

Site Improvement Plan

Exe Dawlish

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)

UK0030130 Dawlish Warren SAC

UK9010081 Exe Estuary SPA

Site description

The Exe estuary is of international importance for wintering and migratory wetland birds. It is also of national importance for its marine life, especially that associated with intertidal sand and mud flats.

The associated salt marshes, reed beds and grazing marshes are important in a regional context - the grazing marshes have rich ditch flora and fauna. Dawlish Warren is a geomorphologically important sand spit which protects the mouth of the Exe estuary.

Salt marsh in the lee of the spit is an important habitat and provides a winter roost for wildfowl and waders, particularly dark-bellied Brent geese and oystercatcher. Herb-rich neutral grassland hosts the only mainland population of the Warren sand crocus. A mosaic of reed bed, marsh, scrub and open water support several nationally rare plants.

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 Public Access/Disturbance	Pressure/Threat	A007(NB) Slavonian Grebe, A046a(NB) Dark-bellied Brent Goose, A130(NB) Eurasian oystercatcher, A132(NB) Avocet, A141(NB) Grey Plover, A149(NB) Dunlin, A156(NB) Black-tailed Godwit	Reduce the potential causes of bird disturbance	Devon County Council, Devon & Severn Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA), East Devon District Council, Environment Agency, Exeter City Council, Natural England, RSPB, Teignbridge District Council, Exe Estuary Management Partnership (EEMP)
2 Changes in species distributions	Pressure/Threat	A046a(NB) Dark-bellied Brent Goose, A130(NB) Eurasian oystercatcher, A141(NB) Grey Plover	Investigate the potential site specific causes for declining bird populations.	Natural England, RSPB
3 Coastal squeeze	Pressure/Threat	A007(NB) Slavonian Grebe, A046a(NB) Dark-bellied Brent Goose, A130(NB) Eurasian oystercatcher, A132(NB) Avocet, A141(NB) Grey Plover, A149(NB) Dunlin, A156(NB) Black-tailed Godwit, H2120 Shifting dunes with marram	Investigate and mitigate against inappropriate coastal management, and ensure implementation of the Exe Estuary strategy and monitoring following coastal defence removals	Devon County Council, East Devon District Council, Environment Agency, Natural England, Teignbridge District Council

4 Change in land management	Pressure/ Threat	H2120 Shifting dunes with marram, H2130 Dune grassland, H2190 Humid dune slacks, S1395 Petalwort	Habitat management of Dawlish Warren	Devon Wildlife Trust, Environment Agency, Natural England, Teignbridge District Council, Warren Golf Club
5 Public Access/Disturbance	Pressure	H2110 Shifting dunes, H2120 Shifting dunes with marram, H2130 Dune grassland, H2190 Humid dune slacks, S1395 Petalwort	Reduce the impact of visitor pressure at Dawlish Warren	Devon Wildlife Trust, Natural England, Teignbridge District Council
6 Fisheries: Commercial marine and estuarine	Pressure	A007(NB) Slavonian Grebe, A046a(NB) Dark-bellied Brent Goose, A130(NB) Eurasian oystercatcher, A132(NB) Avocet, A141(NB) Grey Plover, A149(NB) Dunlin, A156(NB) Black-tailed Godwit, Waterbird assemblage	Fishery management	Devon & Severn Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA), Natural England, Exe Estuary Management Partnership (EEMP)

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 Public Access/Disturbance

The area is subject to a wide variety of small scale recreational activities, and commercial activities, which have the potential for larger scale cumulative disturbance to waterfowl

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
1A	Review the effectiveness of existing measures on recreational water-based activities	£15000	2016	Existing Local Project	Exe Estuary Management Partnership (EEMP)	Exe Estuary Management Partnership (EEMP)	Devon County Council, Devon & Severn Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA), Environment Agency, Natural England, RSPB, Teignbridge District Council
Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
1B	Develop effective management of recreational activities on the Exe estuary including improved codes of conduct for specific user groups, zoning scheme and appropriate mitigation measures.	£100000	2018	Partnership agreement	Exe Estuary Management Partnership (EEMP), Natural England, Staff time	Local Authorities	Devon & Severn Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA), Environment Agency, Natural England, RSPB, Exe Estuary Management Partnership (EEMP)

