

Morecambe Bay European marine site Management Scheme Action Plan 1st April 2008 - 31 March 2011

Morecambe Bay is designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) under the Habitats Directive. The intertidal and subtidal parts of these designations form the European marine site. The authorities around the Bay are required to exercise their functions so as to secure compliance with the Habitats Directive. They have worked together, with the Morecambe Bay Partnership, to develop a Management Scheme for the Morecambe Bay European marine site.

The Action Plan aims to identify what needs to be done differently, by whom and when, to achieve the necessary outcomes for wildlife, as well as optimising social and economic benefits. The revision of Action Plan has been informed by the 5-year review of the Management Scheme and a review of its effectiveness.

Authorities are required by law to take account of the Habitats Directive in their day to day activities, for example in considering planning applications or granting consents and licences. They may also be required by law to carry out other actions, for example the port authorities have to prepare and test oil pollution contingency plans, which will contribute to protecting the European marine site. The Action Plan does not include these.

The Action Plan focuses on the priority actions that will deliver the greatest benefits. It is a rolling 3 year plan which will be reviewed, revised and reported on annually.

Morecambe Bay Management Scheme Action Plan 2008 - 2011

	Action	Outcome sought	Lead	Milestones & status
	Conservation Advice			
CA1	Revise Natural England's Regulation 33 conservation advice for Morecambe Bay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulation 33 advice revised to include conservation objectives and advice on operations which may cause deterioration or disturbance to the interest features added to the Special Area of Conservation since 2000 (reef & subtidal sandbanks are relevant to the European marine site) 	Natural England	<p>The Regulation 33 Advice for Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary European sites has been revised and combined into a single document (Morecambe Bay SAC includes the whole of the Duddon Estuary. The draft Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary Reg 33 is available to LAs for use pending further national guidance. It should be noted that this is a working draft. Comments welcomed</p> <p>a) A revised consent for Fleetwood WwTW is imminent to reflect new BOD limit (relevant to impacts on Lune Deep (Sept 2009)</p>
CA2	To ensure that duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity is delivered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The profile and visibility of biodiversity is raised, biodiversity is conserved and enhanced and biodiversity is built into decision-making across the public and private sector. 	Natural England	<p>a) Additional training and guidance on biodiversity duties given to LPAs (June 2008)</p> <p>b) AONB Mgt Review includes marine biodiversity for first time (Apr 2009)</p>

Interpretation & Education				
IE1	Set up improved European marine site website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Morecambe Bay Partnership website is used to host and source key information and documents on the European marine site, increasing access to and use of this information and raising awareness and understanding of the conservation interests and management needs of the European marine site 	Morecambe Bay Partnership & Natural England	<p>a) New information added including Maps and Interest Features description (June & Sept 2009)</p> <p>b) Review and maintain: on-going</p>
IE2	Improve information available on key conservation interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maps and details of key conservation features are available for planners, managers and users of Morecambe Bay 	Natural England	<p>a) Maps & supporting information available on website: Done (October 2009)</p> <p>b) Additional advice provided through Cumbria Biodiversity Evidence Base and Cumbria Records Centre: Done (2008)</p> <p>c) Seek to get map information on Mario and into Cumbria and Lancashire Records Centre (Mar 2010)</p>
IE3	Review opportunities to deliver Morecambe Bay Partnership's Interpretive Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness of the Bay's wildlife and other resources raised and promoted, in ways which will ensure they are safeguarded and enhanced, whilst delivering social and economic benefits for the area. 	Morecambe Bay Partnership/ Natural England	<p>a) Review & prioritise opportunities: Done & ongoing- see (b) below</p> <p>b) Seeking to progress through a Morecambe Bay and Duddon Regional Park: ongoing - see http://www.morecambebay.org.uk/whats_new/regional_park.html</p>

IE4	Increase stakeholder engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders aware of, informing and supporting the work of the Morecambe Bay Partnership and the European marine site Management Group, including the delivery of the Action Plan. 	Morecambe Bay Partnership/ Natural England	<p>a) Identify and build opportunities into the Morecambe Bay Partnership's event programme (annual review): EXPO 2008, Aug 2008 (5 day public exhibition in Grange) well attended and well received; high degree of community involvement & ongoing talks and events.</p> <p>b) Report to annual conference of Morecambe Bay Partnership (annual): Feb 2009; Feb 2010</p> <p>c) Duddon Estuary Partnership consider relevant issues at regular meetings: ongoing</p>
Management				
Catchment Management				
CM1	Undertake Review of Consents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment Agency consents reviewed as required by the Habitats Directive. 	Environment Agency, United Utilities & Natural England	<p>a) Progress Morecambe Bay review of consents to national timetable (ongoing): On target for all consents to have been reviewed as required by Mar '08. DONE</p> <p>b) Review of consents has required work at Lancaster WwTW in AMP5 (seasonal P removal to a 1 mg/l target). The proposed delivery date is early 2014.</p> <p>c) Extension of the Barrow WwTW outfall to discharge directly into the Walney Channel avoiding physical damage to intertidal habitats : Proposed in late 2014.</p>

