
RAMSAR INFORMATION SHEET

FOR WETLANDS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE

Site reference number 7UK148
1 Compilation date Jan 2000
2 Country UK (England)
3 Name of wetland Northumbria Coast
4 Site centre location: Latitude: 55 27 59 N Longitude: 01 35 18 W
5 Altitude 0m
6 Area (ha) 1107.98

7 Overview

The Northumbria Coast Ramsar site comprises several discrete sections of rocky foreshore between Spittal, in the North of Northumberland, and an area just south of Blackhall Rocks in County Durham. These stretches of coast regularly support internationally important numbers of purple sandpiper and turnstone. The Ramsar site also includes an area of sandy beach at Low Newton, which supports a nationally important breeding colony of little tern, and parts of three artificial pier structures which form important roost sites for purple sandpiper.

8 Wetland type **Marine/coastal wetland**

Code	Name	% Area
D	Rocky shores	96
E	Sand / shingle shores (including dune systems)	3.3
M	Rivers / streams / creeks: permanent	0.2
Other	Other	0.5

9 Ramsar Criteria 6
10 Map of the site ✓
11 Compiler Joint Nature Conservation Committee
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12 Justification of criteria

Ramsar criterion 6

The site supports internationally important wintering populations of turnstone *Arenaria interpres* (2.6 % of the Eastern Atlantic Flyway population) and purple sandpiper *Calidris maritima* (1.6% of the Eastern Atlantic Flyway population)

13 General location

Nearest town/city: Newcastle upon Tyne

The site comprises several discrete stretches of the coastline in north east England, running between Spittal in the north of Northumberland to an area just south of Blackhall Rocks in County Durham.

Administrative Region: Northumberland, County Durham, Tyne and Wear

14 Physical Features

Soil & Geology	acidic, basic, clay, gravel, igneous, limestone/chalk, metamorphic, neutral, sand, sandstone, sedimentary, shingle, slate/shale
Geomorphology and Landscape	cliffs, coastal, crags/ledges, intertidal rock, open coast (including bay), pools
Nutrient status	no information
pH	no information
Salinity	saline / euhaline
Soil	mainly mineral
Water permanence	usually permanent
Summary of main climatic features	Rainy, temperate climate with a mild winter and periodic frost. Mean minimum temperature approximately 7.4°C. Mean maximum temperature approximately 14.4°C. Mean annual precipitation approximately 6222.4mm, with a winter maximum.

15 Hydrological values

Shoreline stabilisation and dissipation of erosive forces, Sediment trapping

16 Ecological features

The site consists mainly of areas of rocky shore with associated boulder and cobble beaches. These support a rich algal flora and associated fauna and form an important feeding area for wading birds. The areas of sandy beach within the site support a flora which includes marram grass *Ammophila arenaria* and sea sandwort *Honkenya peploides*.

17 Noteworthy flora

18 Noteworthy fauna

Species occurring at levels of international importance:

Over winter the area regularly supports:

Purple Sandpiper (<i>Calidris maritima</i>) (Eastern Atlantic (wintering))	787 individuals, representing an average of 1.6% of the population (5 year peak mean for 1992/93 to 1996/97)
Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) (Western Palearctic (wintering))	1739 individuals, representing an average of 2.6% of the population (5 year peak mean for 1992/93 to 1996/97)

Species occurring at levels of national importance:

During the breeding season the area regularly supports:

Little tern (<i>Sterna albifrons</i>) (Eastern Atlantic (breeding))	40 pairs, representing an average of 1.7% of the GB population (5 year mean for 1993 to 1997)
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19 Social and Cultural Values

Aesthetic
Conservation education
Current scientific research
Non-consumptive recreation
Other
Sport fishing
Tourism
Transportation/navigation

20 Land tenure/ownership

Ownership category	On-Site	Off-Site
Non-governmental organisation	+	+
Local authority, municipality etc.	+	+
National/Crown estate	+	+
Private	+	+

21 Current land use

Activity	On-Site	Off-Site	Scale
Nature conservation	+	+	Large-Scale
Tourism	+	+	Large-Scale
Recreation	+	+	Large-Scale
Research	+		Small-Scale
Collection of non-timber natural products: (unspecified)	+	+	Small-Scale
Fishing: (unspecified)	+	+	Small-Scale
Fishing: commercial	+	+	Small-Scale
Fishing: recreational/sport	+		Small-Scale
Gathering of shellfish	+	+	Small-Scale
Shell collection	+	+	Small-Scale
Bait collection	+	+	Small-Scale
Arable agriculture (unspecified)		+	Large-Scale
Sewage treatment/disposal		+	Large-Scale
Harbour/port	+	+	Small-Scale

22 Adverse factors affecting the ecological character of the site

Activity	On-Site	Off-Site	Scale
General disturbance from human activities	+	+	Large-Scale

23 Conservation measures taken

Conservation measure	On-site	Off-site
SSSI	+	
Candidate SAC	+	
Land owned by a NGO for nature conservation	+	
Site management statement/plan implemented	+	

24 Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented

see below

Site vulnerability and management statement

Little terns are vulnerable to disturbance by tourists in the summer causing reduced breeding success. The National Trust employs wardens each summer to protect the little tern colony at Beadnell Bay.

25 Current scientific research/survey/monitoring and facilities

Fauna:

Numbers of migratory and wintering wildfowl and waders are monitored annually as part of the national Wetland Birds Survey (WeBS) organised by the British Trust for Ornithology, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

26 Current conservation education

None

27 Current recreation and tourism

A diverse range of recreational activities takes place along the coast including walking, camping, sea angling, bird watching, water sports (water skiing, sailing, windsurfing and canoeing) and general use of amenity beaches. Bird watching is particularly popular at Druridge Bay where there is a Country Park and a number of Nature Reserves. As well as attracting a large number of day trippers, a sizeable population of summer visitors stay in caravan sites and other accommodation along the coast.

28 Functional jurisdiction

Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions

29 Management authority

English Nature
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30 Bibliography

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Reference should also be made to Country Agencies Management Plans for sites that are within National Nature Reserves.