The Wash and North Norfolk Coast

• Special Area of Conservation •

Natura 2000 & European Marine Site

Annual Management Plan

2015 - 2016

Living Document

v1

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Contents

Background 1
Part One: Monitoring 1
Part Two: Appropriate Assessments 5
Part Three: Relevant Authority Management 6
Part Four: Action Plan 8

Table 1. Monitoring Programmes Undertaken In Order to Assess Management Requirements of The Wash and North Norfolk Coast European Marine Site 2
Table 2. Guidance of New Plans, Projects and Activities Requiring an Appropriate Assessment 5
Table 3. Management Plans and / or Policies of Relevant Authorities Outside of the European Marine Site Management Scheme 6
Table 4. Management Actions for the Wash and North Norfolk Coast European Marine Site for 2015/16 8

Background

The Wash and North Norfolk Coast European Marine Site (WNNC EMS) management scheme has been running since 2002 with the aim to safeguard marine wildlife and habitats designated under EU and UK law, while encouraging sustainable use of the European marine site. The management objectives are broken down into time scaled actions which were drawn up in consultation with Relevant Authorities (RAs) and stakeholders. RAs and others will report on progress against these management actions on an annual basis.

The Annual Management Plan is composed of four parts;

- Part One: Monitoring
- Part Two: Appropriate Assessments
- Part Three: Relevant Authority Management
- Part Four: Action Plan

Part One: Monitoring

The Habitats Directive require that a condition monitoring programme is undertaken to monitor the condition of the conservation features of the WNNC EMS, and ensure the conservation objectives for each feature are being met. This also provides feedback on the effectiveness of the management measures against the conservation objectives. Relevant Authorities (RAs) and other organisations may also supply Natural England with information to inform the condition monitoring programme. In addition, partnership agreements are in place to share all survey and monitoring information to inform WNNC EMS condition monitoring programme. The monitoring programmes taking place enable condition assessment of site features and will contribute to the EU Commission report undertaken every six years.

A key strength of WNNC EMS management scheme is that it derives information on activities and potential risks to site features from a range of sources including the Advisory Group network, Incident Recording Process and risk assessments and survey evidence gathered through condition assessments and compliance monitoring carried out by RAs in fulfilment of their monitoring obligations. This combined information on activities and potential pressures on site conservation features is used to highlight key management requirements which are reviewed annually through the Action Plan (Part Four).

New monitoring programmes were introduced in 2009, following the unfavourable condition status of interest features in 2008. Table 1 outlines monitoring programmes that have been undertaken during 2013 and 2014, and where available an online link is provided to these data.

Table 1. Monitoring Programmes Undertaken In Order to Assess Management Requirements of The Wash and North Norfolk Coast European Marine Site

Responsibility	Type of survey	Results	
		2013	2014
Shoreline Monitoring Programme			
Environment Agency - Anglian Coastal Monitoring	Bathymetric	Monitoring programme. All surveys undertaken and reported annually see Anglian Coastal Monitoring report for info /full extents.	
	Beach topographic surveys		
	Hydrodynamic monitoring		
	Laser scan survey		
	LiDAR surveys		
	Aerial photography		
Wash Intertidal Survey			
Natural England	Intertidal invertebrate	Intertidal survey of the Wash and North Norfolk coast SAC undertaken in Sept/Oct 2012. Transect covering The Wash and North Norfolk Coast, with phase 1 biotope and phase 2 survey carried out. Report available here.	No further monitoring currently planned. The 2012 survey will be used to inform condition for this reporting cycle.
	W&NNC Large Shallow Inlets and Bay Baseline Monitoring Survey	Continuation during FY 13/14	This report is complete and is available on request (this is for subtidal stony reef and *Sabellaria spinulosa* reef).
North Norfolk Coastal Lagoons			
Natural England	Data collation, extent and distribution assessment (in house monitoring of extent and location, salinity, pH)	North Norfolk lagoon project commenced in 2013 - ongoing	NE are carrying out monitoring of the 3 lagoons at Snettisham as well as Broad Water, Salts Hole and Abrahams Bosom. This should be completed by the end of FY15/16. Reports are available for the lagoon biotope monitoring work carried out on the North Norfolk coast in 2013.
SPA Features			
Natural England Wetland Bird Survey	WeBS bird counts	NE use WeBs counts, data found here.	
	Investigation into the decline of SPA birds in The Wash.		Wash User SSSI Project conducted in 2015 results pending
National Trust	Breeding birds		Report available
Seal (*Phoca vitulina*) Survey			
Natural England Sea Mammal Research Unit	Annual moult survey	SMRU reports found here. NE breeding *P. vitulina* survey continued in FY 14/15.	Draft survey report available for FY 2014/15. Surveys were undertaken in July/August 2015.
	Annual breeding counts		
	Seal scat survey		
Otter (*Lutra lutra*) Survey			
Environment Agency	Confirming presence of species at sites previously recorded	Fifth Otter Survey of England and Wales (2009-10) is available here	Not applicable

