

Humber Estuary European Marine Site Codes of Conduct

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Voluntary Codes for all Estuary Users



The Humber Estuary Management Scheme

The Humber Advisory Group represents estuary users who work in partnership with the Humber Estuary Relevant Authorities Group, to ensure the sustainable management of the estuary. The Codes of Conduct are just one aspect of their work.



The Humber Advisory Group at the launch of the Humber Management Scheme, and first edition of the Humber Codes of Conduct (July 2005).

Contacts & Further Information

Emergency Contacts

All Emergency Services	999 or 112	
Environment Agency Floodline	0845 9881188	www.environment-agency.gov.uk/flood
Humberside Police	0845 6060222	www.humberside.police.uk
Lincolnshire Police	01522 532222	www.lincs.police.uk
Maritime & Coastguard Agency	01262 672317	www.mcga.gov.uk

Useful Contacts

Angling Trust	0845 6010699	www.anglingtrust.net
BASC	01244 573 000	www.basc.org.uk
British Canoe Union	0845 370 9500	www.bcu.org.uk
British Hangliding & Paragliding Association	0116 2611322	www.bhpa.co.uk
British Horse Society	0844 848 1666	www.bhs.org.uk
British Kite Surfing Association	01305 813555	www.britishkitesurfingassociation.co.uk
British Microlight Aircraft Association	01869 338888	www.bmaa.org
British Water Ski Federation	01932 570885	www.britishwaterski.org.uk
Environment Agency	08708 506 506	www.environment-agency.gov.uk
Hull & Goole Port Health Authority	01482 324776	www.hullandgoolepha.gov.uk
Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust	01507 526667	www.lincstrust.org.uk
Ministry of Defence - Defence Estates	01223 255 000	www.defence-estates.mod.uk
Natural England	0845 600 3078	www.naturalengland.org.uk
North Eastern Sea Fisheries Committee	01482 393515	www.neseafish.gov.uk
RAF Donna Nook	01507 358716	
RNLI Helpdesk	0845 122 6999	www.rnli.org.uk
Royal Yachting Association (RYA)	0845 345 0400	www.rya.org.uk
RSPB	01904 613121	www.rspb.org.uk
RSPCA	0300 1234 555	www.rspca.org.uk
The Ramblers	0207339 8500	www.ramblers.org.uk
Yorkshire Wildlife Trust	01904 659570	www.yorkshire-wildlife-trust.org.uk

Navigation / Harbour Authorities

ABP Humber Estuary Services	01482 327171	www.humber.com
British Waterways Board	01636 704481	www.britishwaterways.co.uk
ConocoPhillips	01469 571571	www.conocophillips.com

Local Authorities

East Lindsey District Council	01507 601111	www.e-lindsey.gov.uk
East Riding of Yorkshire Council	01482 393939	www.eastriding.gov.uk
Kingston upon Hull City Council	01482 300300	www.hullcc.gov.uk
Lincolnshire County Council	01522 552222	www.lincolnshire.gov.uk
North East Lincolnshire Council	01472 323356	www.nelincs.gov.uk
North Lincolnshire Council	01724 296296	www.northlincs.gov.uk

First Aid Stations

Cleethorpes Promenade	139 Central Promenade, Cleethorpes, DN35 8SE
Waters' Edge in Barton upon Humber	Maltkiln Road, Barton upon Humber, DN18 5JR Tel 01652 631500

www.humberems.co.uk



HUMBER

 Management Scheme

The Humber Advisory Group is made up of representatives from each of the activities included in the Codes of Conduct and they have worked in partnership with the Humber Estuary Relevant Authorities Group to produce this publication. The purpose of the codes is to promote the responsible use of the estuary and its environs, whilst providing a safer environment for both local people and visitors to enjoy.

In addition to the Codes of Conduct, there are a series of interpretation boards around the estuary which provide further information on the Humber Estuary European Marine Site.

The Humber Estuary is located on the northeast coast of England and drains a catchment area of some 24,472km², around 20% of the total land surface area of England. The Humber is one of the 10 most important estuaries in Europe for birds and also supports numerous other important animals, plants and habitats. This vast wildlife interest is protected by European and UK law.

