



## European Site Conservation Objectives for Teessmouth and Cleveland Coast Special Protection Area Site Code: UK9006061

With regard to the SPA and the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change;

**Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;**

- **The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features**
- **The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features**
- **The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely**
- **The population of each of the qualifying features, and,**
- **The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.**

This document should be read in conjunction with the accompanying *Supplementary Advice* document, which provides more detailed advice and information to enable the application and achievement of the Objectives set out above.

### **Qualifying Features:**

- A143 *Calidris canutus*; Red knot (Non-breeding)
  - A162 *Tringa totanus*; Common redshank (Non-breeding)
  - A191 *Sterna sandvicensis*; Sandwich tern (Non-breeding)
  - A195 *Sterna albifrons*; Little tern (Breeding)
- Waterbird assemblage

## This is a European Marine Site

This SPA is a part of the Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast European Marine Site (EMS). These Conservation Objectives should be used in conjunction with the Regulation 35 Conservation Advice document for the EMS. For further details about this please visit the Natural England website at: <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/marine/protectandmanage/mpa/europeansites.aspx> or contact Natural England's enquiry service at [enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk) or by phone on 0845 600 3078.

## Explanatory Notes: European Site Conservation Objectives

These Conservation Objectives are those referred to in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the "Habitats Regulations") and Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. They must be considered when a competent authority is required to make a 'Habitats Regulations Assessment' including an Appropriate Assessment, under the relevant parts of this legislation.

These Conservation Objectives and the accompanying Supplementary Advice (where this is available) will also provide a framework to inform the management of the European Site under the provisions of Articles 4(1) and 4(2) of the Wild Birds Directive, and the prevention of deterioration of habitats and significant disturbance of its qualifying features required under Article 6(2) of the Habitats Directive.

These Conservation Objectives are set for each bird feature for a [Special Protection Area \(SPA\)](#). Where the objectives are met, the site will be considered to exhibit a high degree of integrity and to be contributing to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive.

**Publication date:** 30 June 2014 (Version 2). This document updates and replaces an earlier version dated 29 May 2012 to reflect Natural England's Strategic Standard on European Site Conservation Objectives 2014. Previous references to additional features identified in the 2001 UK SPA Review have also been removed.

**COUNTY:** CLEVELAND    **SITE NAME:** COWPEN MARSH

**Status:** Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended.

**Local Planning Authorities:** Hartlepool Borough Council, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

**National Grid Reference:** NZ 500529

<b>Area:</b> 25.7 (ha.)	63.5 (ac.)	Hartlepool
91.1 (ha.)	225.1 (ac.)	Stockton
116.8 (ha.)	288.6 (ac.)	Total

**Ordnance Survey Sheets 1:50,000:** 93                      **1:25,000:** NZ 42, NZ 52

**First Notified:** 1966\*

**Revision Date:** 1988

**Date Notified:** 12/1/89

**Other Information:**

1. This site forms part of 'Teesmouth Flats' and Marshes', a complex of sites listed in 'A Nature Conservation Review' edited by D A Ratcliffe (1977). Cambridge University Press.
2. Teesmouth Flats and Marshes are of international importance and meet the criteria for designation under the terms of the European Community Directive 79/409 EEC or the Conservation of Wild Birds and for inclusion on the list of Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention.
3. During the 1988 revision the boundary of the site has been amended to both extend the site and exclude a small area of land previously notified\*.
4. Part of Cowpen Marsh is managed as a nature reserve by the Cleveland Nature Conservation Trust.

**Description:**

The site known as Cowpen Marsh includes the largest saltmarsh between Lindisfarne and the Humber Estuary and together with adjacent coastal grazing marshes and mudflats it provides an important wintering site for migratory wildfowl and wading birds. It forms an integral part of Tees Estuary, a site of international importance for overwintering shore birds.

