

Site Improvement Plan

Inner Dowsing, Race Bank and North Ridge

Site Improvement Plans (SIPs) have been developed for each Natura 2000 site in England as part of the Improvement Programme for England's Natura 2000 sites (IPENS). Natura 2000 sites is the combined term for sites designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protected Areas (SPA). This work has been financially supported by LIFE, a financial instrument of the European Community.

The plan provides a high level overview of the issues (both current and predicted) affecting the condition of the Natura 2000 features on the site(s) and outlines the priority measures required to improve the condition of the features. It does not cover issues where remedial actions are already in place or ongoing management activities which are required for maintenance.

The SIP consists of three parts: a Summary table, which sets out the priority Issues and Measures; a detailed Actions table, which sets out who needs to do what, when and how much it is estimated to cost; and a set of tables containing contextual information and links.

Once this current programme ends, it is anticipated that Natural England and others, working with landowners and managers, will all play a role in delivering the priority measures to improve the condition of the features on these sites.

The SIPs are based on Natural England's current evidence and knowledge. The SIPs are not legal documents, they are live documents that will be updated to reflect changes in our evidence/knowledge and as actions get underway. The information in the SIPs will be used to update England's contribution to the UK's Prioritised Action Framework (PAF).

The SIPs are not formal consultation documents, but if you have any comments about the SIP or would like more information please email us at IPENSLIFEProject@naturalengland.org.uk, or contact Natural England's Responsible Officer for the site via our enquiry service 0300 060 3900, or enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

This Site Improvement Plan covers the following Natura 2000 site(s)

UK0030370 Inner Dowsing, Race Bank and North Ridge SCI

Site description

The Inner Dowsing, Race Bank and North Ridge SCI is located off the south Lincolnshire coast in the vicinity of Skegness, extending beyond 12nm eastwards and north from Burnham Flats on the North Norfolk coast, occupying The Wash Approaches. The area encompasses a wide range of sandbank types and biogenic reef of the ross worm *Sabellaria spinulosa*. The sandbanks within the site vary in their sediment composition, from fine sands through to coarser sand and in some areas gravels, and also in their shape which includes elongated and unique "comb like" patterns. The tops of the sandbanks are characterised by low diversity communities dominated by polychaete worms and mobile amphipod crustaceans. In the areas between the sandbanks a diverse mosaic of communities is dominated by the sea squirt *Molgula sp.*, and a variety of nemertea and polychaete worms. Abundant *S. spinulosa* aggregations have been found throughout the site, either in the reef or patchy crust formations along the flanks and troughs of sandbanks. These high densities of *S. spinulosa* support diverse communities of epifaunal and infaunal species including bryozoans, hydroids, sponges, anemones, lobsters, crabs and the pink shrimp *Pandalus montagui*.

Inner Dowsing, Race Bank and North Ridge SCI crosses the 12nm boundary and so the site falls under both Natural England and Joint Nature Conservation Committee's remit. This is a Natural England document and applies to the inshore area of the site only. Further information on the offshore area can be found here <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-6536>

Plan Summary

This table shows the prioritised issues for the site(s), the features they affect, the proposed measures to address the issues and the delivery bodies whose involvement is required to deliver the measures. The list of delivery bodies will include those who have agreed to the actions as well as those where discussions over their role in delivering the actions is on-going.

Priority & Issue	Pressure or Threat	Feature(s) affected	Measure	Delivery Bodies
1 Feature location/ extent/ condition unknown	Pressure	H1110 Subtidal sandbanks, H1170 Reefs	Develop monitoring strategy and develop evidence base to inform conservation advice	Eastern Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA), Natural England, Marine Management Organisation (MMO), Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)
2 Fisheries: Commercial marine and estuarine	Pressure/ Threat	H1110 Subtidal sandbanks, H1170 Reefs	Introduce management as appropriate	Defra, Eastern Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA), Natural England, Marine Management Organisation (MMO), Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)

Issues and Actions

This table outlines the prioritised issues that are currently impacting or threatening the condition of the features, and the outstanding actions required to address them. It also shows, where possible, the estimated cost of the action and the delivery bodies whose involvement will be required to implement the action. Lead delivery bodies will be responsible for coordinating the implementation of the action, but not necessarily funding it. Delivery partners will need to support the lead delivery body in implementing the action. In the process of developing the SIPs Natural England has approached the delivery bodies to seek agreement on the actions and their roles in delivering them, although in some cases these discussions have not yet been concluded. Other interested parties, including landowners and managers, will be involved as the detailed actions are agreed and delivered. Funding options are indicated as potential (but not necessarily agreed or secured) sources to fund the actions.

1 Feature location/ extent/ condition unknown

Conservation advice for biogenic reef of *Sabellaria spinulosa* is currently being developed nationally. Conservation management of a frequently ephemeral feature is a challenge and the developing feature framework is seeking to address this through incorporating the 'core' reef concept developed in The Wash into the attributes used to define integrity of the feature. It will also be important to consider the contribution made by non-core areas. Subtidal sandbanks are a dynamic feature, and their condition is currently unknown.

