

NATURA 2000

STANDARD DATA FORM

FOR SPECIAL PROTECTION AREAS (SPA)
FOR SITES ELIGIBLE FOR IDENTIFICATION AS SITES OF COMMUNITY IMPORTANCE (SCI)
AND
FOR SPECIAL AREAS OF CONSERVATION (SAC)

1. Site identification:

1.1 Type 1.2 Site code

1.3 Compilation date 1.4 Update

1.5 Relationship with other Natura 2000 sites

1.6 Respondent(s)

1.7 Site name

1.8 Site indication and designation classification dates

date site proposed as eligible as SCI	
date confirmed as SCI	
date site classified as SPA	199402
date site designated as SAC	

2. Site location:

2.1 Site centre location

longitude	latitude
00 41 00 E	51 31 42 N

2.2 Site area (ha) 2.3 Site length (km)

2.5 Administrative region

NUTS code	Region name	% cover
UK54	Essex	100.00%

2.6 Biogeographic region

Alpine

Atlantic

Boreal

Continental

Macaronesia

Mediterranean

3. Ecological information:

3.1 Annex I habitats

Habitat types present on the site and the site assessment for them:

Annex I habitat	% cover	Representativity	Relative surface	Conservation status	Global assessment

3.2 Annex I birds and regularly occurring migratory birds not listed on Annex I

Code	Species name	Population			Site assessment			
		Resident	Migratory		Population	Conservation	Isolation	Global
Breed	Winter	Stage						
A046a	<i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>		3819 I		B		C	
A149	<i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>		11372 I		B		C	
A143	<i>Calidris canutus</i>		8850 I		B		C	
A137	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>		359 I		C		C	
A141	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>		3789 I		B		C	

4. Site description:

4.1 General site character

Habitat classes	% cover
Marine areas. Sea inlets	
Tidal rivers. Estuaries. Mud flats. Sand flats. Lagoons (including saltwork basins)	89.0
Salt marshes. Salt pastures. Salt steppes	6.0
Coastal sand dunes. Sand beaches. Machair	
Shingle. Sea cliffs. Islets	
Inland water bodies (standing water, running water)	1.0
Bogs. Marshes. Water fringed vegetation. Fens	3.0
Heath. Scrub. Maquis and garrigue. Phygrana	
Dry grassland. Steppes	
Humid grassland. Mesophile grassland	
Alpine and sub-alpine grassland	
Improved grassland	1.0
Other arable land	
Broad-leaved deciduous woodland	
Coniferous woodland	
Evergreen woodland	
Mixed woodland	
Non-forest areas cultivated with woody plants (including orchards, groves, vineyards, dehesas)	
Inland rocks. Scree. Sands. Permanent snow and ice	
Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites)	
Total habitat cover	100%

4.1 Other site characteristics

Soil & geology:

Clay, Gravel, Mud, Neutral, Nutrient-poor, Sand, Sedimentary, Shingle

Geomorphology & landscape:

Coastal, Estuary, Intertidal sediments (including sandflat/mudflat), Islands, Lagoon, Lowland, Subtidal sediments (including sandbank/mudbank), Valley

4.2 Quality and importance

ARTICLE 4.2 QUALIFICATION (79/409/EEC)

Over winter the area regularly supports:

Branta bernicla bernicla 1.3% of the population
(Western Siberia/Western Europe) 5 year peak mean 1991/92-1995/96

<i>Calidris alpina alpina</i> (Northern Siberia/Europe/Western Africa)	2.1% of the population in Great Britain 5 year peak mean 1991/92-1995/96
<i>Calidris canutus</i> (North-eastern Canada/Greenland/Iceland/North-western Europe)	2.6% of the population 5 year peak mean 1991/92-1995/96
<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> (Europe/Northern Africa - wintering)	1.3% of the population in Great Britain 5 year peak mean 1991/92-1995/96
<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> (Eastern Atlantic - wintering)	2.3% of the population 5 year peak mean 1991/92-1995/96
ARTICLE 4.2 QUALIFICATION (79/409/EEC): AN INTERNATIONALLY IMPORTANT ASSEMBLAGE OF BIRDS	
Over winter the area regularly supports:	
34789 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 30/06/1999)	
Including:	
<i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i> , <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> , <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> , <i>Calidris canutus</i> , <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i> .	

4.3 Vulnerability

Benfleet and Southend Marshes comprises extensive areas of foreshore with a tidal creek system and an area of grazing marsh. The vulnerability of the intertidal habitats is linked to changes in the physical environment, especially to 'coastal squeeze'. Recreational activities are not a problem. However, infrastructure works to facilitate visitor attractions are leading to piecemeal development which is dealt with under the planning control provisions of the Habitat Regulations. Both wildfowling and cockle fishing are potential threats which currently are well regulated by agreement. The sea fisheries are regulated by Kent and Essex Sea Fisheries using bye-law power granted by a sea Fisheries regulatory order. Dredging of the Thames and inputs of herbicides to the mudflats may be having indirect effects on the loss of intertidal habitat and viability of the eelgrass *Zostera* beds. Research is underway to determine the effect of herbicides on the eelgrass. The marsh is suffering from the lack of freshwater inputs due to low rainfall. The Environment Agency has instituted a Water Management Plan on the grazing marshes of part of the site which will address the raising of water levels. Sewage outfalls have recently been upgraded to comply with the EC Directives. To secure protection of the site, most of the foreshore is a Local Nature Reserve and covered by the Thames Estuary Management Plan.

5. Site protection status and relation with CORINE biotopes:

5.1 Designation types at national and regional level

Code	% cover
UK01 (NNR)	10.5
UK04 (SSSI/ASSI)	100.0