Along the southern side of Greatham Creek the saltmarsh is dominated by common saltmarsh grass *Puccinellia maritima* with sea aster *Aster tripolium*. Higher levels of the marsh support species-rich associations of red fescue *Festuca rubra*, sea plantain *Plantago maritima*, sea arrowgrass *Triglochin maritima*, greater sea-spurry *Spergularia media* and sea milkwort *Glaux maritima* and there is an unusual community of common sea-lavender *Limonium vulgare* with thrift *Armeria maritima* which occurs here close to the northern edge of its range in eastern Britain. North of the creek pioneer communities of glasswort *Salicornia* spp. and annual seablite on the intertidal mud are succeeded by common saltmarsh-grass and sea aster.

The coastal grazing marsh, which comprises semi-improved neutral grassland dominated by common bent *Agrostis capillaris*, Yorkshire-fog *Holcus lanatus* and red fescue is divided by shallow, seasonally damp, fleets supporting tufted hairgrass *Deschampsia cespitosa*, creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera*, floating sweet-grass *Glyceria fluitans* and marsh foxtail *Alopecurus geniculatus*. Other deep water fleets, some brackish support sea club-rush *Scirpus maritimus*, grey club-rush *Schoenoplectus tabernaemontanii*, wild celery *Apium graveolens*, reed sweet-grass *Glyceria maxima* and brackish water-crowfoot *Ranunculus baudotii* with celery-leaved buttercup

*Ranunculus scleratus*, sea rush *Juncus maritimus* and mare's-tail *Hippurus vulgaris* along their grazed margins.

Greatham Creek and Cowpen Marsh together provide important roosting and feeding grounds for large numbers of migratory wildfowl and wading birds which also feed on the intertidal flats around the Tees Estuary. More than 1000 birds have been recorded here on a regular basis throughout the winter months including peak counts of wigeon (300), teal (420), curlew (520), redshank (610), bar-tailed godwit (145), lapwing (600), golden plover (770) and dunlin (320). The grazing marsh supports breeding mallard, teal, moorhen, coot, redshank, snipe, lapwing, reedbunting and yellow wagtail.

\* Under Section 23 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949.

COUNTY: CLEVELAND      SITE NAME: SEAL SANDS

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended

Local Planning Authorities: HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

National Grid Reference: NZ 529260

Area: 4	9.37 (ha.)	121.99 (ac.)	Hartlepool
	245.0 (ha.)	605.41 (ac.)	Stockton
	294.37 (ha.)	727.4 (ac.)	Total

Ordnance Survey Sheets 1:50,000: 93      1:10,000: NZ 52 NW; SW

First Notified: 1966\*

Date of Revision: 1983/84

Other Information:

1. This site forms part of 'Teessmouth Flats and Marshes', a complex of sites listed in 'A Nature Conservation Review' edited by D A Ratcliffe (1977) Cambridge University Press.
2. Teessmouth Flats and Marshes are of international importance and meet the criteria for designation under the terms of the European Community Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds and for inclusion on the list of Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention.
3. During the 1983/84 revision the boundary has been amended by both reduction and extension, including the reallocation of a small area of the adjacent 'Seaton Dunes and Common SSSI'.

Description:

Seal Sands are the only extensive area of intertidal mudflats, with tidal channels on the East coast of England between the Lindisfarne National Nature Reserve to the north and the Humber Estuary to the south, a distance of 200 miles. These mudflats are of great ornithological importance attracting large numbers of migratory wildfowl (c. 4,000) and wading birds (c. 24,000) especially during the winter months.

Of particular note are internationally important concentrations of shelduck (c. 3,200 during peak counts) which feed on Seal Sands. These represent approximately 2% of the total Western European population. In addition, sizeable flocks of mallard, teal and wigeon, as well as diving duck such as pochard, goldeneye and tufted duck congregate on Seal Sands to roost and feed particularly during cold spells. The most important species of wading birds using Seal Sands as their main feeding ground during the winter months of the year are knot (c. 10,000 at peak counts) and redshank (c. 1,050 at peak counts), which both occur in internationally significant numbers at Teessmouth – (i.e. 3–5% and 1% of the

total Western European populations, respectively). The mudflats are also used as feeding ground by other species of wading birds including dunlin, oystercatcher, ringed plover, curlew, bar-tailed godwit, lapwing, grey plover and turnstone. When the mudflats are inundated at high tide their use as a feeding ground is complemented by adjacent areas of reclaimed land which also serve as roosting sites. The reclaimed enclosures with shallow lagoons in the southern sector of the site and the developing sand-dunes on the Seal Sands Peninsula are particularly important in this respect.