Almost a quarter of the UK's seaborne trade passes through the Humber; this includes 25% of its refined petroleum products. The Humber also has large areas of high grade agricultural land surrounding it. Catchment Sensitive Farming encourages the practice of good soil and land management to minimise diffuse pollution being discharged into the estuary.

Consequently, the Humber is a vital component of the country's well-being and is a major contributor to the UK's economy. To ensure protection of the Humber Estuary and to help achieve its conservation goals, a partnership of over 30 relevant authorities has produced a management scheme that is designed to safeguard the wildlife. The aim of the Humber Management Scheme is:

“Subject to natural change, maintain the favourable condition of the site through the sustainable management of activities”.

The Humber Estuary European Marine Site



The Humber Estuary is recognised as one of the most important estuaries in Europe for wildlife and is designated as a European Marine Site.

The Humber is one of the largest estuaries in the UK and is a valuable resource for people as well as for wildlife. It has a long history of human settlement which has resulted in a wide range of urban and industrial developments but it still remains an inspiring and atmospheric landscape.

The Humber as it is today was created by retreating glaciers about 6000 years ago but it has been subsequently modified by engineers for flood protection and land gain.

The Humber is a muddy estuary carrying high levels of suspended sediment. This sediment supplies the ever changing mudflats which are habitat for numerous plants and countless invertebrates; these in turn provide food for a huge variety of wildlife including birds and over 85 species of fish.

The Humber is designated as:

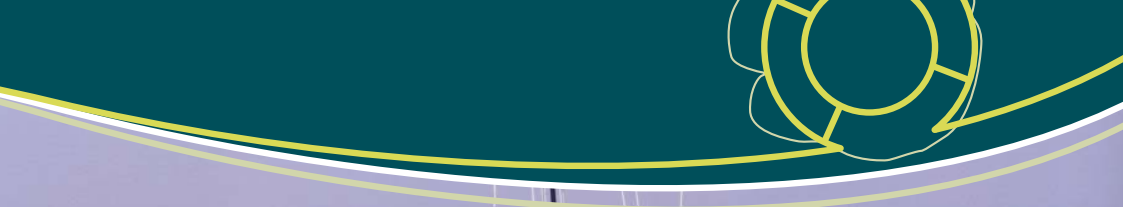
- **SAC - Special Area of Conservation (protected areas for valuable habitats and species) designated under the Habitats directive.**
- **SPA - Special Protection Area (areas that support internationally important numbers of birds) designated under the Birds Directive.**
- **Ramsar Site – (A wetland of international importance).**
- **European Marine Site – The marine areas (land covered continuously or intermittently by tidal waters) of the Humber Estuary SAC, the SPA and Ramsar sites together form the Humber Estuary European Marine Site.**

These designations are part of the **Natura 2000** network, created to maintain special sites across Europe.

Safety At Sea

- The RNLI's website (*see Contact List*) is an excellent source of safety information - whether you're interested in windsurfing, jet skiing, canoeing, kayaking, dinghy sailing, power boating or kite surfing.
- The Royal Yachting Association (RYA) (*see Contact List*) provides training courses for many water sports.
- Always wear a lifejacket or buoyancy aid. Ensure you have the skill and ability to handle your craft before venturing out to sea.
- If you get into trouble, stay with your craft. It will provide some protection and is easier for rescuers to spot. Carry an appropriate means of attracting attention.
- Keep your craft/board/rig well maintained and carry adequate safety equipment - check it regularly.
- Take note of the tide and weather conditions - be aware of their impact on your activity.
- Use the 'buddy' system. Go on the water in pairs or with a group. Always tell someone onshore where you are going and when you are due back.
- Ensure you know how to alert the rescue services (*see Contact List*).
- Local Authorities issue local safety advice on items such as tides and weather conditions (*see Contact List*).





Water & Airborne Recreation

- Keep to designated activity zones - these are well advertised in relevant areas. If you encounter wildlife, such as seals or flocks of birds, slow down and give them a wide berth.
- Please keep to the recommended flying heights of at least 500m (preferably over 1000m for helicopters) above surface levels, to avoid disturbing birds roosting or feeding on the estuary.
- Be considerate to other coastal users, particularly swimmers and children in the water.
- To prevent collisions - ensure you understand the regulations on rights of way before taking marine craft out to sea. Keep to a safe speed to minimise wash - it can be a nuisance to other users.
- It is illegal to pollute the sea. Waste materials should be taken ashore and disposed of properly.
- Many national associations have their own good practice codes and safety guidelines – please read and follow them (*see Contact List*).
- Comply with the Humber Navigation byelaws 1990, available from ABP Humber Estuary Services (*see Contact List*).