Responsibility	Type of survey	Results	
		2013	2014
Shellfish Surveys (features: intertidal mud and sand flats / sub features: cockle and mussel beds)			
Eastern IFCA	Spring cockle	Completed, EIFCA Research Reports available here.	
	Titchwell Marsh Mussel Survey		Stock assessment survey undertaken. Total seed stock 30 tonnes. Report available here.
	Summer sub-littoral mussel	No sub-littoral mussel surveys conducted by EIFCA in W&NNC EMS in 2013.	
	Review of Wash Fishery Order lay consents (review of impacts of mussel cultivation on the European Marine Site);	EIFCA processing outstanding applications for Wash Lays under WFO (1992). Consultation with NE to ensure that new lays will not have an effect on conservation objectives of the Wash.	
	Intertidal mussel		Small tonnage fishery in 2014. Adult stock remains low. Two new beds identified however overall stock decline to 10,127 tonnes. Recruitment particularly poor during 2014.
	Study on impact of hand worked cockle industry		NE have undertaken study into damage to sediment and piling up of cockles through prop wash practice. Results pending.
	Mussel Regeneration project		EIFCA commenced trials into mussel bed regeneration techniques on The Trial Bank. Report can be found here. Study will continue into 2015.
Natural England	Le Strange Cockle Survey	Over FY 13/14 and FY 14/15 routine monitoring continues as undertaken previously and aims to determine the state of the cockle beds within the area.	Cockle survey report for 14/15 has been finalised (commercial in confidence so unable to share). Cockle bed monitoring has continued for FY 15/16.
North Norfolk Subtidal Surveys (feature: subtidal features of North Norfolk Coast)			
Natural England Environment Agency	Condition monitoring of feature	Completed	Data collected. Final report due end of April 2013.
Sabellaria Reef and Boulder and Cobble Reef Surveys			
Eastern IFCA Natural England	Condition monitoring of *S. spinulosa* in The Wash	Change in approach to fisheries management by Defra. *Sabellaria spinulosa* reef categorised as high risk to towed gear types; byelaw brought in (May 2014) to prevent damage to *S. spinulosa* in WNNC SAC. NE commissioned Large Shallow Inlet and Bay baseline monitoring survey; identified location of Annex 1 'hard subtidal substrate' features within the survey areas with particular reference to *S. spinulosa* and subtidal stony reef. 25% side scan sonar coverage of the site continued in 13/14.	*Sabellaria spinulosa* and subtidal stony reef ongoing.