\*Under Section 23 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

**COUNTY:** CLEVELAND    **SITE NAME:** SEATON DUNES AND COMMON

**Status:** Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended.

**Local Planning Authority:** Hartlepool Borough Council

**National Grid Reference:** NZ 535285                      **Area:** 312.1 (ha.) 771.2 (ac.)

**Ordnance Survey Sheets 1:50,000:** 93                      **1:10,000:** NZ 52 NW

**First Notified:** 1966\*                                      **Revision Date:** 1985

**Other Information:**

1. This site forms part of 'Teesmouth Flats and Marshes', a complex of sites listed in 'A Nature Conservation Review' edited by D A Ratcliffe (1977). Cambridge University Press.
2. Teesmouth Flats and Marshes are of international importance and meet the criteria for designation under the terms of the European Community Directive 79--09/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds and for inclusion on the list of Westlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention.
3. The boundary of the site has been modified.

**Description:**

Seaton Dunes and Common is an area of considerable importance for its flora, invertebrate fauna, and bird life. The range of habitats present include sandy, muddy and rocky foreshore, dunes, dune slacks and dune grassland, as well as relict saltmarsh, grazed freshwater marsh with dykes (known locally as fleets and stells) pools and seawalls.

Marram grass *Ammophila arenaria* dominates the main dunes with large populations of sea lyme grass *Elymus arenarius*, sand couch *Agropyron junceiforme* and sea rocket *Cakile maritima* on their seaward side. The dune flora is particularly rich and includes the nationally rare rush-leaved fescue *Festuca juncifolia* and sea couch *Agrophyron pungens* and its northernmost locality, as well as purple milk vetch *Astragalus danicus*, blue fleabane *Erigeron acer* and yellow wort *Blackstonia perfoliata* which have a limited distribution and are associated with the lime-rich slag of the dune covered sea walls. On the landward side of the dunes there is an extensive growth of sea buckthorn *Hippophae rhamnoides* and areas of dune slack supporting large populations of common spotted and marsh orchids *Dactylorhiza* spp. as well as their hybrids including several locally rare forms. The remainder of the site is primarily dune grassland and grazed freshwater marsh with associated fleets, stells, pools and seawalls dominated by various grasses, rushes and reeds with uncommon plants such as strawberry clover *Trifolium fragiferum*, wild celery *Apium graveolens*, knotted hedge parsley *Torilis nodosa* and adder's tongue fern *Ophioglossum vulgatum*. A small area of relict saltmarsh vegetation is present including stiff saltmarsh grass *Puccinellia rupestris* of local distribution throughout Britain.

The snail *Hydrobia ventrosa* is present at its most northerly site on the East Coast of England. In addition, two nationally rare species of beetle occur here, namely, *Hydnobius perrisi* and *Philonthus atratus* as well as the rare spider *Silometopus incurvatus*.

Seaton Sands, North Gare Sands and Seaton Snook dunes provide important winter feeding grounds and roost sites for various species of wading birds including sanderling, knot, ringed plover, turnstone, oystercatcher, dunlin and grey plover. The Teesmouth population of sanderling exceeds internationally important levels and up to half of the 1200 birds (5.7% of the W. European population) feed and roost within the

SSSI. Similarly, large populations of knot winter at Teesmouth, when up to 10,000 birds (3% of the W. European population) may roost on Seaton Snook Dunes during high tide. The populations of other species of wading birds reach nationally significant levels, with up to 200 ringed plover (about 1% of the W. European population) and approximately 250 turnstone (2.4% of the UK wintering population) present within the site prior to migration. Large numbers of common, arctic and sandwich terns (3,500 at peak counts) also frequent the Seaton Snook area on migration.

