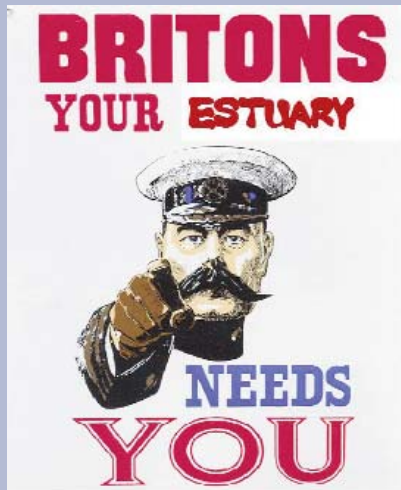


Spreading the word – The Humber European Marine Site Signage

The Humber Management Scheme is developing a project to install a series of interpretative signs around the Humber Estuary. The signs will display information about the Humber Estuary European Marine Site, the features relating to its designation and the partnership of organisations and stakeholders that work together to manage it in a sustainable way. They will also provide information on the damage that certain unregulated activities can cause to sensitive areas.



We want the signs to be a resource for members of the public and as such would like to invite ideas as to what information you would like to see on the boards. Perhaps you have questions about specific habitats and species or would like to know more about how you can help to keep the Humber Estuary special? Any comments or suggestions would be gratefully received. Please send to kat.sanders@humberinca.co.uk or at the address shown on the back page.

Humber Strategy to be launched Spring 08

Following an extensive consultation process the Humber Flood Risk Management Strategy will be published in March 2008. The strategy is the Environment Agency's long term plan for managing flood risk on the Humber Estuary.

Philip Winn, Humber strategies manager said, "Defra (the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) has approved our final strategy, committing to the importance of the flood risk management work we're doing in the Humber. There's a lot to do before the publication of the strategy, in particular talking to local people, businesses and organisations to ensure they know how it will affect them."

For further information visit:
www.environment-agency.gov.uk/humberstrategy



Humber Berth Extension

Having obtained the necessary permissions, consents and licences, Humber Sea Terminal at North Killingholme are constructing two further berths at the sea terminal; berths 5 and 6. The work started in mid July 2007 and is scheduled for completion early in 2008. Humber Sea

Terminal is a member of the Humber Estuary Relevant Authorities Group, and wishes to notify as many stakeholders of the estuary as possible about the ongoing work.

HUMBER



Management Scheme

The next issue of Ebb & Flow will be published in spring 2008 following the publication of our annual report. If you would like further information about the Humber Management Scheme, please contact; Humber Project Officer, Humber Management Scheme, Waters' Edge Visitors Centre, Malkin Road, Barton upon Humber, North Lincolnshire, DN18 5JR
Tel: 01652 631520 E-mail: info@humberems.co.uk Website: www.humberems.co.uk

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This publication is printed on recycled paper.

EBB & FLOW

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE HUMBER MANAGEMENT SCHEME

No 7 Autumn 2007

Humber, one step closer to Special Conservation Status

The Humber estuary **possible Special Area of Conservation (pSAC)** has now been formally submitted by Defra to the European Commission for full SAC status. This means the Humber is now a candidate SAC and is afforded full protection as though already adopted by the commission. The Humber is one of three estuaries (Humber, Severn and the Dee) recently submitted to the Commission as cSACs to protect their vulnerable wildlife and habitats. In addition to the cSAC, the Humber Estuary **Special Protection Area (SPA)** was classified by the Secretary of State for the Environment, and at the same time the Humber Estuary **Ramsar** site was designated. This marks the final stage in the extension and renaming of the former Humber Flats, Marshes and Coast SPA and Ramsar site which began in 2004 when Natural England (then English Nature) consulted all owners, occupiers and other interested parties on the changes to the designations.

The cSAC and SPA, along with a number of similar sites in the UK, are legally protected because they form part of a network of the most important nature conservation sites in Europe known as 'Natura 2000'

Since the initial consultation in 2004, minor changes have been made to the boundaries of the designations to exclude areas of land that are not considered to be of European or International importance. The following three maps show the area covered by each of the three designations.

Humber Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA)



Humber Estuary Ramsar Site



Humber Estuary candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC)



HUMBER



Management Scheme

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The Humber Management Scheme Update

The Humber Management Scheme document was researched, consulted on and compiled between the years 2000 and 2005. The great efforts that went into this development stage have since been continued as the scheme is now being implemented. The two groups that make up the partnership; The Humber Estuary Relevant Authorities Group (HERAG) and the Humber Advisory Group (HAG) continue to meet regularly and many of the founding members remain. HAG was key in producing the codes of conduct which they continue to update and promote, and this leaflet is now supported by an information board/poster, produced at the start of the year for use at presentations, conferences and other promotional events.

HAG and HERAG have continued to expand the partnership to liaise and work with many other organisations in the region. As part of their remit to monitor activities, HAG are currently working to facilitate the communication between Natural England and Humberside Police to report on known unsustainable activities that are threatening the integrity of designated areas. A successful alliance between HAG members Humber Parasailing and Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust has resulted in regular boat trips around Reads Island where members of the public can enjoy the views and learn about the wildlife. In April 2007, The Humber Management

Scheme completed a project to host a university student from Hull. Angela Kelham worked alongside Project Officer Kat Sanders for 12 weeks on the Marine Protected Area Scorecard project. This exercise and Angela's subsequent work highlighted areas of management in which the scheme was succeeding and areas in which further improvement could be made. One such area identified for improvement was 'public engagement & awareness'. Efforts are being made to remedy this through the now twice annual production of Ebb & Flow, regular attendance at public events and most significantly with the development of the signage project. National Information sharing with other European Marine Site officers has been improved with the development of the Marine Protected Area Centre for the UK. A year on from its launch, Natural England have made some major changes, staff working on the Humber have been reviewing the way in which the conservation objectives for the Humber are set and undertaking the ongoing condition assessment of the whole estuary. Condition Assessment plays a key role in assessing whether the management actions detailed in the Humber Management Scheme Action Plan are being achieved, the results of this are then formally summarised within The Humber Management Scheme annual report, published every year in March.

