods—such as food, fuel, clean air and water, and productive soil—and deliver valuable services including pollination, flood protection, climate regulation, and tranquillity.

Big Numbers Box

2.4% of waste is sent to landfill

20% of electricity from local renewables¹²

5% of England's ancient monuments

56% of Dorset is designated National Landscape

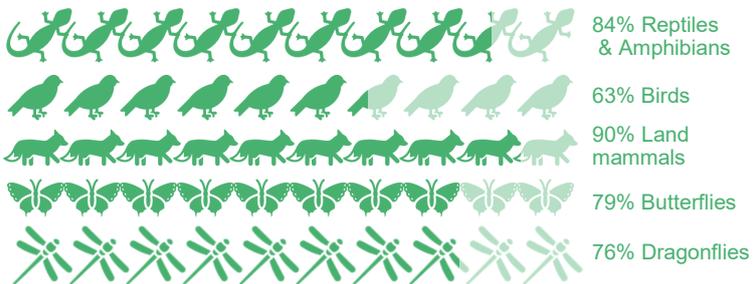
9,217 Listed Buildings

90% chose Dorset for its environment

Box 1: Landmarks & Landscapes

- 90% of Dorset's* residents surveyed said the environment was an important, very important or crucial factor in their decision to live in Dorset. In addition, businesses report a demonstrable positive impact from both the Jurassic Coast and the National Landscape.¹
- Dorset contains part of England's only natural World Heritage Site and two National Landscapes, covering 56% of the Dorset Council area.²
- Dorset is home to 9,217 Listed Buildings of which 245 are Grade I.³ 5% of England's national protected monuments are in Dorset.
- Dorset's coast is recognised in national and international designations for its unique landscape, scenic quality, wildlife and geological formations.²

Dorset is home to...



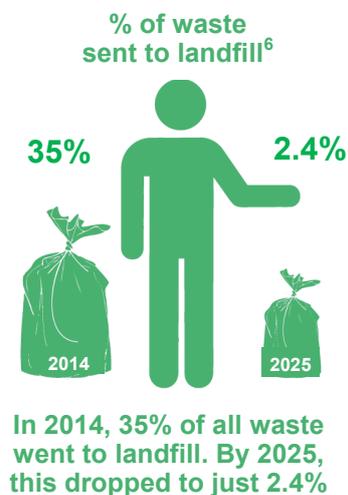
Sources

*includes Christchurch

- 1 'Dorset's Environmental Economy', Ash Futures for Dorset County Council, Dorset AONB, Jurassic Coast WHS, Dorset LNP, 2015 (adjusted to 2025 prices)
- 2 Dorset Databook 2011, Dorset County Council (recalculated)
- 3 The National Heritage List for England (NHLE), Historic England, 17/09/2025
- 4 The Clean Growth Strategy, Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, 12/10/2017
- 5 Public Health and Landscape, Creating healthy places, Landscape Institute, November 2013

Box 2: Economy and wellbeing

- Dorset's* environmental economy is worth between £1.3bn and £3.5bn per annum. It also supports between 17,000 and 61,000 jobs in the economy.¹
- The low carbon economy could grow by 11% per year between 2015 and 2030 - four times faster than the rest of the economy.⁴
- Access to nature supports physical and mental health, yet people in deprived areas are significantly less likely to live near green spaces—highlighting the importance of improving access to reduce environmental inequality.⁷
- The landscape can reduce the need for expensive public health interventions. Local public health spending on the landscape can be 27 times more cost-effective than clinical interventions.⁵



Box 3: Land Use

- Dorset's agricultural land area represents 199,534 ha, just over three quarters of Dorset's total land area. There are just over 2,200 farms in the county.⁸
- Dorset has just over 30,000 ha⁷ of woodland cover, which represents 12.1% of Dorset's land area. This is higher than the national average of 10.3%.⁸
- There are over 200 national and local environmental designated areas across Dorset.⁸
- Dorset has 142 km of coastline, much of it designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.⁹



Sources

*includes Christchurch

6 Dorset Council Recycling Team

7 Included outside: Engaging people living in low-income areas in nature, Natural England, Sept 2022

8 Rural regions and sustainable development in England, University of Exeter 2025

9 Dorset Council