

The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership: Information Pack for Relevant Authorities

Protecting Nature and Culture

A network of protected areas has been created to conserve the unique and very special marine wildlife of The Wash and North Norfolk coast. The creation of these Marine Protected Areas places legal duties on authorities to ensure that human activities do not adversely impact the sensitive marine species and habitats of the region. Although there are legal duties to protect the site's wildlife, an essential working principle for effective management is that human activities occur in parallel with nature conservation to ensure that maritime livelihoods and the regions rich cultural heritage are sustained as part of the marine environment.

The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership is the organisation that manages and helps deliver authority statutory duties to The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Protected Area network through collaborative working between regulators, local communities, sea-users, businesses and conservation groups.

Legal Roles and Responsibilities: current and the future

The network of Marine Protected Areas of The Wash and North Norfolk includes:

- Gibraltar Point Special Protection Area
- North Norfolk Coast Special Protection Area
- The Wash Special Protection Area
- The Wash & North Norfolk Coast Special Area of Conservation



Figure 1. The boundary of The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Protected Area network

These Marine Protected Areas have been created to meet the requirements of the European Commission Birds Directive (1979) and Habitats Directive (1992) through the designation of Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation, respectively. These sites connects this region of the British Southern North Sea to a European wide family of terrestrial and marine protected sites called Natura 2000. The marine components of the Natura 2000 network that sit within inshore waters (12 nautical miles) are referred to as European Marine Sites. The network of Marine Protected Areas at The Wash and North Norfolk coast is a European Marine Site.

The aim of a European Marine Site is to maintain and restore the protected features to 'favourable' conservation status.

The European Commission Habitats Directive (1992) is transposed into UK law for terrestrial interests and inshore waters through The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010). These Regulations also accommodate the need for maintaining the list of Special Protection Areas under the European Commission Birds Directive (1979). This national legislation enables the designation of European Marine Sites, the formation of Management Schemes, lists all authorities which are responsible for management and requires Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies to advise responsible authorities on the conservation objectives for the site. Responsible authorities specified in the UK The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) are referred to as Relevant Authorities. The full list of Relevant Authorities for The Wash and North Norfolk Coast European Marine Site can be found on [The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership website](#).

The Statutory Nature Conservation Body for English European Marine Sites is Natural England. Advice on conservation objectives and marine activities for The Wash and North Norfolk European Marine Site can be found within the [Conservation Advice Package](#).

Brexit

On the 23rd June 2016, the UK voted to leave the European Union. The four Marine Protected Areas that constitute The Wash and North Norfolk Coast European Marine Site were created to meet EU obligations, and are legally meeting the requirements of UK national legislation. At present, the UK is due to leave the European Union on Friday 29th March 2019. The Government has introduced the 'Great Repeal Bill', which aims to incorporate all European Union legislation into UK law. As such, all roles and responsibilities for Relevant Authorities towards European Marine Site's will remain for the foreseeable future.

Relevant Conservation Legislation

The Wash and North Norfolk European Marine Site also implicitly meets obligations and duties under other national and international nature conservation legislation and conventions including:

- The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981)
- Countryside and Rural of Way Act (2000)
- Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act (2006)
- Ramsar
- OSPAR
- Bern & Bonn Conventions

Working in Partnership

The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership works to coordinate and help deliver all Relevant Authority legal duties to the European Marine Site. This is achieved through the Relevant Authorities contributing to a single funding pot to employ specialist staff to coordinate the Partnership and related activities. The current Project Manager is Dr Sam Lew, who has a background in marine research and education, and community-based conservation.

The following items describe the five key work areas for The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership:

1. Relevant Authority Support

Management Scheme

The Management Scheme is a document that describes the organisational framework used to support Relevant Authorities in meeting their statutory duties. Management Schemes are accepted to be the most cost-effective and efficient means of delivering legal obligations, particularly at large complex sites such as The Wash and North Norfolk coast (Defra 2012; WWF, 2017).

Annual Management Plan

The Annual Management Plan is a document that synthesises all Relevant Authority and partner organisation (for example, conservation NGOs) activities that are undertaken to meet legal duties to the site, many of which are shared. Activities are broken down into four key areas:

1. Monitoring of site features to establish favourable condition status
2. Monitoring of sea-based activities to determine any adverse effects on site features
3. Complementary management plans linked to the site
4. Future plans and projects for sea-based activities that may impact the site features

The synthesis of these key areas for all Relevant Authorities ensures no duplication of effort, identifies any gaps in management and provides a central point that can be referenced to demonstrate that statutory duties are being met. Information in the Annual Management Plan is collated through the Annual Relevant Authority and coastal Site Managers survey.

Specific activities that each Relevant Authority is legally obliged to manage can be found on The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership [website](#).