In order to develop appropriate conservation advice and assess the condition of features then an evidence base must be developed. Monitoring by a number of parties, including public and private sector, may be necessary. A monitoring strategy must therefore be developed in order to ensure appropriate management is implemented in the site.

<i>Action</i>	<i>Action description</i>	<i>Cost estimate</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Mechanism</i>	<i>Funding option</i>	<i>Delivery lead body</i>	<i>Delivery partner(s)</i>
1A	Clarify <i>S.spinulosa</i> reef and subtidal sandbank monitoring responsibilities and timetable for work.	Not yet determined	2015-20	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Not yet determined	Not yet determined	Eastern Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA), Natural England, Marine Management Organisation (MMO), Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)

2 Fisheries: Commercial marine and estuarine

Commercial fishing activities categorised as being unlikely to impact a feature's condition, or categorised as having the potential to impact a feature's condition, under Defra's revised approach to commercial fisheries in European Marine Sites (EMS) require assessment and (where appropriate) management. This assessment will be undertaken by Eastern IFCA and the Marine Management Organisation. For activities categorised as unlikely to impact a feature's condition, these assessments should take account of any in-combination effects of other activities, and/ or appropriate plans, in the site. The feature *S.spinulosa* reef has been identified as having the potential to be sensitive to interaction with static gear (pots and nets), demersal drift nets and long lines, and commercial diving. The feature 'sandbanks which are slightly covered with seawater all the time' has been identified as having the potential to be sensitive to interaction with towed demersal gear (trawls and dredges), static gear (pots and nets).

<i>Action</i>	<i>Action description</i>	<i>Cost estimate</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Mechanism</i>	<i>Funding option</i>	<i>Delivery lead body</i>	<i>Delivery partner(s)</i>
2A	Provide an appropriate level of reporting to ensure sites are well managed and to enable Natural England to provide advice on the condition of features and potential condition threats. Specifically, a decision needs to be reached on the monitoring requirements of <i>S. spinulosa</i> reef, and sandbanks which are slightly covered by seawater all the time.	Not yet determined	2015-20	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Not yet determined	Not yet determined	Defra, Eastern Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA), Natural England, Marine Management Organisation (MMO), Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)
<i>Action</i>	<i>Action description</i>	<i>Cost estimate</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Mechanism</i>	<i>Funding option</i>	<i>Delivery lead body</i>	<i>Delivery partner(s)</i>
2B	Provide an appropriate level of reporting to ensure sites are well managed and to enable Natural England to provide advice on the condition of features and potential condition threats. Specifically, a strategic plan for monitoring of <i>S. spinulosa</i> reef, and sandbanks which are slightly covered with seawater al the time, needs to be agreed between Natural England and management authorities, including clarification of the respective responsibilities of all parties involved.	Not yet determined	2015-20	Partnership agreement	Not yet determined	Not yet determined	Eastern Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA), Natural England, Marine Management Organisation (MMO), Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)

Site details

The tables in this section contain site-relevant contextual information and links

Qualifying features

#UK Special responsibility

Inner Dowsing, Race Bank and North Ridge SCI	H1110 Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time H1170 Reefs
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Site location and links

Inner Dowsing, Race Bank and North Ridge SCI

Area (ha) **84514** Grid reference **53 15 26 N,** [Map link](#)
00 43 14 E

Local Authorities n/a

Site Conservation Objectives [Inner Dowsing, Race Bank and North Ridge cSAC](#)

European Marine Site conservation advice [Inner Dowsing, Race Bank and North Ridge cSAC](#)

Regulation 33/35 Package [Regulation 33/35 package link](#)

Marine Management Organisation site plan [n/a](#)

Water Framework Directive (WFD)

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) provides the main framework for managing the water environment throughout Europe. Under the WFD a management plan must be developed for each river basin district. The River Basin Management Plans (RBMP) include a summary of the measures needed for water dependent Natura 2000 sites to meet their conservation objectives. For the second round of RBMPs, SIPs are being used to capture the priorities and new measures required for water dependent habitats on Natura 2000 sites. SIP actions for non-water dependent sites/habitats do not form part of the RBMPs and associated consultation.

Inner Dowsing, Race Bank and North Ridge SCI

<i>River basin</i>	Anglian RBMP
<i>WFD Management catchment</i>	n/a
<i>WFD Waterbody ID (Cycle 2 draft)</i>	n/a

Overlapping or adjacent protected sites

Site(s) of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	
Inner Dowsing, Race Bank and North Ridge SCI	North Norfolk Coast SSSI Gibraltar Point SSSI The Wash SSSI n/a
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	
Inner Dowsing, Race Bank and North Ridge SCI	n/a
Ramsar	
Inner Dowsing, Race Bank and North Ridge SCI	n/a
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)	
Inner Dowsing, Race Bank and North Ridge SCI	Gibraltar Point SPA N Norfolk Coast SPA The Wash SPA Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes & Gibraltar Point SAC The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC n/a
Other relevant documents and links	
Inner Dowsing, Race Bank and North Ridge SCI	Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Inner Dowsing, Race Bank and North Ridge SAC Selection Assessment (Version 5.0) Marine protected areas: strategic management table

<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1.0	29/07/2015	

www.naturalengland.org.uk/ipens2000