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Shoreline Management				
SM1	Review of Shoreline Management Plan covering Morecambe Bay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Shoreline Management Plan (SMP2) currently being developed for Morecambe Bay & the Duddon Estuary (2008-2010) adopts policies that will support the sustainable management of the shoreline over the next 20, 50 and 100 years, addressing the needs of climate change adaption including coastal habitat squeeze, targets to halt and reverse biodiversity decline and requirements of the Habitats Directive/European marine site. The Shoreline Management Plan (2010) policies been developed in participation with, and are owned by, key stakeholders 	Morecambe Bay & Duddon SMP Steering Group	<p>a) Appropriate assessment of SMP policies completed as part of the SMP review process and signed off by Natural England (2010)</p> <p>b) Jo Marriner appointed as Environment Agency Coastal Change Liaison Officer (2009-2010) to support work with coastal communities</p> <p>See NW England & N Wales Coastal Group site: http://mycoastline.org</p>
Fisheries				

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F1	To progress a shellfisheries Regulating Order for Morecambe Bay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All shellfisheries and shellfish cultivation in Morecambe Bay are managed to be sustainable. The Management Plan for the Regulating Order incorporates the measures necessary to ensure that it makes an appropriate contribution to achieving the conservation objectives for Morecambe Bay 	NW&NW Sea Fisheries Committee	<p>a) Regulating Order proposals initiated (2006): Regulating Order applied for Jan 2008.</p> <p>b) Environmental Forum established (Jan 2007): Meeting regularly and providing useful liaison on general fisheries issues.</p> <p>c) Appropriate Assessment of Management Plan (Dec 2007): Awaiting sign off from Natural England, to be informed by Shellfisheries/bird risk assessment below.</p> <p>d) Formal public Regulating Order consultation (Jan - Mar '08): Held up by Crown Estates who have not consented.</p> <p>e) Expected progress to follow Marine Bill enactment - if enactment is Nov 09 then progress expected early 2010.</p>
F2	Undertake shellfisheries/bird resource risk assessment study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The potential risk of the internationally important bird populations using Morecambe Bay being affected by the shellfisheries evaluated through a risk assessment study undertaken on the Bay. 	Natural England & NW&NW Sea Fisheries Committee	<p>a) Environmental Forum has considered and agreed the need for a shellfisheries/bird risk assessment study. This will be undertaken in partnership with the Forum members and the industry.</p> <p>b) Natural England has drawn up and is placing contract for study (to be completed by Mar 2010)</p>
Shipping & Navigation				
SN1	Review maintenance dredging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Port maintenance dredging programmes reviewed against the conservation objectives for the Morecambe Bay European site under the Habitats Regulations 	Port Authorities, Natural England	<p>a) Take up and timescale for implementation of Maintenance Dredging Protocol agreed between Morecambe Bay Port Authorities, Natural England and Defra (early 2009): Meeting to be arranged to pursue Baseline Document requirements</p>

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	Access & Recreation			
AR1	Improve coastal access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better quality access to and around the coast in ways which safeguard and enhance the natural environment, its enjoyment and its contributions to the natural economy. Marine Bill/Act Coastal Access provisions implemented around Morecambe Bay. 	Morecambe Bay Partnership, Natural England, Local Authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Explore and identify key needs and opportunities with NW Coastal Trail officer and Local Authorities and report back to Management Group (Oct 2007): Done & ongoing b) Key opportunities progressed and secured with key partners e.g. footpath/bridleway access across Kent Viaduct (Ongoing) c) Cumbria Local Access Forum has set up coastal access working groups and started review work to pilot roll-out ahead of coastal access in Marine Bill.
AR2	Promote recovery of the biodiversity and amenity value of damaged shingle habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vegetated shingle interests at North Walney/Earnse Bay and Foulney Island are protected from vehicular damage to enable them to recover and contribute to the amenity value of the area 	Natural England & Barrow Borough Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Review situation and agree actions needed (Mar 2008): On-going. Press releases done. Police action increased, including prosecution at Sandscale NNR. Barrier constructed at boundary of N. Walney NNR b) Improved vigilance & reporting: Ongoing c) Interpretation panels erected May 2008
AR3	Improve amenity quality of environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less non-natural litter on shoreline Less litter entering the site 	Morecambe Bay Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Continue and increase Beach Care programme: Ongoing, continues as a volunteer led activity as resources do not allow a dedicated officer at present ~ 15-20 events/year. In 2009 the programme expanded with 2 new groups joining to make a total of 5 locality based teams with sets of equipment and a regular programme of events. b) In liaison with Local Authorities review opportunities for local campaigns to reduce litter (Mar 2008): Lancaster City Council taking action on reducing plastic waste.

