

85. River Crouch Marshes (Mid-Essex Coast, phase 3)

Geographical Coordinates:	51°39'N 0°45'E	Area:	906ha
Location:	The site includes several component areas on the north and south sides of the inner estuary of the Crouch river, about 50km north of the town of Southend-on-Sea, in the county of Essex, southeast England.		
Date of Ramsar Designation:	24 March 1995		
Other International Designations:	European Union Special Protection Area		
National Designations:	Site of special scientific interest; Environmentally sensitive area		

Principal Features: The Mid-Essex Coast comprises an extensive complex of estuaries and intertidal sand and silt flats including several islands, shingle and shell beaches and extensive areas of saltmarsh. The River Crouch Marshes support a number of rare plants and animals. Among the nationally scarce plants present are: *Ceratophyllum submersum*, *Hordeum marinum*, *Limonium humile*, *Myosurus minimus*, *Parapholis incurva*, *Suaeda vera* and *Trifolium squamosum*. The area also contains the following Red Data Book invertebrates: a damselfly *Lestes dryas*, which is classified as vulnerable, and the following invertebrates which are classified as rare: a beetle *Graptodytes bilineatus* and the moths *Malacosoma castrensis* and *Eucosma catoptrana*. The area is also important for wintering water birds. During the period 1987/88 to 1991/92 an average peak count of 2,820 *Branta bernicla bernicla* was recorded. (Criteria 1a,2a,2b,3c).

Conservation Issues: Land uses at the site include habitat/nature conservation, shellfish collecting, sport and recreational hunting, sport, recreational and commercial fishing, permanent pastoral agriculture and recreation. The site has been identified by English Nature as a high priority for development of a water level management plan.