

# An internationally important site for wildlife



Redshank      Spurn Point      Grey Seals      Mudflats      Wintering Teal      Alkborough Flats

## The Humber Estuary

The River Humber is actually an estuary. It varies with the sea tides. Low tide exposes vast expanses of mudflat, home to millions of small worms, shrimps and snails which provide essential food for the 130,000 birds that visit the area each year.

The Humber is an important industrial area, particularly for ports, chemicals and renewable energy.

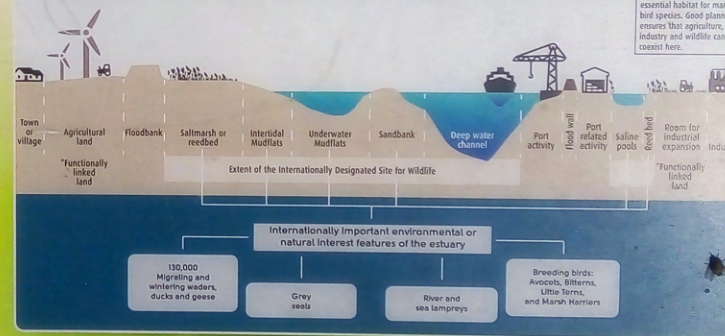
Industry and wildlife are both important to people. They provide jobs and economic wealth and an environment of the highest quality, essential for our health and well-being.

## The Humber Nature Partnership

The Humber Nature Partnership runs the Humber Management Scheme. Its job is to maintain the important natural interest features of the estuary.

Over 30 different authorities regulate land-use planning, flood defence, port activity, navigation, water and air quality, waste, land drainage and wildlife conservation.

## Simplified Cross Section of the Estuary (North to South)



## Cleethorpes

Cleethorpes developed as a seaside resort in the 19th century, with visitors flocking to enjoy its extensive beaches. These sandflats are also an internationally important natural interest feature of the Humber Estuary, used by thousands of birds at low tide during the autumn and winter.

Looking directly across the estuary you can see Spurn Point, identified by its lighthouse. To your right you can see the Humber Forts, completed in 1919 to protect the entrance to the estuary. Haile Sand Fort is situated around the low-water mark between Cleethorpes and Humberston. Bull Sand Fort is 1.5 miles (2.4 km) off Spurn Head.

## A Protected Wildlife Site

The Humber Estuary has been designated as an internationally important site for wildlife. It provides the highest levels of environmental protection in England which ensure that industry and wildlife coexist in harmony.

The estuary has been notified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

It is an offence, without reasonable excuse, intentionally or recklessly to destroy or damage any flora, fauna or geological or physiographical features by reason of which the land is of special interest, or intentionally or recklessly to disturb any of those fauna.

We can all contribute to enhancing the estuary by avoiding any damage to habitats or disturbance of wildlife.

Further information can be obtained by visiting the Humber Nature Partnership website at [www.humbernature.co.uk](http://www.humbernature.co.uk) or by downloading the Humber Nature App for free from your usual app store. Just search for Humber Nature.

If you have some spare time and would like to get involved as a volunteer on a range of environmental and educational projects, then contact the Project Manager for the Humber Management Scheme on [info@humbernature.co.uk](mailto:info@humbernature.co.uk)



## Humber Hounds

Disturbance of birds can affect their survival. When approaching bird flocks...

**THE WHOLE OF THE HUMBER ESTUARY IS A PROTECTED AREA AND THE AREA TO THE SOUTH OF CLEETHORPES ON THE SOUTH BANK IS A SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST (SSSI). SIGNAGE INDICATES THE HABITATS, FLORA AND FAUNA THAT CAN BE FOUND IN THIS AREA WHICH IS NOW A DESIGNATED SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION.**

**HERE IN THE SAND DUNE BELT GROUND COVER IS COMPLETE AS NO BARE SAND IS VISIBLE. THE LOCAL COUNCIL ATTEMPTS TO RETAIN THE BIODIVERSITY SHOWN IN THE FOREGROUND BY PERIODICALLY CUTTING BACK THE LARGER SHRUBS OF THE LATER STAGES OF THE SUCCESSION SHOWN IN THE BACKGROUND.**