Walking, Dog Walking & Horse Riding

- Observe local byelaws and regulations on rights of access.
- Avoid disturbing wildlife and plants – especially avoid any damage to saltmarsh and sand dunes.
- Keep to recognised rights of way or permitted areas – horse riders keep to bridleways.
- Walkers – use gates and stiles to cross fences or hedges. Always fasten gates, and report any obstacles or broken facilities to the relevant Local Authority (*see Contact List*).
- Horse riders should follow the British Horse Society's guidelines for riding responsibly and safely (*see Contact List*).
- Dogs are banned from some stretches of coastline during the summer. At Spurn they are banned throughout the year due to its fragile habitats and bird interest.
- Keep your dog under close control and do not allow it to chase birds or other animals – especially do not allow it to run loose through saltmarsh or inter-tidal areas causing disturbance to wading birds.
- Clear up and dispose of dog excrement in a waste bin.
- If you have to walk near livestock then keep your dog on a lead and under close control.





Bird Watching

- Keep a good distance from roosting birds to avoid disturbing them - especially during the winter.
- Do not disturb breeding birds. Nesting birds are protected by law - bitterns, harriers and little terns are particularly significant - and you could be prosecuted for disturbing them.
- Not all birds breed in trees! – many estuary birds such as ringed plover nest on open ground and extra care (such as keeping dogs on leads) should be taken so as not to disturb them.
- Follow the RSPB 'Code of Conduct for Bird Watchers' (*see Contact List*).
- Enjoy bird watching at nature reserves where facilities, such as hides, make the activity more comfortable for you and minimise disturbance to the birds.
- Take care not to harm the habitats that are home not only to the birds you enjoy watching but also to a variety of plants and other animals, some rare or endangered.
- Foot trampling damages fragile habitats such as sand dunes and saltmarsh. Please take care not to walk on them and keep to designated footpaths.
- Be aware that wildfowling is a common annual legal activity around the Humber Estuary between 1st September and 20th February.





Angling

- Follow the Angling Trust's 'Conservation & Safety Codes' (*see Contact List*).
- Keep to the Angling Trust's *Recommended Retention Size Limits* – return undersize and unwanted fish to the sea quickly and in good condition.
- Endeavour to apply catch and release principles to preserve fish stocks.
- Carry a disgorger and remove hooks carefully.
- Help preserve the marine environment and protect wildlife:
 - Use line of appropriate breaking strain to avoid lost tackle.
 - Take home all waste and old tackle.
 - Cut line into short lengths before disposal.
- Consider the safety of those around you when casting:
 - Use a shock leader of 10lb breaking strain for each ounce of weight (5kg per 30g).
 - Use a link or swivel to attach the lead.
 - Do not tie line directly to the lead as the knot will be damaged and may fail.



Bait Digging

- Recreational anglers may gather bait but digging is restricted in certain areas. Observe local byelaws, such as those at Cleethorpes (*see Contact List*).
- Help conserve bait stocks and aid the recovery of bait beds by:
 - Backfilling holes (where appropriate).
 - Replacing rocks and seaweed to where they are found.
 - NOT collecting immature worms and shellfish.
 - NOT taking more bait than is needed.
 - Avoiding wasted bait by ensuring it is stored correctly.
 - Please do NOT trench dig.
- Avoid digging where it will impact on other users of the shore. Do not dig around moorings, seawalls or other structures as this can cause undermining.
- Be aware of local byelaws – it is illegal to take edible crabs for use as bait.

