



# Humber Management Scheme

## Action plan

January 2016



Industry and nature in harmony in one of Europe's great estuaries

## **1. The Humber Management Scheme Plan**

The Humber Estuary is internationally important for wildlife and is designated as a European Marine Site (EMS). The organisations with statutory responsibilities for the Humber Estuary EMS, known as Relevant Authorities, established the Humber Management Scheme (HMS) to deliver one single management plan for the Humber Estuary EMS. The HMS is administered and overseen by the Humber Nature Partnership.

The Humber Nature Partnership is also the catchment partnership host for the Humber Estuary and Coastal Margin Catchment as part of the Water Framework Directive (WFD). Many actions included in this plan meet the requirements under WFD.

## **2. How was the action plan developed?**

The HMS action plan was developed by reviewing the [conservation objectives](#) for each Humber Estuary designated feature, outlining the potential threats to the objectives and any existing management that is in place. Gaps in management were then identified which now form the actions within this plan.

The action plan is split into 5 main themes:

1. Policy and legislation
2. Site safeguard and management
3. Research and monitoring
4. Advisory
5. Communications and publicity

Some actions are very broad and will be determined and defined over the action plan period. Other actions are very specific. Actions have been prioritised based on the condition of the protected habitat or species e.g. the protected habitat or species is not in favourable condition, or those actions which will have most impact. Actions which have been identified as low priority does not mean that they are of low importance.

## **3. Who will deliver the actions?**

The majority of actions identified are those which require partnership support for their delivery. Their key partners have been identified in the action plan.

Humber Nature Partnership staff will administer and drive forward the action plan, with support from the whole partnership.

The delivery of the actions will be supported, overseen and supported by the HMS Management Group. This group is made up of representatives of the Humber Estuary Relevant Authorities Group (HERAG) and the Chair of the Humber Nature Forum. The HMS Management Group will review the progress of the HMS action plan and deliver plan quarterly in conjunction with HNP staff.

In some cases where a range of partners are required to deliver an action, a steering group will be set up.

#### 4. Benefits of the HMS

The HMS has demonstrated its value to the management of one Europe’s greatest estuaries for many years and is now recognised as part of one of the most successful Nature Partnerships in England. The model used is recognised as one of the most effective and efficient ways to deliver estuary management. By working as a partnership to manage an area as complex as the Humber Estuary reduces the need to invest resources to meet statutory duties and by combines knowledge and experience. Participation in the partnership enables essential actions to be delivered which cut across geographical boundaries, achieving more than in isolation.

#### 5. How will the plan be monitored and updated?

The Humber Nature Partnership will use two main indicators to measure the success of the HMS action plan:

- Condition of the Humber SAC, SPA and SSSI, taking into account natural change and factors outside the control of the action plan and
- Outputs identified in the HMS action plan

The Humber Nature Partnership has also developed an annual delivery plan.

The HMS action and delivery plan will be reviewed annually and updated using the information as identified in diagram 2.

#### 6. Current estuary condition

The action plan and its associated delivery plan address the protection and enhancement of the Humber Estuary EMS. The SAC, SPA, RAMSAR and SSSI designations are constantly monitored and as information is updated we will share this with partners.

The HMS uses condition information to inform the action plan and measure its success. Where information is not in place on the SAC or SPA feature condition, SSSI condition assessment information can be used to inform management actions. The Conservation status of the Humber Estuary SPA and SAC features can be found in table 1. Table 2 provides a summary of the Humber Estuary SSSI condition.

Feature	Conservation status
Estuary	SAC feature in unfavourable recovering condition.
Mud and sand flats	SAC feature in unfavourable recovering condition.
Saline lagoons	SAC feature in favourable condition.
Saltmarsh – Atlantic salt meadow and pioneer saltmarsh	Annex 1 (Habitats Directive) feature assessment not recorded at site level.
Sub-tidal sandbanks	SAC feature in favourable condition.
Breeding birds	No current SPA condition assessment.

Wintering and passage birds	No current SPA condition assessment.
Grey seals	SAC feature in favourable condition.
River and sea lamprey	Annex 1 (Habitats Directive) feature assessment not recorded at site level.

