

County: Humberside

Site Name: Hornsea Mere

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

Local Planning Authority: Holderness Borough Council

National Grid Reference: TA 190470

Ordnance Survey Sheets 1:50,000: 107 **1:10,000:** TA 14 NE, 24 NW

Area: 230.0 (ha) 568.79 (ac)

First Notified: 1951 *

Date of Revision: 1983

Description:

Hornsea Mere is a site of national ornithological importance. It consists of a large shallow eutrophic lake of about 120 hectares (300 acres), together with its associated habitats of reedswamp, fen and carr woodland, representing a relic of the once-extensive marshes and lakes of Holderness.

The shallowness of the lake (in general only 1–2 m) has encouraged the formation of a large area of fringing reedswamp in which common reed *Phragmites australis*, reedmace *Typha latifolia* or common club-rush *Schoenoplectus lacustris* are the dominant species. Such communities are best developed at the western end of the site where they are accompanied by areas of carr woodland containing willow and alder. In addition, there are floristically-rich fen communities with greater spearwort *Ranunculus lingua*, early marsh orchid *Dactylorhiza incarnata*, slender tufted-sedge *Carex acuta*, tufted sedge *C. elata*, greater pond sedge *C. riparia* and round-fruited rush *Juncus compressus*.

As a result of eutrophication, and of high phosphate concentrations in particular, dense algal blooms occur. However macrophytes too are well represented including Canadian waterweed *Elodea canadensis*, fennel pondweed *Potamogeton pectinatus*, spiked water-milfoil *Myriophyllum spicatum*, yellow water-lily *Nuphar lutea* and rigid hornwort *Ceratophyllum demersum*.

The reedbeds support a diverse insect fauna with several local fenland species; the mayfly *Caenis horaria* has been recorded.

The mere is however principally valued for its importance as a refuge and feeding area for duck. These include wintering mallard 3,000, pochard 1,450, teal 1,000, tufted duck 500, goldeneye 200+, wigeon 1,000 and smaller numbers of goosander, scaup and long-tailed duck. Breeding species include coot (200 pairs), mallard, gadwall, pochard, teal, shoveler and tufted duck. About 800 pairs of reed warbler breed here, near the north-eastern limits of their British range. Reedbed roosts of starlings and hirundines are large, and summering little gulls peak at about 50.

Other Information:

1. This site is listed in “A Nature Conservation Review”, edited by D A Ratcliffe (1977). Cambridge University Press.
2. The site is protected by the Wild Birds (Hornsea Mere Sanctuary) Order 1980, Statutory Instrument No. 403.

3. Most of the site is managed as a nature reserve by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.
 4. There is a Sailing Club at the eastern end of the Mere, and both public boating and angling take place.
 5. The boundary has been amended.
- * Under Section 23 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949.