



Humber Management Scheme

Fact sheet: Wintering and passage birds



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

Introduction

The Humber Estuary plays an international role in bird migration and is one of the most important wetland sites in the UK. It provides a safe feeding and roosting area for species moving from breeding sites in the arctic and sub-arctic to wintering grounds in southern Europe and Africa, as well as for species which use the Humber as an overwintering site. Waders and waterfowl utilise the extensive and highly productive intertidal mudflats of the estuary as a source of food and a roost site.

In ecological terms, the value of the Humber is for the massive number of wildfowl and waders which regularly use the mudflats and saltmarsh during passage and for overwintering and numbers can reach an annual peak of up to 130,000.

Current status and location in the Humber EMS

Birds which use the Estuary are protected under the Humber Estuary Special Protection Area. The SPA protection is summarised in Table 1.

Bird
Bittern
Shelduck
Hen Harrier
Avocet
Golden Plover
Knot
Dunlin
Ruff
Black-tailed godwit
Bar-tailed godwit
Redshank
Waterbird assemblage

Table 1: Humber SPA wintering and migrating birds

The Humber Estuary SPA has not been assessed. However, the Humber SSSI bird assessment provides an unfavourable recovering condition.

Objectives and targets

The overall objective for the Humber Estuary is:

Avoid the deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying features, and the significant disturbance of the qualifying features, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving the aims of the Birds Directive¹.

The targets for wintering and migrating have been taken from the favourable conservation tables in the Humber Estuary Regulation 33 advice². The targets will be updated once the Conservation Advice for the Humber Estuary has been updated.

Attribute	Target
The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features	Targets in the Regulation 33 advice are out of date. This section will be completed once the new Conservation Advice is in place.
The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features	
The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely	
The distribution of the qualifying features within the site	

Threats, management and gaps in management

Threat	Management	Gaps in management	Action
Extent of habitat: Coastal squeeze	Humber Flood Risk Management Strategy and CHaMP	Identify further opportunities for habitat improvement and creation	3
Extent of habitat/food availability: Loss from development	Habitats Regulations Assessment		
Habitat availability e.g. mudflat, connecting high tide roosts			
Population numbers: Designation of management realignment sites	Natural England, Environment Agency, ABP and other members of the Managed Realignment Group are currently looking into the sign off of managed realignment sites.	A process to designate managed realignment sites has not been agreed.	2

¹ http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/UK9006111-Humber-Estuary-SPA_tcm6-32298.pdf

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

Disturbance: Recreation and public access	Research in underway to understand the impact of recreation on designated birds.	The research report will recommend management which will need to be put into place.	5
Disturbance: bait digging	The IFCA's are undertaking an assessment of the impact of fishing activities on the designated features.	Research is required to understand bait digging locations, frequency, intensity, target species and impacts on birds.	18
Extent of habitat: Land use and farming practice	Stewardship funding and grazing marsh projects	Opportunity to expand grazing marsh projects throughout the estuary	4
Inappropriate grazing		Agreements required with landowners and production of guidance	24
Gaps in data and baseline information		There is a need across the features to understand what monitoring is taking place and data available to identify gaps. Baselines need to be set where not in place. See cross cutting action plan.	20
Population: Water quality	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.		
Population: Non-native species		Understanding of non-natives and impacts. See cross cutting action plan.	12

Food availability: Operational and maintenance issues surrounding North Killingholme Haven Pits impacting on water levels and food availability.	Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust manage Killingholme Haven Pits	Work, including funding, is required improve water levels within North Killingholme Haven Pits.	9
Habitat extent: Habitat and morphological change	IPENS research project will look into the influence of these threats and recommend further work	Unknown as yet. The IPENS project will make further recommendations.	14
Food availability			
Changes in drainage and discharge			
Supporting processes: siltation of lagoons	Long term this may become an issue, especially at Blacktoft sands. Management work is undertaken by the RSPB		
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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