Table 1: Conservation status of Humber SPA and SAC features (provided by Natural England July 2014)

Areas	% 2014	% 2015
Area meeting PSA target	98.82	98.75
Area in favourable Condition	7.63	7.54
Area in unfavourable recovering condition	91.28	91.21
Area unfavourable no change	0.20	0.17
Area unfavourable declining	0.98	1.09
Area destroyed/part destroyed	0.00	0.00

Table 2: Humber Estuary SSSI Condition (June 2014)

## 7. Conservation Objectives

Natural England has identified the conservation objectives for the Humber Estuary. The action plan identifies how the actions delivered link to these objectives.

SPA	
<p>1. Ensure that the <b>integrity</b> of the site is <b>maintained or restored</b> as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, <b>by maintaining or restoring:</b></p> <p><a href="http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5382184353398784">http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5382184353398784</a></p>	<p>1.1 The <b>extent and distribution</b> of the habitats of the qualifying feature</p> <p>1.2 The <b>structure and function</b> of the habitats of the qualifying features</p> <p>1.3 The supporting <b>processes</b> on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely</p> <p>1.4 The <b>population</b> of each of the qualifying features</p> <p>1.5 The <b>distribution</b> of the qualifying features within the site</p>
SAC	

<p>2. Ensure that the <b>integrity</b> of the site is <b>maintained or restored</b> as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, <b>by maintaining or restoring:</b></p> <p><a href="http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5009545743040512">http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5009545743040512</a></p>	<p>2.1 The <b>extent and distribution</b> of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species</p> <p>2.2 The <b>structure and function</b> (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats</p> <p>2.3 The <b>structure and function</b> of the habitats of qualifying species</p> <p>2.4 The supporting <b>processes</b> on which qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species rely</p> <p>2.5 The <b>populations</b> of qualifying species</p> <p>2.6 The <b>distribution</b> of qualifying species within the site</p>
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## 8. Water Framework Directive: Humber River Basin Management Plan

The Humber Nature Partnership is the host for the Humber Estuary and coastal management catchment. The priority river basin management issues to tackle in the catchment are:

- Coastal squeeze and intertidal habitat loss
- Tributyltin contamination in the inner estuary
- Dissolve oxygen sag in the inner estuary during summer months

The aims of the HMS to meet ‘favourable conservation status’ as required by the Habitats Regulations fit well with the requirement under the Water Framework Directive for the Humber to reach ‘good ecological potential’. Many of the actions identified in the HMS action plan will meet the requirements of both pieces of legislation, including actions that cover issues and necessary measures such as habitat conservation for coastal squeeze, improving flood plain connectivity, awareness raising and carrying out data collection and research.

## 9. 2016 priorities

### Site safeguard and management

- Work to understand bird declines: bird tagging project/next steps following IPENS bird decline report (NE)
- Recreational disturbance management: management plan, Humber Hounds project, NE coastal path
- Strategic opportunity mapping and land management

### **Research and monitoring**

- Completion of the in-combination database
- Audit of existing monitoring on the Humber Estuary

### **Communication and publicity**

- Completion of the Humber Estuary awareness raising app

### **10. Lifetime of the plan**

No fixed timescales have been given to the lifetime of this plan. This plan will be reviewed and updated annually depending on the progress of actions.