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AR4	Engage with recreational stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raised awareness of wildlife habitats in Bay • Raised awareness of recreational users needs • Conflict avoidance and resolution 	Morecambe Bay Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Hold twice yearly meetings of Sport & Recreation User Group (ongoing): On target b) Duddon Estuary Partnership holds 3 meetings a year bringing all interests together (including recreational interests).

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Monitoring and evaluation				
ME1	Monitor and review Action Plan implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Action Plan includes the actions necessary to achieve the conservation objectives for Morecambe Bay, is kept up to date and is well-publicised The Action Plan is informed by, and will inform, the condition monitoring undertaken by Natural England 	Management Group supported by MBP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Agree revised Action Plan for 2006-9 (Jul 2007): On target b) Complete annual review of Action Plan (Oct 2007, Nov 2008): On target c) Report to Morecambe Bay Partnership (Nov 2007, Feb 2009; Feb 2010): On target d) Risk Review - Defra initiated review of ongoing human activities within EMSs to assess the potential risk of these activities having an adverse effect on the conservation objectives of the sites. Where activities presenting a high risk are identified, to explore these with the relevant authority and agree the actions that need to be undertaken. Initial Review of North West EMSs completed. Morecambe Bay risk review to be copied to Relevant Authorities for comments (Dec 2009)
ME2	Revise Management Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management scheme meets national and local needs, is up-to-date, takes account of the revised Regulation 33 Advice and is in a form which can be easily accessed and understood by relevant authorities and the public. 	Management Group supported by MBP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Format for revised scheme agreed (Sep 2007): b) Scheme revised (Q1 10-11): c) Scheme published (Q3 10-11):

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ME3	Monitoring of sea grass beds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up-to-date information on the extent and quality of sea grass (<i>Zostera</i>) beds and a better understanding of potential threats to these beds, for example from wastewater discharges, pipe-laying activities and habitat modification by cord grass (<i>Spartina</i>). 	Natural England	a) Review and agree monitoring requirements (Mar 2008) : New pipeline proposals will provide updated information ongoing b) UU have done some monitoring of eel grass habitat for short periods in vicinity of the Barrow WwTW outfall over last three summers in conjunction with the Barrow WwTW outfall scheme - latest survey results awaited.
ME4	Monitoring of honeycomb worm reefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes in the distribution and quality of honeycomb worm reefs known and used to inform management of shellfisheries and other activities 	Natural England & NW&NW Sea Fisheries Committee	a) Review and agree monitoring requirements (Mar 2008) : Secure a repeat survey on Heysham Flats to compare with previous survey (done by Hull University) work to be done by end 2009. b) Walney Intertidal Sabellaria
ME5	Monitoring of saltmarsh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A baseline map of saltmarshes in Morecambe Bay produced to inform the Shoreline Management Plan review and monitoring under the Habitats and Water Framework Directives 	Lancaster City Council, Environment Agency & Natural England	a) Satellite methodology evaluated : Lancaster City Council is continuing to work with BNSC and other agencies to investigate the use of satellite data for monitoring salt marshes b) Air photographic survey of NW saltmarshes undertaken by the Environment Agency (now complete) ; analysis expected Spring 2010 c) Baseline map of saltmarshes completed (Dec 2007) : On target
ME6	Monitor distribution of the alien species wire weed (<i>Sargassum muticum</i>) and other alien species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain watching brief on the alien species wire weed <i>Sargassum muticum</i> and other alien species eg Chinese mitten crab 	Natural England (with Morecambe Bay Partnership and Cumbria Wildlife Trust)	a) Watching brief - ongoing b) Consider role of emerging Cumbria Records Centre and future monitoring (2010 / 2011)