Responsibility	Type of survey	Results	
		2013	2014
Saltmarsh Surveys			
Natural England Environment Agency	Condition monitoring of feature	NE undertook WNNC Saltmarsh Surveys: Transitional & Low to Upper Marsh Communities during FY 13/14	Report is now available. Condition Monitoring of the Saltmarsh Features of the Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC Vol 1 The Wash Final Report & Vol 2 North Norfolk Coast Final Report 2013 final reports to be published.
North Norfolk Coast Seagrass Survey			
Natural England	Condition monitoring of feature	Survey completed to assess the condition of seagrass beds along the North Norfolk Coast.	Survey reports available on request.
Water quality			
Environment Agency (Water Framework Directive – Good Ecological Status by 2015)	Monitoring of rivers discharging into the WNNC EMS	Rivers discharging into EMS are classed as moderate, main issue dissolved inorganic nitrate (DIN). Further investigations	
	Monitoring of emissions to air and water to assess compliance	Licensees who negatively affected the W&NNC EMS contacted	
	Monitoring of bathing water quality	Ongoing monitoring and investigations to assess water quality status. WFD data obtained (e.g. phytoplankton for The Wash)	
EIFCA	Monitoring of water quality		Continuous data collected via sonde until late 2014
Non-native Invasive Species			
EIFCA	Monitoring of Pacific oyster (*Crassostrea gigas)* and Slipper limpet (*Crepidula fornicata*) distribution and abundance in The Wash		Completed in 2014. Summary report available.
Incident Recording Process			
Site managers Advisory Groups WNNC EMS Project Manager	Monitoring of the 15 incidents that may cause disturbance to Annex species & EMS habitat features	Data analysed by EMS Project Manager up to June 2013.	IRP data set analysis and serious incident follow up.
Military Aircraft Disturbance to Annex I bird species			
MoD TASCO Holbeach DTE Air Command DASC Advisory Group	Informal bird impact monitoring with volunteers to assess effect of military activities	Survey not undertaken in 2013 due to insufficient funds.	Survey not undertaken in 2014 due to insufficient funds to commence ASAP.
Recreational Disturbance on Natura 2000 Conservation Features			
Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership	Cross Local Authority project to assess recreational disturbance impacts on Natura 2000 sites including WNNC EMS		Commenced 2014, results expected 2015.

Part Two: Appropriate Assessments

The management scheme is concerned with on-going and current activities taking place within or adjacent to the European Marine Site (EMS). New activities which require consent or permission from a competent authority before they can proceed or continue are dealt with under Regulations 3(3), 3(4) and 47 to 85 of the UK Habitats and Species Regulations (2010). The Regulations state that where these plans or projects have the potential to significantly affect the interest features of the site, full consideration must be given to the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

The Regulations outline the competent authorities' (whether or not they are also relevant authorities) statutory function to carry out an Appropriate Assessment for any new plan or project that might significantly affect the interest features of the site. Furthermore, since the adoption of the East Marine Plan in April 2014, the WNNC EMS management scheme must have 'due regard to it' while individual RAs will have to act in accordance with it. The East Marine Plan can be found here.

New plans, projects or activities listed in Table 2 are classified as plans and projects under the Habitats Regulations. This is not an exhaustive list, but should be used as guidance.

Table 2. Guidance of New Plans, Projects and Activities Requiring an Appropriate Assessment

New Plan, Project or Activity	Relevant Authority	Potential Impact	Additional Legislation/ Management
Aircraft	MoD	Loss of SPA features	Sustainability Appraisals / Habitats Regulations Assessments whenever a new activity is planned
Coastal protection and flood defence works	EA	Physical loss and damage	Common Rights of Way Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), SMP
Land drainage	Landowners Internal Drainage Boards NE EA DEFRA	Saltmarsh function and habitat composition	Land Drainage Act 1991; Water Resources Act 1991; The Water Environment Regulations 2003
Eel, smelt and sea trout Fisheries	EA / EIFCA	Physical damage and biological disturbance	Net or trap fishing authorisation under the Salmon & Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975
Fisheries regulated under The Wash Fishery Order	EIFCA	Physical damage and biological disturbance	Sea Fisheries (Shellfish) Act 1967; The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (Transitional and Saving Provisions Order 2011)
Commercial fishing activities	EIFCA MMO	Physical damage / loss and disturbance	Various EU and national fisheries measures and EIFCA byelaws
Mariculture and aquaculture	CEFAS, EIFCA, NE, MMO, Crown Estates, Wash lay holders, Le Strange Estate, North Norfolk lay holders	Change of substrate if area of cultivation increases, biological disturbance by non-native species	The Alien and Locally Absent Species in Aquaculture (England and Wales) Regulations 2011
Marine planning including coastal land use & development	MMO Local Authorities	Various	East Marine Plan National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance
Nature conservation management-Predator of SPA features control methods	NE Wildlife organisations	Loss of SPA features if not appropriate	Ensure site managers take a coordinated approach
Sample collection including aerial photo surveys	NE EIFCA	Disturbance of SPA features	Ensure coordinated approach