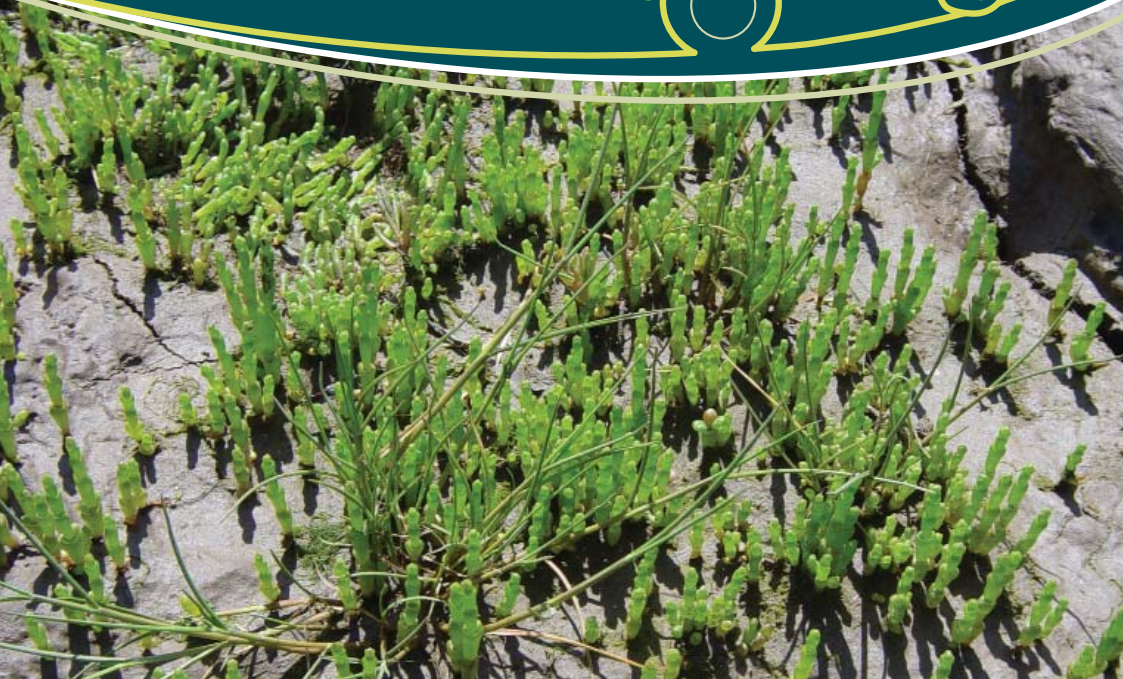




Motorised Access To The Foreshores

- Motorised vehicles cause significant damage to sensitive sites. There are no designated activity zones within the Humber European Marine Site.
- Without the landowner's permission, it is illegal to drive a mechanically propelled vehicle off a road or other public right of way used as a road (Road Traffic Act 1988) (as amended).
- Mechanically propelled vehicles include all "off road" vehicles such as 4x4s, scramble bikes and quad bikes. All foreshore land and sea defence banks are included in this Act.
- A small number of permissions are given where a motorised vehicle is necessary for access to the foreshore for another legitimate activity – e.g. fishing. The landowner will need to be contacted and, in addition, consent given by Natural England (see *Contact List*).