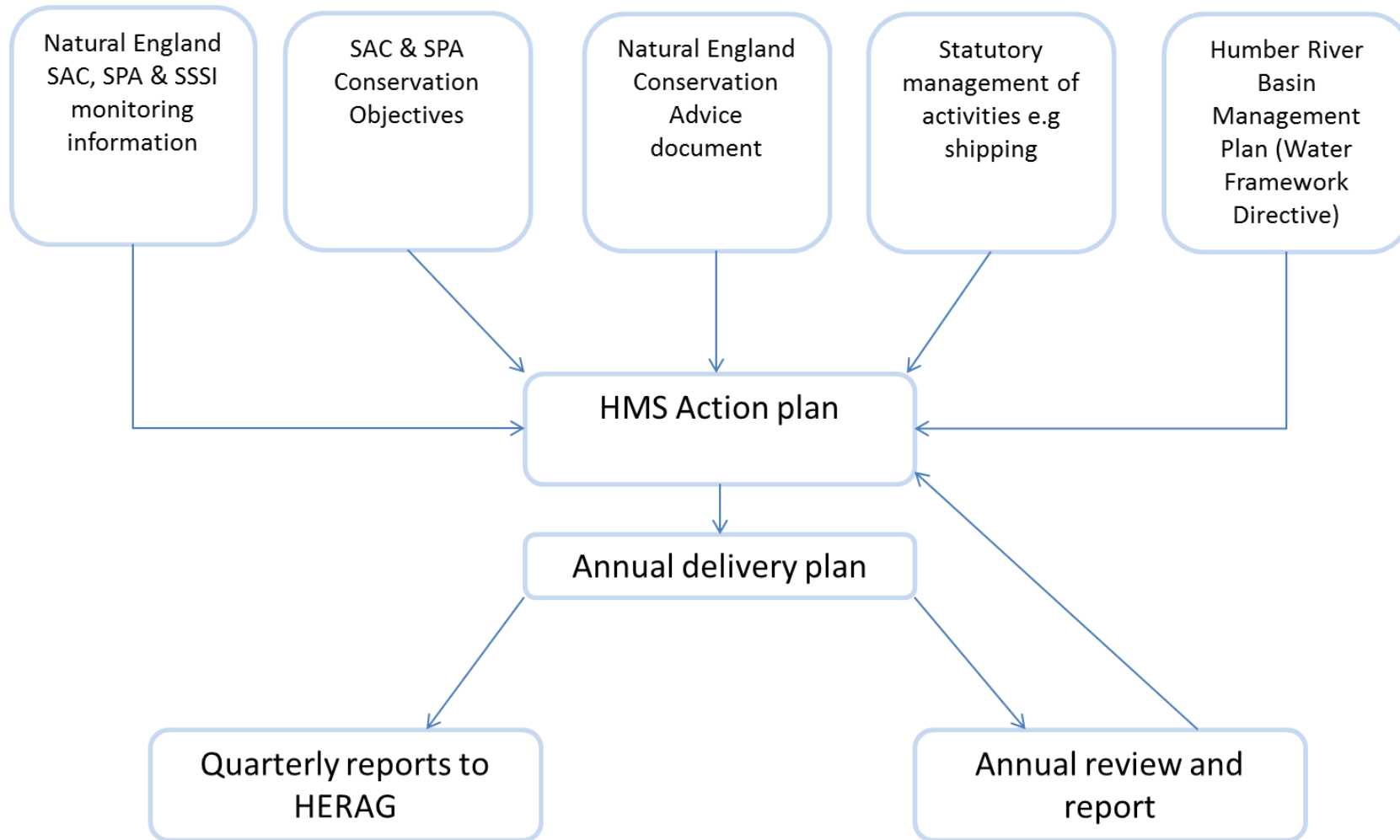


Diagram 2: Review and update of the HMS action plan

## 11. HMS action plan

Action	Link to SPA/SAC Conservation Objectives	Link to WFD objectives	Timescales	Geographical focus	Lead Partners	Monitoring indicator & source of data	Output	Priority
<b>Policy and legislation</b>								
<b>1. Designation of managed realignment sites as SSSI, SAC and SPA. This action will become an increased priority if evidence suggests site deterioration. Site safeguard and management</b>	All objectives		2025	Managed realignment sites	Natural England	Condition of MR sites	Sites designated	Low
<b>2. Addressing bird declines:</b>								High
<b>2.1 Managing the impact of recreation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Production of a delivery plan and delivery of identified actions</li> </ul> <b>Projects:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Humber Hounds</li> <li>Access map</li> <li>See awareness raising action</li> </ul>	1.4 and 1.5		2016 Ongoing 2016	Whole estuary	HNP	WeBS data and NE condition assessment	Delivery plan produced Membership, facebook followers and public opinion  Map produced  Pilot complete	High
<b>2.2 Bird tracking project</b>  <b>2.3 Identifying further actions: IPENS report</b>	1.5 All objectives 1		Pilot 2016 2016	To be identified	Humber Wader Ringing Group, HNO, IECS, BTO, NE To be identified		Actions identified and included in HMS action plan	



