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 K

1.2 Site code UK0013690

1.3 Compilation date 199610

1.4 Update 200105

1.5 Relationship with other Natura 2000 sites

U	K	9	0	0	9	1	7	1
U	K	9	0	0	9	2	4	2
U	K	9	0	0	9	2	4	3
U	K	9	0	0	9	2	4	4
U	K	9	0	0	9	2	4	5
U	K	9	0	0	9	2	4	6
U	K	9	0	2	0	3	0	9

1.6 Respondent(s) International Designations, JNCC, Peterborough

1.7 Site name **Essex Estuaries**

1.8 Site indication and designation classification dates

date site proposed as eligible as SCI	199610
date confirmed as SCI	200412
date site classified as SPA	
date site designated as SAC	200504

2. Site location:

2.1 Site centre location

longitude	**latitude**
01 02 37 E	51 42 06 N

2.2 Site area (ha) 46140.82

2.3 Site length (km)

2.5 Administrative region

NUTS code	Region name	% cover
UK54	Essex	13.27%
0	Marine	86.73%

2.6 Biogeographic region

Alpine	Atlantic	Boreal	Continental	Macaronesia	Mediterranean
	X				

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
Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time	3.89	B	C	C	**C**
Estuaries	40.93	A	B	B	**B**
Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide	51.16	A	B	B	**B**
Perennial vegetation of stony banks	0	D			
Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand	0.72	A	B	A	**A**
Spartina swards (*Spartinion maritimae*)	0.04	A	A	A	**A**
Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*)	7.37	B	B	A	**B**
Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic halophilous scrubs (*Sarcocornetea fruticosi*)	0.05	B	A	A	**A**
Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* ("white dunes")	0	D			

3.2 Annex II species

		Population			Site assessment			
	Resident	Migratory						
Species name		Breed	Winter	Stage	Population	Conservation	Isolation	Global
Alosa alosa	Rare	-	-	-	D			
Alosa fallax	Very rare	-	-	-	D			
Phoca vitulina	Present	-	-	-	D			

4. Site description

4.1 General site character

Habitat classes	% cover
Marine areas. Sea inlets	30.0
Tidal rivers. Estuaries. Mud flats. Sand flats. Lagoons (including saltwork basins)	56.5
Salt marshes. Salt pastures. Salt steppes	11.0
Coastal sand dunes. Sand beaches. Machair	
Shingle. Sea cliffs. Islets	0.5
Inland water bodies (standing water, running water)	
Bogs. Marshes. Water fringed vegetation. Fens	
Heath. Scrub. Maquis and garrigue. Phygrana	
Dry grassland. Steppes	
Humid grassland. Mesophile grassland	
Alpine and sub-alpine grassland	
Improved grassland	2.0
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. Screes. 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, Cobble, Mud, Neutral, Nutrient-rich, Pebble, Sand, Sedimentary, Shingle

Geomorphology & landscape:

Coastal, Estuary, Floodplain, Intertidal sediments (including sandflat/mudflat), Islands, Lowland, Open coast (including bay), Subtidal sediments (including sandbank/mudbank)

4.2 Quality and importance

Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time
- for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.

Estuaries
- for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.

Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide
- for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.

Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand
- for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.

Spartina swards (*Spartinion maritimae*)
- for which this is one of only two known outstanding localities in the United Kingdom.
- which is considered to be rare as its total extent in the United Kingdom is estimated to be less than 100 hectares.

Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*)
- for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.

Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic halophilous scrubs (*Sarcocornetea fruticosi*)
- for which this is one of only four known outstanding localities in the United Kingdom.
- which is considered to be rare as its total extent in the United Kingdom is estimated to be less than 1000 hectares.

4.3 Vulnerability

The saltmarshes and mudflats are under threat from 'coastal squeeze' - man-made sea defences prevent landward migration of these habitats in response to sea-level rise. These habitats are also vulnerable to plans or projects (onshore and offshore) which have impacts on sediment transport. English Nature's Regulation 33 advice was issued June 2000. A scheme of management is being established with the aim of addressing such problems.

5. Site protection status and relation with CORINE biotopes:

5.1 Designation types at national and regional level

Code	% cover
UK01 (NNR)	8.3
UK00 (N/A)	55.2
UK04 (SSSI/ASSI)	44.8