\* Under Section 23 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949.

SITE NOTIFIED TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE ON 19 OCTOBER 1988

COUNTY: CLEVELAND SITE NAME: SOUTH GARE & COATHAM SANDS

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981, as amended.

Local Planning Authority: LANGBAURGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

National Grid Reference: NZ 547262–NZ 617264 Area: 381.2 (ha.) 941.9 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheets 1:50,000: 93 and 94 1:10,000: NZ 52 NW & NE, 62 NW

First Notified: \*1971

Date of Revision: 1988

Other Information:

1. This site forms part of 'Teemouth Flats and Marshes' a complex of sites listed in 'A Nature Conservation Review' edited by D A Ratcliffe (1977). Cambridge University Press.
2. Teemouth Flats and Marshes are of international importance and meet the criteria for designation under the terms of the European Community Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds and for inclusion on the list of Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention.
3. The boundary of this site has been considerably extended.

Description:

The site known as South Gare and Coatham Sands is of considerable interest for its flora, invertebrate fauna and birdlife. The range of habitats present includes extensive tracts of intertidal mud and sand, sand dunes, saltmarsh and freshwater marsh which have all developed since the construction of the South Gare breakwater with tipped slag during the 1860's. Also exposed at low tide are areas of rocky foreshore along the breakwater, three slag banks known as the German Charlies, and Coatham Rocks.

The sand dunes are dominated by marram grass *Ammophila arenaria* but also support one of the largest continuous stands of lyme grass *Leymus arenarius* in Britain. Sea couch-grass *Elymus pycnanthus*, is present here at the northern limit of its range. The dune slacks support large populations of northern marsh orchid *Dactylorhiza purpurella*, early marsh orchid *D. incarnata* and fragrant orchid *Gymnadenia conopsea*. Other plants of particular interest within the dune system, and associated with lime-rich areas of tipped slag, are yellow wort *Blackstonia perfoliata*, lesser centaury *Centaureum pulchellum*, knotted hedge parsley *Torilis nodosa*, carline thistle *Carlina vulgaris*, strawberry clover *Trifolium fragiferum* and the nationally rare grass, rush-leaved fescue *Festuca*

*juncifolia*. Within the developing saltmarsh notable plants include sea wormwood *Artemisia maritima*, lesser sea spurrey *Spergularia marina*, lax-flowered sea lavender *Limonium humile*, sea purslane *Halimione portulacoides* and smallest hare's ear *Bupleurum tenuissimum*. Parsley water dropwort *Oenanthe lachenalii* is of particular interest amongst the fresh water marsh communities dominated by great reedmace *Typha latifolia*, rushes *Juncus* spp. and sedges *Carex* spp.

The invertebrate fauna of South Gare is rich including several species of butterfly; several uncommon beetles, notably *Broscus cephalotes* and *Enochrus quadripunctatus*; and rare spiders such as *Silometopus incurvatus* and *Dysdera crocata*.

Areas of mud and sand-flat on Bran Sands provide important winter feeding grounds for bar-tailed godwit, curlew, redshank, dunlin and grey plover. Further intertidal areas along Coatham Sands support an internationally important population of sanderling (1200 birds, some 8% of the West European population). Both areas support ringed plover on passage migration (c. 150 birds). Knots feed along the intertidal areas, the breakwater and on the mussel beds of the German Charlies and Coatham Rocks with peak counts of 6000 birds (some 2% of the West European population). These latter areas also support turnstone (c. 180 birds), purple sandpiper and oystercatcher.

\*Under Section 23 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949.

COUNTY: CLEVELAND

SITE NAME: REDCAR ROCKS

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended

Local Planning Authority: LANGBAURGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

National Grid Reference: NZ 605253–NZ 620253      Area: 31.1 (ha.) 76.8 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheets 1:50,000: 94

1:10,000: NZ 62 NW

First Notified: 1984

Other Information:

This is a new site identified as of national importance in the Geological Conservation Review.