Part Three: Relevant Authority Management

The European Marine Site (EMS) Management scheme is one component of the work undertaken by Relevant Authorities (RAs). RAs have a range of statutory responsibilities for the EMS and beyond. Management plans and / or policies (Table 3) outside of the EMS should be complementary to the EMS Management Scheme. RAs are required to report annually on their progress, and advise the management scheme of any changes within the management actions.

Table 3. Management Plans and / or Policies of Relevant Authorities Outside of the European Marine Site Management Scheme

Responsibility	Management Plan	Management Objective	Management Status 2014/15 R = Stalled A= problem G = on track	Timescale	Action Required in 2015/16
1. Agriculture – Saltmarsh Management					
Natural England Defra RSPB Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust Common Rights Holders MoD	Higher Level Stewardship Agreements	Ensure grazing regimes are at effective levels to enhance wildlife communities in EMS	G	Ongoing	Yes
2. Aircraft					
Defence Infrastructure Organisation Holbeach Conservation Group Natural England	Holbeach Integrated Rural Management Plan	Ensure possible disturbance to site features are minimised	G	5 year revision (next due 2017)	Yes
3. Coastal Protection and Flood Defence					
Environment Agency Local Authorities	Shoreline Management Plans. Wash East and West Strategies	Ensure that sea and river defence works do not significantly impact on site features	G	SMP is a 'live' document covering short (0-25 year), medium (12-75) and long (up to 100 years in future) timescales. Regular reviews are undertaken, and there is the opportunity to introduce new policies as required if existing ones are not sufficient.	Maintain awareness of SMP and policies. Contribute to Wash East and West strategies if required.
4. Sediment Deposition / Movement at Sea					
MMO Harbour Authorities Marine Management Organisation Cefas	Defra Protocol: Maintenance Dredging and the Habitats Regulations 1994	Ensure disposal of sediment from dredging activities does not destroy site features	G	Ongoing	Continue with management objective across the EMS
Environment Agency MMO Project Manager Cefas	www.sns2.org	Monitor and catalogue sediment movement	G	Ongoing	PM to investigate possibilities

Responsibility	Management Plan	Management Objective	Management Status 2013/14 R = Stalled A= problem G = on track	Timescale	Action Required in 2014/15
5. Pollution and Waste					
MMO Harbour Authorities Environment Agency Natural England	Defra: Anti-fouling Treatment Regulations	Ensure Defra Regulations are complied with, assessment of pollution risk prior to salvage operations	G	Ongoing	Continue with management objective across the EMS
MCA Coastal Authorities Lincolnshire Oil Pollution Forum Port and Harbour Authorities Environment Agency Defra MCA JNCC Eastern IFCA Natural England	Coastal Oil Spill Contingency Plans NE emergency oil spill line	Ensure oil spills can be effectively dealt with on shoreline and at sea	G	Ongoing	Review of emergency plans and processes.
MCA Harbour Authorities Environment Agency Natural England	Pollution Response Plans (Docks, Ports and Marinas)	Ensure that equipment and personnel are ready to respond to an incident	G	Ongoing	Ensure response exercises are undertaken in order to meet management objective.
6. Water Quality					
Environment Agency Local RAs Local partners	Water Framework Directive (2nd cycle)	Ensure water bodies meet good ecological status by 2015	G	Ongoing until 2021	Further monitoring and investigations for transitional and coastal waterbodies commenced 2013/14.
Environment Agency Anglian Water Services	Asset management Plan 5	Prioritised programme of improvements to storm sewerage and emergency overflows	G	AMP will run until 2021	Planning for AMP 6 underway, submission deadline for measures/improvement works for consideration by AWS was July 2013.