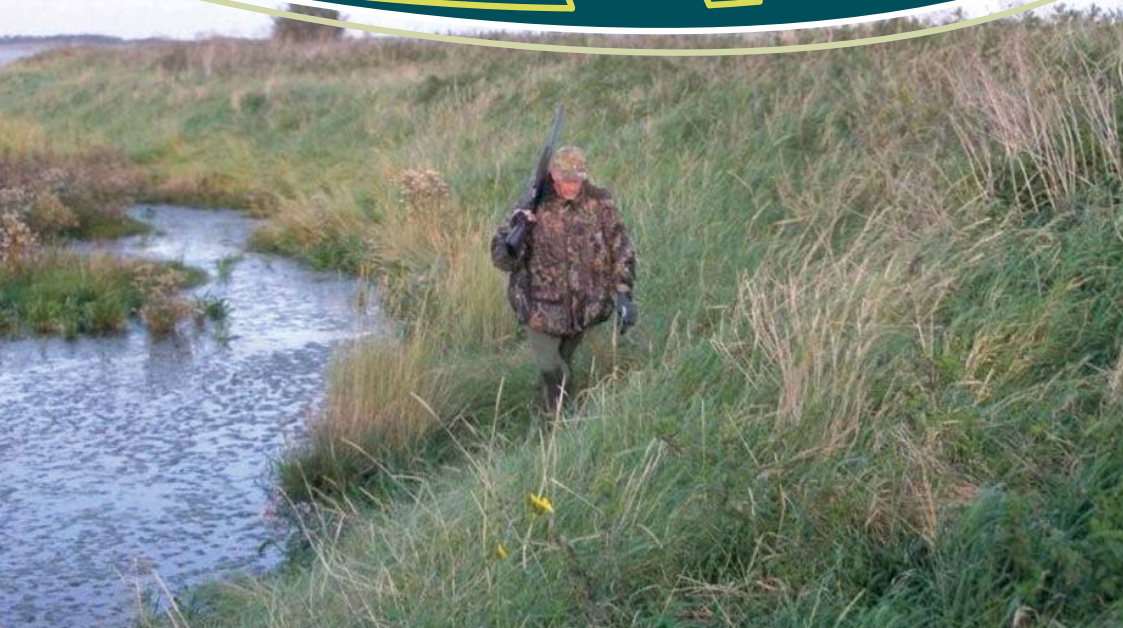


Wildfowling

- Wildfowling is controlled by local clubs and associations that are affiliated to the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC), which produces recommended codes of practice (*see Contact List*).
- Clubs and associations own or lease land and foreshore and each has its own set of rules regulating shooting.
- Wildfowling within the Humber Estuary European Marine Site requires consent from Natural England, (*see Contact List*).
- In severe weather, all shooting of waterbirds may be suspended by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), (*see Contact List*).

Photo – Steve Wash – Wootten Wildfowling and Conservation Club





Field Trips & Study Groups

- See the 'Safety First' and 'Seashore Codes' in this publication and follow your organisation's guidelines on health and safety.
- Check local byelaws and ensure that you have any necessary permissions, by contacting site managers or owners. Some sensitive sites do not allow access for study groups and/or some may require you to hire a guide to accompany you.
- Respect the plants, animals and habitats you have come to study. Trample as little as possible.
- There are organisations such as the Wildlife Trusts that offer designated educational programmes in the Humber area, (*See Contact List*).
- Watch the tide – it can come in very fast from behind you. Please check tide times before your visit.
- Do not remove nature as souvenirs – leave plants and animals where you find them.
- Return rocks and seaweed – leaving them as you found them. Animals live under them.
- Ensure that you keep together – wandering individuals can be a danger to themselves and to the rest of the group.
- Please follow designated paths and public rights of way, unless permission has been granted for other routes.





Safety First

THE SHORE CAN BE A DANGER TO YOU – TAKE CARE

- Watch the tide as it can come in behind you – particularly on extensive sand flats (Cleethorpes and the Lincolnshire Coast). Check tide times before your visit.
- Check the weather forecast before setting off.
- Wear suitable clothing and footwear - it can be cold, wet and muddy.
- Look after your friends and keep a close eye on children.
- **DANGER!** Stay away from soft mud and look out for quicksands.
- Carry a mobile phone, map and compass and ensure you know how to use them! Fog can form suddenly and easily disorientate you.
- Report any munitions, pollution or canisters washed ashore to local police. For your own safety do NOT touch them.
- Ensure that someone knows where you are going and when you expect to return.
- Observe local beach safety information and byelaws.





Seashore Code

1. Leave everything as you find it. Do not collect living plants or animals. There are restrictions on the traditional collecting of samphire and shellfish; contact Natural England & North Eastern Sea Fisheries Committee for details (*see Contact List*).
2. Check any public notices – they are there for your safety and information.
3. Sand dunes and saltmarsh are sensitive environments and vulnerable to erosion. Keep to established footpaths.
4. Respect the coastline and other users.
5. Keep seashore activities away from birds' summer breeding grounds and winter roosts – for example kite flying can be particularly alarming to birds.
6. Use car parks wherever possible. Park responsibly, avoiding restricting public access, rights of way or gates.
7. Reduce the risk of causing a fire by not lighting fires, stoves or barbecues.
8. Respect the rights of landowners and obtain permission before entering privately owned land or managed land.
9. Please take your litter home.
10. Take only photographs, leave only footprints!

Large roosting sites are particularly sensitive between October and March and breeding occurs between April and July.