Description:

Redcar Rocks represent the finest exposures of rock in the Lower Lias north of the Market Weighton Swell i.e. in the Yorkshire Basin. They display most of the stratigraphical interval missing from classic sections along the Yorkshire coast and are composed of calcareous shales containing characteristic fossil ammonites such as *Alsatites liasicus* and *Arnioceras semicostatum*. These span both Hettangian and Sinemurian Stages (i.e. *liasicus* and *semicostatum* zones) and are thus of key importance in relation to better known sections in Yorkshire. This rock sequence is atypical of the Lower Lias since, elsewhere in Britain, Blue Lias facies are normally found.

When exposed at low tide the rocks and sands provide an important feeding ground for several species of wading birds e.g. knot, turnstone, sanderling and purple sandpiper, especially during the winter months. These compliment other areas of rocky foreshore within South Gare and Coatham Sands SSSI, including Coatham Rocks and the 'German Charlies'.

## Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat

**Name:** Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast (Extended area)

**Unitary Authority/County:** Durham County Council, Hartlepool Borough Council, Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council, and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council.

**Consultation proposal:** The original Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast Ramsar site was classified on 15 August 1995; an extension to that area has been recommended to enlarge the area within the Tees Estuary and along part of the foreshore to the north because of the site's international importance.

The Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast Ramsar site is a wetland of international importance, comprising intertidal sand and mudflats, rocky shore, saltmarsh, freshwater marsh and sand dunes. Large numbers of waterbirds feed and roost on the site in winter and during passage periods; in summer Little Terns breed on sandy beaches within the site.

**Boundary of Ramsar site:** The original Ramsar site boundary includes all or parts of Seal Sands SSSI; Seaton Dunes and Common SSSI; Cowpen Marsh SSSI; Redcar Rocks SSSI; and South Gare and Coatham Sands SSSI. The extended area is within or coincident with the above SSSI boundaries and will also include parts of Durham Coast SSSI and all of Tees and Hartlepool Foreshore and Wetlands SSSI. For boundary of extended Ramsar site see map.

**Size of Ramsar site:** The extension covers an area of 304.75 ha, giving a revised Ramsar site area of 1247.31 ha.

**International importance of Ramsar site:** The Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast is a wetland of international importance because:

- a) the site qualifies under **criterion 5** as it is used regularly by over 20,000 waterfowl in any season:

Period	Season	Population
1991/92 - 1995/96	Wintering	21,312 individuals

- b) the site qualifies under **criterion 6** as it is used regularly by 1% or more of the biogeographic populations of the following bird species, in any season:

Waterfowl species	5 year peak mean	% of biogeographic population
Knot <i>Calidris canutus islandica</i>	5,509 individuals - wintering (1991/92 - 1995/96)	1.6% NE Can/Grl/Iceland/NW Eur
Redshank <i>Tringa totanus totanus</i>	1,648 individuals - passage (1987 - 1991)	1.1% Eastern Atlantic (wintering)
Sandwich Tern <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>	1,900 individuals - passage (1988 - 1992)	1.3% Western Europe/Western Africa

**Non-qualifying species of interest:** The site supports a nationally important breeding population of Little Terns *Sterna albifrons* (1.7% GB, 1995 - 1998). In winter the site holds nationally important populations of Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* (1.1% GB, 1993/94 - 1997/98), Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* (1.4% GB, 1993/94 - 1997/98), Teal *Anas crecca* (1.3% GB, 1987/88 - 1991/92), Shoveler *Anas clypeata* (1.3% GB, 1991/92 - 1995/96) and Sanderling *Calidris alba* (2.6% GB, 1993/94 - 1997/98).

**Status of Ramsar site:**

- i) Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast was designated as a Ramsar site on 15 August 1995.
- ii) Consultations commenced on the proposal to extend the site on 29 September 1999.
- iii) The extended area of Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast Ramsar site was designated on 31 March 2000.