Part Four: Action Plan

The Action Plan underpins the management plan of The Wash and North Norfolk Coast European Marine Site. Actions requiring management as an outcome of monitoring (Part One) or Relevant Authority management programmes (Part Three) alongside activities which fall outside of these are included in the Action Plan (Table 4). The Action Plan is reviewed and updated throughout the year to ensure management is progressive and the conservation status of the EMS is on track.

Table 4. Management Actions for the Wash and North Norfolk Coast European Marine Site for 2015/16

Action	Type of Action	Responsibility	Status 2014/15 R = Stalled A = problem G = on track	Management for 2015/16	Status Sept 2015 R = Stalled A = problem G = on track
1. Coastal Protection and Flood Defence Works					
Feed into medium term strategies (e.g. Wash East Strategy) as appropriate. Maintain awareness of planned and ongoing coast protection works, including methods used. Feed into communications regarding emergency works as appropriate.	Planning	Project manager Environment Agency MMO Natural England Local Authorities	**G**	Awareness and input into Wash SMP plan. Maintain awareness of Environment Agency methods used for routine and emergency works on coastal protection/flood defence. Review existing methodology for information. Share contact details with Environment Agency operations field team leaders for information.	**G**
2. Common Rights / Longshore Economy / Traditional Activities					
Observe Common Rights whilst taking into account other legislation.	Planning	Common Rights Holders Project Manager	**G**	Common Rights Holders continue with self-regulation whilst taking into account other legislation with Relevant Authorities.	**G**
Wildfowling organisations produce management plans to assist Natural England with consenting procedure (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981)	Planning	Natural England Common Rights Holders Wildfowling organisations Project Manager	**G**	Ensure that groups are receiving adequate assistance to achieve action point.	**G**
Ensure longshore activities do not cause detrimental harm on site interest features	Monitoring	Project Manager Common Rights Holders Fishermen's Associations Advisory Groups Site Managers Eastern IFCA Local Authorities	**G**	Develop methods to identify level of activities occurring and monitor through IRP system in order to assess 'hot spots' and develop adaptive co-management solutions with stakeholders Promote Good Practice Guides Refer matter to RA for further action if appropriate	**A**

