

Morecambe Bay European marine site Management Scheme Action Plan 1st April 2006 - 31 March 2009

Morecambe Bay is designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) under the Habitats Directive. The intertidal and subtidal parts of these designations form the European marine site. The authorities around the Bay are required to exercise their functions so as to secure compliance with the Habitats Directive. They have worked together, with the Morecambe Bay Partnership, to develop a Management Scheme for the Morecambe Bay European marine site.

The Action Plan aims to identify what needs to be done differently, by whom and when, to achieve the necessary outcomes for wildlife, as well as optimising social and economic benefits. The revision of Action Plan has been informed by the 5-year review of the Management Scheme and a review of its effectiveness.

Authorities are required by law to take account of the Habitats Directive in their day to day activities, for example in considering planning applications or granting consents and licences. They may also be required by law to carry out other actions, for example the port authorities have to prepare and test oil pollution contingency plans, which will contribute to protecting the European marine site. The Action Plan does not include these.

The Action Plan focuses on the priority actions that will deliver the greatest benefits. It is a rolling 3 year plan which will be reviewed, revised and reported on annually.

Morecambe Bay Management Scheme Action Plan 2006 - 2009

	Action	Outcome sought	Lead	Milestones & status
Conservation Advice				
CA1	Revise Natural England's Regulation 33 conservation advice for Morecambe Bay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulation 33 advice revised to include conservation objectives and advice on operations which may cause deterioration or disturbance to the interest features added to the Special Area of Conservation since 2000 (reef & subtidal sandbanks are relevant to the European marine site) 	Natural England	a) Revised draft Regulation 33 Advice (Sept 2007): b) Consultation with relevant authorities (Oct 2007): c) Advice published (December 2007):
CA2	To ensure that duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity is delivered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The profile and visibility of biodiversity is raised, biodiversity is conserved and enhanced and biodiversity is built into decision-making across the public and private sector. 	Natural England	a) Guidance note on biodiversity duties under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 copied to relevant authorities (July 2007):
Interpretation & Education				
IE1	Set up improved European marine site website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Morecambe Bay Partnership website is used to host and source key information and documents on the European marine site, increasing access to and use of this information and raising awareness and understanding of the conservation interests and management needs of the European marine site 	Morecambe Bay Partnership & Natural England	a) Format for basic website agreed (Jun 07): Done b) Basic website up and running (Sep 2007): c) Review future enhancement & funding (Mar 2008):

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IE2	Improve information available on key conservation interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maps and details of key conservation features are available for planners, managers and users of Morecambe Bay 	Natural England	a) Priorities agreed (June 2007): b) Maps & supporting information compiled (December 2007): c) Information available on website (December 2007):
IE3	Review opportunities to deliver Morecambe Bay Partnership's Interpretive Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness of the Bay's wildlife and other resources raised and promoted, in ways which will ensure they are safeguarded and enhanced, whilst delivering social and economic benefits for the area. 	Morecambe Bay Partnership/ Natural England	a) Review & prioritise opportunities (Sep 2007 & ongoing):
IE4	Increase stakeholder engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders aware of, informing and supporting the work of the Morecambe Bay Partnership and the European marine site Management Group, including the delivery of the Action Plan. 	Morecambe Bay Partnership/ Natural England	a) Identify and build opportunities into the Morecambe Bay Partnership's event programme (annual review): b) Report to annual conference of Morecambe Bay Partnership (annual):
Management				
Catchment Management				
CM1	Undertake Review of Consents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment Agency consents reviewed as required by the Habitats Directive. 	Environment Agency, United Utilities & Natural England	a) Progress Morecambe Bay review of consents to national timetable (ongoing):

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Shoreline Management				
SM1	Review of Shoreline Management Plan covering Morecambe Bay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved, widely shared understanding of Shoreline Management Planning and its importance The revised Shoreline Management Plan covering Morecambe Bay takes appropriate account of the Habitats Directive/European marine site requirements, the biodiversity duties placed on statutory bodies and integrates with Local Development Frameworks 	Morecambe Bay & Duddon SMP Steering Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Agree mechanisms and programme for raising the awareness of and engaging Morecambe Bay stakeholders in the Shoreline Management Plan process (Dec 2007): b) Deliver programme (2007-2009): c) Appropriate assessment of SMP policies built into SMP review process (2007-2009):
Fisheries				
F1	To progress a shellfisheries Regulatory Order for Morecambe Bay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All shellfisheries and shellfish cultivation in Morecambe Bay are managed to be sustainable. The Management Plan for the Regulatory Order incorporates the measures necessary to ensure that it makes an appropriate contribution to achieving the conservation objectives for Morecambe Bay 	NW&NW Sea Fisheries Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Regulatory Order proposals initiated (2006): b) Environmental Forum established (Jan 2007): c) Appropriate Assessment of Management Plan (?): d) Regulatory Order consultation (?):
F2	Develop & apply shellfisheries/bird resource model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The potential risk of the internationally important bird populations using Morecambe Bay being affected by the shellfisheries evaluated using a model developed for the Bay. 	Natural England & NW&NW Sea Fisheries Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Exploratory discussions (2006): Held b) Review and agree course of action (Dec 2007)
Shipping & Navigation				

