

Date of Notification: 24 January 1992

COUNTY: Norfolk

SITE NAME: GREAT YARMOUTH NORTH DENES

DISTRICT: Great Yarmouth

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

Local Planning Authority: Great Yarmouth Borough Council

National Grid Reference: TG 533 100

Area: 92.4 (ha) 228.2 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 134

1:10,000: TG 50 NW, TG 51 SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): –

Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1992

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

New site and Proposed Special Protection Area (SPA)

Description and Reasons for Notification:

The site consists of a dune system on the east coast of Norfolk between Great Yarmouth and Caister and is an important example of an accreting “ness” or promontory. It supports a full successional sequence of vegetation from pioneer to mature types; foredune, mobile dune, semi-fixed dune and dry acid dune grassland are all represented, the latter being particularly extensive. The largest United Kingdom breeding colony of the rare Little Tern is located on the foreshore.

There is a strip of accreting dune vegetation along most of the seaward edge of the dunes, consisting of the Sand Couch-grass *Elymus farctus* and Lyme-grass *Leymus arenarius*. Landward lies a band of mobile dune vegetation characterised by Marram *Ammophila arenaria* and Red Fescue *Festuca rubra*. Within this community the rare grass, Rush-leaved Fescue *Festuca juncifolia* is usually found. In places the mobile dune vegetation is backed by a more species-rich semi-fixed dune community.

The mobile and semi-fixed communities quickly give way to a broad band of fixed dune vegetation indicative of acid conditions, characterised by Sand Sedge *Carex arenaria* and the lichen *Cornicularia aculeata*. The nationally scarce Grey Hair-grass *Corynephorus canescens* is often very abundant and many species of lichens are also found. Towards the north of the site the vegetation appears less acid with areas of the Red Fescue – Lady’s Bedstraw *Gallium verum* community frequently occurring. Landward of the seawall there is an extensive area of well developed acidic dune grassland with Sand Sedge, Sheep’s Fescue *Festuca ovina* and Common Bent *Agrostis capillaris*.

The Little Tern colony has increased in size over each of the last five years with 201 pairs nesting in 1990. This represents 8.4% of the UK population, while the colony has supported an average of 133 breeding pairs during the last five years. Associated with the ternery, Ringed Plover also frequently nest.

The site is of physiographic significance as one of a number of ‘ness’ features which are characteristic of the East Anglian coast. However unlike many other dune systems in the region this site is actively accreting. It is this accumulation of sediment which is responsible for the good representation of mobile dune vegetation communities.