



# Humber Management Scheme

Fact sheet: Sub-tidal sandbanks



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

## Introduction

Sub-tidal sandbanks are permanently covered by seawater, typically at depths less than 20m. The sub-tidal environment of the Humber Estuary is highly dynamic and varies according to the composition of the bottom sediments, salinity, sediment load and turbidity, dissolved oxygen and anthropogenic factors relating to water quality and dredging. The sub-tidal area of the Humber accounts for 55% of total estuary area.

The sub-tidal zone provides an important breeding, sheltering and nursery area of marine fish and a migratory corridor for Atlantic salmon and sea trout.

The Humber Estuary sub-tidal has two sub features:

- Sub-tidal gravel and sand: Patchy and distributed throughout the estuary
- Sub-tidal muddy sand: found predominantly in the middle and outer estuary.

## Current status and location in the Humber EMS

Sub-tidal sandbanks are a features designated as part of the Humber SAC.

The sub-tidal sandbank feature is currently in favourable conservation status.

## Targets

The overall **objective** for SAC features is:

**Avoid the deterioration of the qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species, and the significant disturbance of those qualifying species, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving Favourable Condition Status of each of the qualifying features.**<sup>1</sup>

The targets for subtidal sandbanks have been taken from the favourable conservation tables in the Humber Estuary Regulation 33 advice<sup>2</sup>. The targets will be updated once the Conservation Advice for the Humber Estuary has been updated.

Attribute	Target
Extent	No decrease in extent from an established baseline, subject to natural change.
Topography	Depth should not deviate significantly from an established baseline, subject to natural change.
Sediment character	Average grain size parameters should not deviate significantly from an established baseline, subject to natural change.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/UK0030170-Humber-Estuary-SAC\\_tcm6-31768.pdf](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/UK0030170-Humber-Estuary-SAC_tcm6-31768.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <http://humburnature.co.uk/admin/resources/english-natures-reg-33-advice.pdf>

Distribution of subtidal gravel and sand biotopes	Distribution and extent should not deviate significantly from an established baseline, subject to natural change.
Distribution of characteristic subtidal mud biotopes	Distribution and extent should not deviate significantly from an established baseline, subject to natural change.

### Threats, management and gaps in management

Threat	Management	Gaps in management	Action
Extent/topography/sediment character/distribution of biotopes: Removal from dredging	ABP has produced the Maintenance Dredging Baseline Document which is reviewed every 3 years and approved and given licence by the Marine Management Organisation. This process is subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment.		
Extent: Loss from development	Habitats Regulations Assessment		
Water quality: Oil pollution (spill)	Humber Clean oil response plan is in place and the Strategic Environment Group is reviewing the plan.  The Water Framework Directive has identified and delivering a number of actions relating to the improvement of water quality.		

Distribution of biotopes: Non-native species		Understanding of non-natives present and impacts (see cross cutting plan).	12
Climate change		Undertake a climate change vulnerability assessment (see cross cutting plan).	13



## About the Humber Nature Partnership

The Humber Nature Partnership aims to deliver the sustainable management of the Humber Estuary and its surroundings, providing an environment in which new and existing businesses can grow alongside the enhancement of the estuary's wildlife riches.

### Our work includes:

- Delivering the Humber Management Scheme
- Providing ecological services
- Supporting economic growth
- Engagement and communication
- Ensuring high quality evidence and data exists



We have delivered projects with industry such as wetland habitat creation and woodland management work. We have also delivered range of research and data gathering projects such as ornithological surveys in the South Humber Gateway area to extensive work to understand the impact of recreation on Humber protected birds. We also deliver a range of education and awareness raising projects such as producing codes of conducts and signage. We aim to work in partnership on the delivery of projects and are always open to hearing new project ideas.

### We offer the following skills and expertise:

- Partnership working
- Expertise in ecology and planning
- On site wildlife management
- Managing contracts
- Awareness raising and engagement
- Event organising
- Negotiation and conflict resolution

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