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SN1	Review maintenance dredging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintenance dredging programmes reviewed against the Habitats Directive 	Port Authorities	a) Review process agreed: Awaiting Defra decision
Access & Recreation				
AR1	Improve coastal access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to the coast promoted in ways which safeguard and enhance the natural environment and its enjoyment. 	Morecambe Bay Partnership	a) Explore opportunities with NW Coastal Trail officer and Local Authorities and report back to Management Group (Oct 2007):
AR2	Promote recovery of the biodiversity and amenity value of damaged shingle habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vegetated shingle interests at North Walney/Earnse Bay are protected from vehicular damage to enable them to recover and contribute to the amenity value of the area 	Natural England & Barrow Borough Council	a) Review situation and agree actions needed (Mar 2008)
AR3	Improve amenity quality of environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less non-natural litter on shoreline Less litter entering the site 	Morecambe Bay Partnership	a) Continue and increase Beach Care programme (ongoing): b) In liaison with Local Authorities review opportunities for local campaigns to reduce litter (Mar 2008):
AR4	Engage with recreational stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raised awareness of wildlife habitats in Bay Raised awareness of recreational users needs Conflict avoidance and resolution 	Morecambe Bay Partnership	a) Hold twice yearly meetings of Sport & Recreation User Group (ongoing):

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Monitoring and evaluation				
ME1	Monitor and review Action Plan implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Action Plan includes the actions necessary to achieve the conservation objectives for Morecambe Bay, is kept up to date and is well-publicised The Action Plan is informed by, and will inform, the condition monitoring undertaken by Natural England 	Management Group supported by MBP	a) Agree revised Action Plan for 2006-9 (Jul 2007): b) Complete annual review of Action Plan (Oct 2007): c) Report to Morecambe Bay Partnership (Nov 2007):
ME2	Revise Management Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management scheme meets national and local needs, is up-to-date, takes account of the revised Regulation 33 Advice and is in a form which can be easily accessed and understood by relevant authorities and the public. 	Management Group supported by MBP	a) Format for revised scheme agreed (Sep 2007): b) Scheme revised (Dec 2007): c) Scheme published (Mar 2008):
ME3	Monitoring of sea grass beds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up-to-date information on the extent and quality of sea grass (<i>Zostera</i>) beds and a better understanding of potential threats to these beds, for example from wastewater discharges, pipelaying activities and habitat modification by cord grass (<i>Spartina</i>). 	Natural England	a) Review and agree monitoring requirements in liaison with the Environment Agency (Mar 2008):
ME4	Monitoring of honeycomb worm reefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes in the distribution and quality of honeycomb worm reefs known and used to inform management of shellfisheries and other activities 	Natural England & NW&NW Sea Fisheries Committee	a) Review and agree monitoring requirements (Mar 2008):

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ME5	Monitoring of saltmarsh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A baseline map of saltmarshes in Morecambe Bay produced to inform the Shoreline Management Plan review and monitoring under the Habitats and Water Framework Directives 	Lancaster City Council, Environment Agency & Natural England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Satellite methodology evaluated: Research contract let by Lancaster CC in progress b) Air photographic survey of NW saltmarshes undertaken by the Environment Agency (Oct 2007): c) Baseline map of saltmarshes completed (Dec 2007):
ME6	Monitor distribution of the alien species wire weed (<i>Sargassum muticum</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know whether and to where the alien species wire weed <i>Sargassum muticum</i> is spreading in Morecambe Bay and understand the potential impacts of wire weed upon the European marine site Maintain watching brief for other alien species eg Chinese mitten crab 	Natural England (with Morecambe Bay Partnership and Cumbria Wildlife Trust)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Review and agree monitoring requirements (Mar 2008):