

Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS)

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Designation date

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Site Reference Number

2. Date this sheet was completed/updated:

Designated: 13 July 1994 / Updated: May 2005

3. Country:

UK (England)

4. Name of the Ramsar site:

Stour and Orwell Estuaries

5. Map of site included:**a) hard copy** (required for inclusion of site in the Ramsar List): *yes -or- no***b) digital (electronic) format** (optional): YES

6. Geographical coordinates (latitude/longitude):

51° 57' 15'' N 01° 09' 26'' E

7. General location:

Nearest town/city: Felixstowe

The Stour Estuary forms the south-eastern part of Essex/Suffolk boundary.

The Orwell Estuary is a relatively long and narrow estuary with extensive mudflats and some saltmarsh, running from Ipswich in the north, southwards towards Felixstowe.

Administrative region: Essex; Suffolk

8. Elevation (average and/or max. & min.) (metres): **9. Area** (hectares): 3,323.62

Min. 0

Max. No information available

Mean No information available

10. Overview:

The Stour and Orwell site is a wetland of international importance, comprising extensive mudflats, low cliffs, saltmarsh and small areas of vegetated shingle on the lower reaches. It provides wintering habitats for important assemblages of wetland birds and supports internationally and nationally important numbers of wintering wildfowl and waders, and holds several nationally scarce plants and British Red Data Book invertebrates.

11. Ramsar Criteria:

2, 5, 6

Secretariat Comment: The RIS provides information requiring the application of Criterion 4. This need to be included in the next update.

12. Justification for the application of each Criterion listed in 11. above:

Ramsar criterion 2

Contains nationally scarce plants and British Red Data Book invertebrates.

The vascular plants *Zostera noltei* and *Spartina maritima* are considered vulnerable and endangered, respectively, in the GB Red Book.

Secretariat Comment: Criterion 2 requires to specify the scientific names of those species considered vulnerable, endangered or critically endangered. This need to be included in the next update.

Ramsar criterion 5

Assemblages of international importance:

Species with peak counts in winter:

51,285 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003)

Ramsar criterion 6

Species/populations occurring at levels of international importance.

Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation):

Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:

Species with peak counts in winter:

Black-tailed godwit , <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i> , Iceland/W Europe	2,157 individuals, representing an average of 4.6% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
Common redshank , <i>Tringa totanus totanus</i> ,	2,657 individuals, representing an average of 1% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
Dark-bellied brent goose, <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i> ,	2,133 individuals, representing an average of 1% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
Dunlin , <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i> , W Siberia/W Europe	14,626 individuals, representing an average of 1% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
Grey plover , <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> , E Atlantic/W Africa -wintering	3,204 individuals, representing an average of 1.2% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Species/populations identified subsequent to designation for possible future consideration under criterion 6.

Species with peak counts in winter:

Red knot , <i>Calidris canutus islandica</i> , W & Southern Africa (wintering)	5863 individuals, representing an average of 1.3% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
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More contemporary data and information on waterbird trends at this site and their regional (sub-national) and national contexts can be found in the Wetland Bird Survey Alerts report, which is updated annually. See <http://www.bto.org/survey/webs/webs-alerts-index.htm>.

13. Biogeography:**a) biogeographic region:**

Atlantic

b) biogeographic regionalisation scheme (include reference citation):

Council Directive 92/43/EEC

14. Physical features of the site:

Soil & geology	shingle, sand, mud
Geomorphology and landscape	lowland, coastal, valley, subtidal sediments (including sandbank/mudbank), intertidal sediments (including sandflat/mudflat), estuary
Nutrient status	
pH	
Salinity	brackish / mixosaline, fresh, saline / euhaline
Soil	no information
Water permanence	usually permanent
Summary of main climatic features	Annual averages (Lowestoft, 1971–2000) (www.metoffice.com/climate/uk/averages/19712000/sites/lowestoft.html) Max. daily temperature: 13.0° C Min. daily temperature: 7.0° C Days of air frost: 27.8 Rainfall: 576.3 mm Hrs. of sunshine: 1535.5

General description of the Physical Features:

No information available

15. Physical features of the catchment area:

No information available

16. Hydrological values:

Sediment trapping

17. Wetland types

Inland wetland, Marine/coastal wetland

Code	Name	% Area
E	Sand / shingle shores (including dune systems)	0.3
F	Estuarine waters	19.8
G	Tidal flats	44.2
H	Salt marshes	35
4	Seasonally flooded agricultural land	0.7

18. General ecological features:

Orwell is a relatively long and narrow estuary with extensive mudflats bordering the channel that support large patches of eelgrass *Zostera* sp. The saltmarsh tends to be sandy and fairly calcareous with a wide range of communities. There are small areas of vegetated shingle on the foreshore of the lower reaches. Grazing marshes adjoin the estuary at Shotley. The Stour estuary is a relatively simply structured estuary with a sandy outer area and a muddier inner section. The mud is rich in invertebrates and there are areas of higher saltmarsh. The shoreline vegetation varies from oak-dominated wooded cliffs, through scrub-covered banks to coarse grasses over seawalls, with reed-filled borrow dykes behind.