<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>
1C	Propose measures for minimising disturbance of overwintering birds by moorings managers and moorings users.	Not yet determined	2016	Mechanism not identified / develop mechanism	Not yet determined	Exeter City Council	Exe Estuary Management Partnership (EEMP)
<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>
1D	Manage access to the estuary for recreational users	Not yet determined	2020	Advice	Not yet determined	East Devon District Council	East Devon District Council, Exeter City Council, Natural England, Teignbridge District Council, Exe Estuary Management Partnership (EEMP)
<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>
1E	High tide roost enhancement/expansion	£50000	2016	Habitat creation / restoration strategy: Habitat restoration	Not yet determined	Teignbridge District Council	Natural England

2 Changes in species distributions

A comparison of trends, in the decline of bird numbers on the site, with the available regional data suggests that site specific pressures may be causing a declining trend in bird numbers on the Exe Estuary. Declining bird species include Oystercatcher, Lapwing, Dark-bellied brent goose, Red-breasted merganser and Grey plover. It is noted that the decline in Oystercatcher on the WEBS alert system is thought to be due to site-specific issues as the decline is not following national, regional or local trends.

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
2A	Monitoring & applied research – investigate if there are site-specific factors contributing to a decline in the Oystercatcher population, and implement management of those factors	£25000	2015	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	LIFE, Natural England, RSPB	Natural England	RSPB

3 Coastal squeeze

The dunes at Dawlish are subject to inappropriate coastal management currently, and coastal squeeze is a future threat for both SAC & SPA through climate change & changing sea levels, as well as from ongoing development. For coastal squeeze, the actions are generally taken off the site, and must integrate with strategic coastal process actions and compensation plans for sites suffering coastal squeeze. Some of the coastal defences (gabions) at Dawlish are due to be removed under the Exe Estuary Strategy (Flood Risk Management Strategy which implements the Shoreline Management Plan policies), but there is a degree of uncertainty over how this will affect sediment dynamics & the morphology of the spit and hydrology within the estuary. Currently, the dunes are effectively cut off from the beach and the site is locked in one place, when it should be mobile. The removal of the gabions will allow the site to restore itself to a more natural state, however this may pose risks to SPA & SAC interest features. The Inappropriate coastal management Theme Plan will go into more detail on the necessary changes required by all dynamic sites.

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
3A	Ensure implementation of the Exe Estuary Strategy, influence future Flood Risk Management strategies in order to ensure they set out the necessary steps to restore a site within reasonable timescales. Monitor the effects of the evolution of the warren on the European Marine Site interest features.	Not yet determined	2014 onwards	Shoreline Management Plan and Strategies	Defra	Environment Agency	East Devon District Council, Natural England, Teignbridge District Council
3B	Investigate inappropriate coastal management & plan SPA compensation for coastal squeeze in line with the strategic plan	Not yet determined	2020	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Environment Agency, EU Life, Natural England	Environment Agency	Devon County Council

4 Change in land management

The golf course area of Dawlish Warren SAC is subject to wear, and modifications can have an impact on adjoining species rich grassland (e.g. spray-drift of chemicals, and hydrology as a result of water abstraction). This part of the site is under Wildlife Trust ownership and is tenanted by The Warren Golf Club. A management plan needs to be produced. Additionally, restoring mobility to the dune system, which is essential for the site to have a robust future in the face of climate change, may result in a reduction or even partial loss of the Petalwort population, this issue with dynamism of mobile sites will be looked at in more detail in the Inappropriate coastal management Theme Plan.

<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>
4A	Produce a new management plan for the Wildlife Trust owned part of the SAC. Identify existing licenses or consents to check potential time limitations, or conditions / monitoring requirements associated with them. Manage water levels to ensure hydrological changes in relation to golf course has no adverse effect of site interest features.	£10000	2016	Implementation Of Appropriate Coastal Management	LIFE	Devon Wildlife Trust	Natural England, Warren Golf Club
<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>
4B	Possible relocation of Visitor Centre to increase footfall and visitor engagement .	£100000	2020	Mechanism not identified / develop mechanism	Not yet determined	Teignbridge District Council	n/a
<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>
4C	Manage the site to retain petalwort populations through coastal defence changes.	£50000	2020	Implementation Of Appropriate Coastal Management	Not yet determined	Teignbridge District Council	Environment Agency, Natural England

5 Public Access/Disturbance

There are three main pressures and threats to the SAC features due to high visitor numbers: trampling, dog fouling, and wildfire. These issues are ongoing, and the wardens have attempted to reduce them somewhat but are disadvantaged by the size of the site, the number of access points (including on foot or by sea), and the reluctance of some visitors to follow signage. Trampling however, may be an activity that does not require further management as Dawlish requires greater mobility within the site, and managed trampling could potentially be tolerated as a way of increasing sand movement. This issue requires further investigation.