**A VIEW THROUGH THE SAND DUNE BELT TO THE SALT MARSH AND THE OPEN SEA / ESTUARY BEYOND. THE BOARDWALK ALLOWS VISITORS ACCESS THROUGH THE DUNE BELT TO THE COAST WITHOUT DAMAGING THE ECOSYSTEM. ADJACENT TO THE PATH A VARIETY OF PLANTS SHOW THAT BIODIVERSITY IS HIGH, BUT FURTHER AWAY SEA BUCKTHORN AND OTHER SHRUBS TYPICAL OF THE LATER SAND DUNE SUCCESSION SHOW THAT ALTHOUGH BIOMASS HAS INCREASED, BIODIVERSITY HAS DECREASED.**



**HERE ARE THE REMAINS OF SOME FENCING THAT WAS CONSTRUCTED TO HELP PREVENT SAND MOVEMENT AND STABILISE THE DUNE BELT. IT NO LONGER HAS MUCH PURPOSE AS THE MARSH HAS CUT OFF FRESH SAND SUPPLIES AND THE DUNES HAVE PROGRESSED TO A LATER STAGE IN THE DUNE SUCCESSION WHERE LARGE SHRUBS REDUCE BIODIVERSITY AND CUTBACK IS PROBABLY REQUIRED.**

THE SALT MARSH IS GROWING FROM SOUTH TO NORTH. AT CLEETHORPES BEACH IT IS NOW DUG OUT FREQUENTLY TO STOP IT DESTROYING THE RESORT FUNCTION. HERE A NEW AND ACTIVELY GROWING DUNE RIDGE AND EMBRYO DUNES SEEN IN THE BACKGROUND IS GROWING SEAWARD OF THE MARSH. THE MARSH IS NOW ONLY COVERED BY THE VERY HIGHEST TIDES.





**THE BOARDWALK OUT OF THE DUNE BELT TO THE DEFENSIVE BANK AND BOATING LAKE. THE DUNES ARE NOW, PERHAPS, OVER-STABILISED WHICH MEANS THEY FORM A SIGNIFICANT DEFENCE AGAINST THE SEA AND RISING SEA LEVELS, BUT BIODIVERSITY IS SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED.**

**A VIEW FROM THE DEFENSIVE EMBANKMENT TO THE BOATING LAKE, SHOWING THE OVER-MANAGED STATE OF THE DUNE BELT TODAY, STIMULATED BY THE RESORT FUNCTION OF CLEETHORPES. MODERN MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES WOULD OFFER A LIGHTER TOUCH THAT DOES NOT STABILISE THE DUNES COMPLETELY AND ALLOWS BIODIVERSITY TO FLOURISH.**



**CLEETHORPES BOATING LAKE WAS BUILT ON THE SAND DUNE BELT IN THE 1920's. ALTHOUGH IT MIRRORS A DUNE SLACK IT'S CONCRETE CONSTRUCTION MEANS THAT IT HAS NONE OF THE HABITATS AND BIODIVERSITY ASSOCIATED WITH A DUNE SLACK. A POPULAR SITE FOR LOCALS AND VISITORS IT IS NOW HOME TO A VARIETY OF BIRD SPECIES, PARTICULARLY SWANS, GEESE AND DUCKS.**







THE DUNE BELT AND SALT MARSH IN SOUTH CLEETHORPES ARE AFFECTED BY COASTAL SQUEEZE. HERE THE BOATING LAKE CAR PARK IS TO THE RIGHT AND ON THE LEFT ARE A MAIN ROAD AND SUBURBAN HOUSING. AS URBAN AND SUBURBAN DEVELOPMENT ENCROACH ON THE DUNE BELT IT IS SQUEEZED BETWEEN THIS AND RISING SEA LEVELS, PUTTING THE ECOSYSTEM UNDER STRESS.

**ONLY AT THE EXTREME NORTHERN END OF THE ORIGINAL DUNE BELT IS THERE ENOUGH OPEN SAND FOR WIND TO CONTINUE TO DEVELOP EMBRYO DUNES SUCH AS THOSE IN THE FOREGROUND. HERE, SAND IS BEING HELD BY MARRAM GRASS WHICH CAN GROW IN THIS DRY ENVIRONMENT DUE TO DEEP TAP ROOTS AND THIN LEAVES THAT LOSE LITTLE WATER BY EVAPORATION. IN THE BACKGROUND THE DUNES ARE ALREADY FIXED BY SEA BUCKTHORN.**