19. Noteworthy flora:

Nationally important species occurring on the site.

Higher Plants.

Puccinellia rupestris, *Spartina maritima*, *Sarcocornia perennis*, *Limonium humile*, *Zostera angustifolia*, *Zostera noltei*.

20. Noteworthy fauna:

Birds

Species currently occurring at levels of national importance:

Species regularly supported during the breeding season:

Little tern , *Sterna albifrons albifrons*, W Europe 46 apparently occupied nests, representing an average of 2.3% of the GB population (Seabird 2000 Census)

Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:

Common greenshank , *Tringa nebularia*, Europe/W Africa 68 individuals, representing an average of 11.3% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Great crested grebe , *Podiceps cristatus cristatus*, NW Europe 165 individuals, representing an average of 1% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Little egret , *Egretta garzetta*, West Mediterranean 17 individuals, representing an average of 1% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Species with peak counts in winter:

Common goldeneye , *Bucephala clangula clangula*, NW & C Europe 328 individuals, representing an average of 1.3% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Eurasian curlew , *Numenius arquata arquata*, N. a. *arquata* Europe (breeding) 1784 individuals, representing an average of 1.2% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Northern pintail , *Anas acuta*, NW Europe 510 individuals, representing an average of 1.8% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Spotted redshank , *Tringa erythropus*, Europe/W Africa 4 individuals, representing an average of 2.9% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Species Information

Nationally important species occurring on the site.

Invertebrates.

Phaonia fusca, *Haematopota grandis* (Meigen), *Arctosa fulvolineata*, *Baryphyma duffeya*.

21. Social and cultural values:

Aesthetic
 Archaeological/historical site
 Livestock grazing
 Non-consumptive recreation
 Sport hunting
 Tourism
 Transportation/navigation

22. Land tenure/ownership:

Ownership category	On-site	Off-site
Non-governmental organisation	+	
Local authority, municipality etc.	+	
National/Crown estate	+	
Private	+	+

23. Current land (including water) use:

Activity	On-site	Off-site
Nature conservation	+	
Tourism	+	+
Recreation	+	+
Cutting of vegetation (small scale/subsistence)	+	
Bait collection	+	
Permanent arable agriculture		+
Grazing (unspecified)	+	
Hunting: recreational/sport	+	
Sewage treatment/disposal	+	
Harbour/port	+	
Flood control	+	
Transport route	+	+
Urban development		+
Non-urbanised settlements	+	+

24. Factors adversely affecting the site's ecological character, including changes in land (including water) use and development projects:

Explanation of reporting category:

1. Those factors that are still operating, but it is unclear if they are under control, as there is a lag in showing the management or regulatory regime to be successful.
2. Those factors that are not currently being managed, or where the regulatory regime appears to have been ineffective so far.

NA = Not Applicable because no factors have been reported.

Adverse Factor Category	Reporting Category	Description of the problem (Newly reported Factors only)			
			On-Site	Off-Site	Major Impact?
No factors reported	NA	Potential: harbour/port, transport route, settlements			

For category 2 factors only.
 What measures have been taken / are planned / regulatory processes invoked, to mitigate the effect of these factors?

Is the site subject to adverse ecological change? NO

25. Conservation measures taken:

Conservation measure	On-site	Off-site
SSSI / ASSI	+	
SPA	+	
Land owned by a NGO for nature conservation	+	
Management agreement	+	
Site management statement/plan implemented	+	
AONB	+	+

26. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:

No information available

27. Current scientific research and facilities:**Fauna.**

Numbers of migratory and wintering wildfowl and waders are monitored annually as part of the national Wetland Birds Survey (WeBS) organised by the British Trust for Ornithology, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

High tide bird counts.

Environment, Flora and Fauna.

Vegetation, bird and invertebrate surveys/monitoring carried out on NGO reserves.

28. Current conservation education:

None reported

29. Current recreation and tourism:**Activities, Facilities provided and Seasonality.**

A popular area for tourists as it is within an AONB. There are more visitors in the summer. However it is well used throughout the year by walkers, bird watches and for sailing.

30. Jurisdiction:

Head, Natura 2000 and Ramsar Team, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, European Wildlife Division, Zone 1/07, Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6EB

31. Management authority:

Site Designations Manager, English Nature, Sites and Surveillance Team, Northminster House, Northminster Road, Peterborough, PE1 1UA, UK

32. Bibliographical references:**Site-relevant references**

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