<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>
5A	Reduce visitors' ability to impact the site's features through improved management of dog fouling and wildfire, and review regulatory means of controlling damaging behaviour and its enforcement in line with Actins under Priority 1. Investigate the effects of trampling and provide for adaptive management in relation to visitor pressure in response to changes within the site. Presence of golfers/birdwatchers around the bight.	£50000	2018	Estuary Management Plan	LIFE	Teignbridge District Council	Devon Wildlife Trust, Natural England

6 Fisheries: Commercial marine and estuarine

Commercial fishing activities categorised as 'amber or green' under Defra's revised approach to commercial fisheries in EMSs require assessment and (where appropriate) management. This assessment will be undertaken by D&SIFCA. For activities categorised as 'green', these assessments should take account of any in-combination effects of amber activities, and/or appropriate plans or projects, 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>
6A	An assessment of the distribution and impacts of both commercial and non commercial fishing activities on site features may inform future actions. Such work could, for example, indicate where management is required, or appropriate measures be introduced by the regulatory authority (eg. powers for a regulatory order for management of a public shellfishery). If management measures are established to protect EMS site feature(s), on-going work will be required to ensure compliance in order to ensure the range of potential fishing and bait collecting activities are well managed and do not present a risk to the favourable condition of site features.	Not yet determined	2018	Regulation: Creation / amendment of byelaws	Natural England	Devon & Severn Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA)	Natural England, Exe Estuary Management Partnership (EEMP)

Site details

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

Qualifying features

#UK Special responsibility

Dawlish Warren SAC

H2190 Humid dune slacks

S1395 *Petalophyllum ralfsii*: Petalwort

H2120 Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* ("white dunes")

H2130# Fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation ("grey dunes")

Exe Estuary SPA

A141(NB) *Pluvialis squatarola*: Grey plover

A046a(NB) *Branta bernicla bernicla*: Dark-bellied brent goose

A132(NB) *Recurvirostra avosetta*: Pied avocet

A156(NB) *Limosa limosa islandica*: Black-tailed godwit

Waterbird assemblage

A149(NB) *Calidris alpina alpina*: Dunlin

A007(NB) *Podiceps auritus*: Slavonian grebe

A130(NB) *Haematopus ostralegus*: Eurasian oystercatcher

Site location and links

Dawlish Warren SAC

Area (ha) **58.84** Grid reference **SX984792** [Map link](#)

Local Authorities Devon

Site Conservation Objectives [European Site Conservation Objectives for Dawlish Warren SAC](#)

European Marine Site conservation advice [n/a](#)

Regulation 33/35 Package [n/a](#)

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

Exe Estuary SPA

Area (ha) **2345.71** Grid reference **SX980841**

[Map link](#)

Local Authorities

Devon

Site Conservation Objectives

[Exe Estuary SPA](#)

European Marine Site conservation advice

[Conservation Advice for European Marine Sites](#)

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.

Dawlish Warren SAC

River basin	South West	South West RBMP
WFD Management catchment	East Devon	
WFD Waterbody ID (Cycle 2 draft)	n/a	

Exe Estuary SPA

River basin	South West	South West RBMP
WFD Management catchment	East Devon	
WFD Waterbody ID (Cycle 2 draft)	GB108045008750, GB108045008980, GB108045009020	

Overlapping or adjacent protected sites

Site(s) of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	
Dawlish Warren SAC	Dawlish Warren SSSI
Exe Estuary SPA	Dawlish Warren SSSI Exe Estuary SSSI
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	
Dawlish Warren SAC	Dawlish Warren NNR
Exe Estuary SPA	Dawlish Warren NNR
Ramsar	
Dawlish Warren SAC	Exe Estuary
Exe Estuary SPA	Exe Estuary
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)	
Dawlish Warren SAC	Exe Estuary SPA
Exe Estuary SPA	Dawlish Warren SAC
Other relevant documents and links	
Exe Estuary SPA	Exe Estuary Action Plan 2013-2014 Exe Estuary Interim Management Plan 2012-2015

<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1.0	06/10/2014	

www.naturalengland.org.uk/ipens2000

