

County: Humberside **Site Name:** The Lagoons

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

Local Planning Authority: Holderness Borough Council

National Grid Reference: TA 410177 **Area:** 67.9 (ha) 167.8 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 113 **1:10,000:** TA 41 NW

First Notified: 1968 * **Date of Revision:** 1990

Other Information:

1. During the 1990 revision the boundary of the site has been amended to include land not previously notified.*
2. Part of the site is designated as an Area of Special Protection under Section 3(1) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 by the Easington Lagoons (Area of Special Protection) Order 1987.
3. The site overlaps in part with a site known as Spurn Head, a site identified as being of national importance in the Geological Conservation Review.
4. The site lies within the Spurn Heritage Coast defined by the Countryside Commission.

*Under Section 23 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949.

Description:

The site known as the Lagoons is situated on the Holderness coast some 2 kilometres north of Spurn peninsula and south-west of Easington village. It comprises a variety of coastal habitats including saltmarsh, shingle, sand dune, swamp and most significantly, saline lagoons and pools which represent the only extant example in North Humberside of this nationally rare habitat.

The northern lagoon is bounded by flood banks that to the east having been breached and overtopped in the 1950's form the current lagoon. To the south there is a further saline waterbody formed by tidal inundation of a former borrow pit. These lagoons both support populations of the nationally scarce spiral tasselweed *Ruppia cirrhosa* together with a range of invertebrate species characteristic of coastal saline water habitats. Of these, two Crustaceans, *Palaemonetes varians* and *Idotea chelipes*, a mollusc *Hydrobia ventrosa* and a bryozoan *Conopeum seurati*, are particularly characteristic of such lagoons. The southern lagoon contains a population of silkweed *Chaetomorpha linum*, a filamentous green alga, and this is the northernmost lagoonal locality on the east coast of Britain.

Around the southern lagoons there is a mosaic of saltmarsh and sparsely vegetated sand and saltpan, the extent of the latter being determined by the duration of tidal inundation. Saltmarsh vegetation is dominated by sea aster *Aster tripolium*, and mud rush *Juncus gerardii* with other commonly occurring species including red fescue *Festuca rubra*, sea arrowgrass *Triglochin maritima*, sea club-rush *Scirpus maritimus*, glasswort *Salicornia europaea* and buck's-horn plantain *Plantago coronopus*. Small stands of common reed *Phragmites australis* also occur in this vegetation mosaic. Sand dunes at the southern end of the site are dominated by marram grass *Ammophila arenaria* and lyme-grass *Leymus arenarius*.

Of particular importance is the colony of over 1% of the British breeding population of little tern, a rare species which nests on the sand dune and shingle storm beach seaward of the northern lagoon. The other notable species breeding in this habitat is ringed plover.

The lagoons are utilised by a variety of waders on spring and autumn passage, and the area is a noted location for wintering coastal passerines such as shorelark and snow bunting. Sea duck such as goldeneye, scaup and smew also occur on the open water areas in winter.