Plenty of fish in the Estuary

Estuaries such as the Humber house a varied fish fauna. The current tally for the Humber Estuary stands at 86 species. The fish assemblage is made up of estuarine, freshwater, marine and migratory species. Truly estuarine fish are those that are seldom found in the open sea or in the estuaries' watersheds. Two of the most abundant estuarine species are Flounder and Common goby which are found at most sites within the Humber. Surprisingly, most fish species found in the Humber Estuary are not truly estuarine fish.



Flounder *Platichthys flesus* (Photo: IECS)

The fish assemblage in the Humber includes a number of freshwater species. Roach, Carp, Chub and Tench turn up regularly along the upper reaches of the estuary and in sites where the ambient salinity is very low such as drains and freshwater marshes. There are no fixed boundaries as these fishes move up and down the estuary following the daily movement of the tides and the seasonal changes in freshwater outflow. Following the recent flooding in the Yorkshire area, we have recorded some of these freshwater

species in the middle estuary, however, the middle and lower reaches of the Humber Estuary are generally dominated by marine species.

Marine species are indeed the most abundant and dominate the list of species using the Humber. Marine fishes in the Humber do not differ much from what is found along the Yorkshire and Lincolnshire coasts. These species, often of commercial importance, originate from the North Sea and use the Humber Estuary for feeding, spawning or nursery grounds. The most abundant marine fishes are relatively small-bodied; Sand goby, Weever, Seasnail, Pogge, Pipefish and Rockling are usually captured in the Humber. Cod, Haddock, Whiting, Sprat, Seabass, Dover sole and Plaice are also regularly found.

Adding to the overall diversity the Humber Estuary is an important route for migratory fishes such as Eel, River lamprey, Smelt and Shad, and less frequently Salmon and Sea trout, all of which are of special conservational importance.

In the last 12 months alone the Institute for Estuarine and Coastal Studies (IECS) at Hull University have found 56 different species, nearly two thirds of the 86 species ever reported in the Humber Estuary. We might not see them everyday but there are certainly lots of different species of fish living in the Humber Estuary today.

Dr Rafael Pérez-Domínguez
Senior Estuarine and Coastal Fish Ecologist
IECS, University of Hull

Changes to the partnership



The Humber Estuary Relevant Authorities Group (HERAG) said a big "Thank you and farewell" to Dr Jon Capel, who retired in March this year. Jon was in post as City Ecologist for Hull City Council for almost 8 years and was involved in the Management Scheme from its inception. He was an active member of the partnership as representative for Hull City Council on HERAG and as the local authority representative on the working group. We wish Jon all the best in his retirement and look forward to continuing work with him through his involvement with HAG.



In July 2007, East Riding of Yorkshire Council appointed Mr Jeremy Pickles as their new Sustainable Community & Coast Officer. Jeremy will be primarily involved in the reviewing and production of the new Shoreline Management Plan which is currently in its consultation phase. Jeremy will become the East Riding's representative on the Humber Estuary Relevant Authorities Group and fill Jon Capel's shoes as local authority representative on the working group.

Adrian Koster, Chairman of the Humber Advisory Group (HAG) was elected at the groups meeting, February 2007. He has been involved with HAG from its inception in 2001 and attended the formal launch of the Humber Management Scheme and Codes of Conduct in 2005. As an industrial journalist, Adrian has known the estuary and Yorkshire coast since 1969 and also as an agronomist operating intensively in Holderness until the 1990s. In addition to HAG, Adrian is a Director of Rothamsted Research Association for world-class science in sustainable land-management; Committee member of FWAG in East Yorkshire, and Vice-Chairman of the Derwent Valley Conservation Group. Adrian chairs the Humber Advisory Group in partnership alongside John Rowley, re-elected as Vice-Chairman.



An on-line Marine Protected Areas resource for the UK



The UK Marine Protected Areas Centre (www.ukmpas.org) was launched at the Marine Protected Areas conference in Scarborough early in October 2007. The virtual Centre aims to be a comprehensive information resource for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in the UK including their designations, habitats, species and activities. It will provide current news, research and activities on MPAs in addition to linking to websites of individual European Marine Sites, other MPAs in the UK and to partner websites. The website will also draw together resources that will help to build capacity amongst UK MPA practitioners and facilitate sharing of information, good practice and learning through functions such as discussion forums and the ability for users to upload news stories and case studies. The idea for the Centre was conceived by Natural

England (NE) and has been developed in collaboration with the Marine Biological Association (MBA) – which is also hosting the Centre. After consultation with a wide range of stakeholders earlier in the year, NE and the MBA have completed the initial phase of development. Further development of the Centre will be overseen by a Steering Group that represents a diverse range of partners including governmental bodies, nature conservation agencies, European Marine Site managers, environmental NGOs and the fishing industry. The UK Marine Protected Areas Centre will continue to evolve and the project aims to be user-led. If you would like to be involved or require further information then please contact the Centre at info@ukmpas.org.uk.

Humber Conference 2007

This years' Humber Conference will be held on the 21st November 2007 at Reeds Hotel, Barton upon Humber. The event will focus on the theme of 'Working in Partnership'. The Humber Management Scheme is involved in the

organisation of this year's event and will be contributing both financially and by participating in the days presentations and discussion through the Humber Estuary Relevant Authorities Group and Humber Advisory Group.