Action	Type of Action	Responsibility	Status 2014/15 R = Stalled A = problem G = on track	Management for 2015/16	Status Sept 2015 R = Stalled A = problem G = on track
3. Land Drainage					
Ensure chemical weed control or chemical clean-up operations do not cause detrimental harm on site interest features	On ground	Internal Drainage Boards Natural England Environment Agency Defra Land Owners	G	Chemical control is becoming restricted with chemicals being withdrawn from use. Continue to review and update (if necessary) the chemical pollution clean-up control measures in accordance with Defra, EA and NE guideline	G
Minimise the risk of non-native invasive species impacting on coastal waters	On ground	Natural England Site Managers Land Owners Advisory Groups Project manager	G	SEFINS Project Promote the 'check-clean-dry' campaign	G
4. Recreation					
Development of incident recording smartphone app to progress to ensure IRP is fit for purpose	Planning / on ground	Project Manager Site Managers Natural England	G	Grant received from NE towards project. Intern recruited to lead development and ensure IRP system is up to date.	G
Ensure commercial and non-commercial wildlife tours do not negatively impact on site interest species (e.g. seals)	On ground	Project Manager Natural England Advisory Groups Tour Operators	G	Continue to encourage self-regulation and promotion of Good Practice Code by operators Continue to record through IRP Refer matter to RA for further action if appropriate	G
Ensure kiters (including. surfers, boarders and buggy users) and wind surfers do not cause detrimental harm on site interest features	On ground	Project Manager Kiters Working Group Common Rights Holders Site Managers Advisory Groups Harbour Authorities Natural England Land Owners	G	Continue to work alongside and develop best practice and principles with North Norfolk Kiters Group – meet annually Target water sports shops and clubs with a good practice guide Continue to record through IRP & refer matter to RA for further action if appropriate	G
Ensure motorised and non-motorised watercraft do not cause or inflict harm on site interest features	On ground	Project Manager Harbour Authorities Local Authorities Site Managers Advisory Groups	G	Promote Good Practice guide by working alongside clubs and harbour authorities Use IRP to monitor activity patterns and / or increase in frequency; investigate moorings creep	G
Reduce disturbance on site interest features by dog walkers and their pets	On ground	Project Manager Natural England Common Rights Holders Site Managers Land Owners Norfolk Coast Partnership Advisory Groups	G	Reinvigorate the disturbance work in partnership with NCP, Site Managers and Little Tern Working Group Promote awareness of impact to owners through distribution of Code of Conduct. Link message across EMS sites Examine funding possibilities to undertake educational 'Dog Stops' and study	G

Action	Type of Action	Responsibility	Status 2014/15 R = Stalled A = problem G = on track	Management for 2015/16	Status Sept 2015 R = Stalled A = problem G = on track
4. Recreation (continued)					
Ensure use of motorised vehicles, bikes, cycles and hovercraft does not cause detrimental impact on site features	On ground	Project Manager Natural England Common Rights Holders Conservation Organisations Landowners Site Managers Norfolk Coast Partnership Advisory groups	G	Use IRP to monitor activity patterns and / or increase in frequency Promote awareness of impact to owners through distribution of Good Practice Guide Fences and access is restricted as necessary by RAs	G
Ensure that bird / wildlife watching does not cause a detrimental impact on site features	On ground	Natural England Common Rights Holders Conservation Organisations Landowners Project Manager Norfolk Coast Partnership Advisory group	G	Use IRP to monitor activity patterns and / or increase in frequency Promote awareness of impact to wildlife enthusiasts through promotion of Good Practice Guide Promote the Bird Watchers Code, Royal Photographic Society Nature photographers Code of Conduct	G
Other leisure activities including beach barbeques, litter, crab digging / fishing etc.	On ground	Project Manager Natural England Local Authorities Harbour Authorities Common Rights Holders Land owners Site Managers Norfolk Coastal Partnership Advisory Groups	G	Use IRP to monitor activity patterns and / or increase in frequency Liaise with site managers Promote awareness of impact to wildlife enthusiasts through promotion of Good Practice Guide Promote existing codes of conduct	G
5. Education / Research					
Ensure bird ringing does not cause detrimental impact on site features	Planning	Natural England Common Rights Holders Project manager Conservation Organisations Landowners Advisory Groups	G	Promote British Trust for Ornithology practice Ensure that ringing activities are conducted by licenced individuals	G
Ensure that educational visits and outreach activities do not cause detrimental impact on sites features	Planning	Natural England Site Managers Land Owners Advisory Groups Project Manager	G	Promote existing best practice through Good Practice Guide and procedure to visiting groups Use IRP to monitor activity patterns and / or increase in frequency Liaise with site managers	G
6. Water Abstraction					
Ensure that water abstraction is managed to prevent adverse impacts on site interest features and encourages water efficiency	Planning	Environment Agency Natural England Internal Drainage Board Water Companies Agricultural Sector Local Authorities	G	All consents comply with the Habitats Directive Water availability is governed via Catchment Abstraction management Strategy (CAMS)	G