2. Community

The Partnership supports three geographically distinct Advisory Groups. At Advisory Group meetings, Relevant Authority representatives, local people, sea-users, businesses and conservation groups share knowledge and experience to support the conservation and sustainable use of the European Marine Site, and work to ensure management measures are appropriate and locally supported. The Advisory Groups are:

- Boston Advisory Group representing the coastal communities and Relevant Authorities of Lincolnshire between Gibraltar Point and Sutton Bridge
- King's Lynn Advisory Group representing the coastal communities and Relevant Authorities of West Norfolk between Sutton Bridge and Hunstanton
- Wells Advisory Group representing the coastal communities and Relevant Authorities of North Norfolk between Hunstanton and Weybourne

Advisory Groups meet formally three times a year, with further meetings arranged as and when specific issues arise.

3. Recreational Use and Tourism

The coastal tourism and recreation industry has significant social and economic benefits for the local communities of The Wash and North Norfolk coast and provides local people and visitors with an enormous sense of well-being. However, across all sectors it is now recognised that the intensity with which people visit and use the coast results in significant disturbances to the natural environment.

This leads to the question:

How can we promote and encourage a thriving and growing tourism industry whilst ensuring recreational activities are not damaging the very 'commodity' being sold?

Managing recreational disturbance and visitor pressure to the European Marine Site conservation status is the collective responsibility of all Relevant Authorities. The monitoring and mitigation of recreational disturbance is coordinated centrally by The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership Project Manager.

The Marine Partnership has been coordinating a recreational disturbance monitoring programme since 2004. A network of specialist volunteers and wardens at key sites throughout The Wash and North Norfolk coast

are monitoring, recording and reporting disturbances of different recreational activities. This programme has provided a valuable contribution to understanding activity hotspots, key problematic activities and temporal trends that inform recreational activity management for the European Marine Site.

The Advisory Groups are a highly valuable resource for understanding recreational and visitor pressures. Local people and sea-users often have the best knowledge of coastal visitor pressure issues and can feed this information into the management process.

Recreational best practise guides have been produced by the Marine Partnership and are distributed throughout The Wash and North Norfolk coast.

Tailored workshops are undertaken and working groups have been formed to manage priority recreational pressures involving the network of Relevant Authority representatives, local people, sea-users, businesses and conservation groups.

4. Communication and Outreach

The Project Manager is a central reference point for questions and queries related to the conservation status of site features and management of marine-based activities and has the knowledge and expertise to efficiently direct all enquiries to the appropriate authority. The Project Manager can be contacted Monday to Friday between 0900 and 1700 using the following details:

The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership
6 North Lynn Business Village
Bergen Way
King's Lynn
Norfolk PE30 2JG

Telephone: 01553 772020

Mobile: 07557 813095

Email: sam.lew@wnnmp.co.uk

The new [website](#) for The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership also provides information on nature conservation, local culture, partnership working and Relevant Authority duties, site management, key publications and local maritime business and conservation partners.

The Annual Communications Plan can be found on The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership website. Key communications and outreach areas are as follows:

Key Meetings

The Full Management Board represents all Relevant Authorities and Advisory Group Chairs. The Board meets twice a year to discuss progress of The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership with any actions decided democratically. Partner conservation groups attend these meetings but are not entitled to vote.

The Core Management Group is a subset of the Full Management Board and acts as a steering group for The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership. This group meets twice a year just prior to the Full Management Board meetings to iron all discussion details to ensure Full Management Board meetings are relevant, informative and efficiently delivered.

The Advisory Groups meet three times a year and represent the regional platform for all Relevant Authorities, local people, sea-users, businesses and conservation groups to share expertise to support the most effective management of the site and enable collaborative working.

Another significant output for the Marine Partnership is ensuring that workstreams are integrated into other organisations plans and outcomes, such as the regional conservation NGO's. The Project Manager attends a series of regular and *ad hoc* meetings on behalf of the Partnership to ensure this is achieved. Additionally,

attendance on various key national working groups such as the National Steering Group for Marine Protected Areas ensures national level coordination and support.

Outreach

The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership organises and coordinates an annual week-long series of events called 'Wash Week' that celebrates the synergistic working of The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership to protect local nature and culture. Events are hosted by Relevant Authorities, local people and partner conservation groups, which aim to educate and engage the wider public in the very special wildlife and heritage of The Wash and North Norfolk coast.

5. Research and Education

Engagement with research and educational facilities provide enormous added value to the Marine Partnership through access to additional funding streams, staff and institutional resources.

The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership benefits from the research background of the Project Manager and a relationship is established with the University of Hull to understand Ecosystem Services and Natural Capital provided by the Marine Protected Area network, funded by the Natural Environment Research Council's Valuing Nature Network.

College students at the College of West Anglia have undertaken work experience placements with The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership giving students access to the full range of regulators and sea-users to help promote access to the environment sector.

The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership Project Manager is grateful for the continued support of all Relevant Authorities and local communities who work together to protect the remarkable nature and rich culture of this very special and unique part of the Great British coastline.

The Defra review of the effectiveness of European Marine Site Management Schemes (2012) noted The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership as an "exemplar" for the effectiveness and efficiency of the existing management scheme and extensive local community involvement in the management of the site.