<p><b>3. Habitat improvement and creation to meet favourable condition.</b></p> <p><b>3.1 Production of a strategic habitat opportunity map</b></p> <p><b>3.2 On the ground habitat improvement and creation of habitat.</b></p>	All objectives	Link to habitat compensation for coastal squeeze and improved floodplain connectivity . On the ground management could help with pollution issues e.g. DIN and Dissolved Organic Pollution	2017  Ongoing	Whole estuary  To be identified	HNP partnership	N/A  WeBS and NE condition assessment	Strategy produced  Habitats improved and created	Medium
<p><b>4. Breeding birds: Funded active management of all existing and potential breeding sites/colonies with an evidence base to support</b></p>	All objectives 1		Ongoing	Breeding bird sites	SBO, RSPB, Yorkshire/Lincolnshire Wildlife Trusts, NE, EA	Breeding bird data	Management of existing sites, development and management of new sites	Medium
<p><b>5. Non-native species: Understanding the impact of non-native species on the designated features.</b></p> <p><b>If appropriate, develop a biosecurity plan to identify actions to control non-native species.</b></p>	All objectives	Removal of invasive plant species in the upper Humber. Investigation, monitoring and removal of mitten crab.	2018  2020	Whole estuary	Steering group: Natural England, Environment Agency, HNP etc	NE condition assessment	Non-native species assessment and biosecurity plan produced	Low
<p><b>6. Climate change vulnerability assessment with actions.</b></p>	All objectives	Link to coastal squeeze	2020	Whole estuary	Natural England with support from HNP partners?	NE condition assessment	Assessment undertaken	Low

<b>Monitoring, research and data</b>								
7. Humber Management Scheme: 7.1 Data to inform EMS management plan 7.2 Annual report and update 7.3 Activity management update 7.4 Ensure Relevant Authorities are aware of their responsibilities 7.4 EMS vulnerability assessment (awaiting new NE conservation advice)	All objectives		Annual  TBC	Whole estuary	NE HNP	NE condition assessment and WeBS data	Data provided Report and update undertaken Assessment undertaken	High
8. Lamprey: Investigations into dissolved oxygen SAG including review of permits	All objectives 2 relating to lamprey	DO SAG key priority of WFD	Ongoing	Upper estuary	NE EA	Lamprey: water quality and population structure	Investigations complete	High
9. Bait digging: research to understand impact on SPA and SAC	All objectives		2017/18	Whole estuary	E and NE IFCA	NE condition assessment	Research complete	Medium
10. Update to Humber Estuary conservation advice	All objectives		2016/17	Whole estuary	Natural England with HNP support	N/A	Action complete	Medium
11. Estuary monitoring 11.1 Monitoring of features to take place, summarised and reported to partners 11.2 Production of estuary monitoring audit and strategy	All objectives	Lack of available data an issue under WFD	Annually  2018	Whole estuary	NE  HNP, NE, EA	N/A	Action complete	Medium
12. In combination database	All objectives		2016	Whole estuary	HNP	N/A	Action complete	Medium
<b>Advisory</b>								
13. Production and/or promotion of advisory material to landowners on habitat restoration and management	All objectives	Best practice is an issues identified under WFD	2016	Whole estuary	RSPB with HNP support	N/A	Action complete	Low
<b>Communication and publicity</b>								

<b>14. Awareness raising:</b> - Annual communications plan - App - Signage - Code - Website - Estuary TV - Talks	All objectives	Awareness raising linked to best practice important under WFD	Annual 2016 2017 2017 Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing	Whole estuary	HNP	N/A	Actions complete	Medium
<b>15. Determine ecosystem services of estuary and promote benefits</b>	All objectives		2020	Whole estuary	HNP	N/A	Action complete	Low