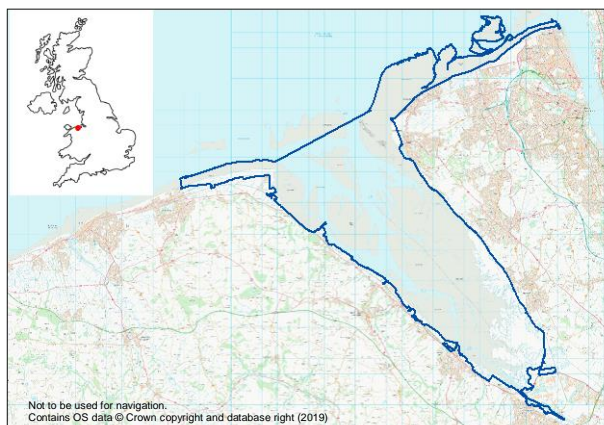


Dee Estuary SPA and SAC

Description:

The Dee Estuary European Marine Site comprises the marine areas of the Dee Estuary special protection area (SPA) and Dee Estuary / Aber Dyfrdwy special area of conservation (SAC). Lying on the boundary between England and Wales, the estuary is a large, funnel-shaped, sheltered estuary that supports extensive areas of intertidal sandflats, mudflats, and saltmarsh. The site is of major importance for waterbirds. During the winter, the intertidal flats and saltmarshes provide feeding and roosting sites for large populations of ducks and waders.



Qualifying features:

The Dee Estuary has been designated as a SAC because it hosts the following habitats: mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide; *Salicornia* and other annuals colonizing mud and sand; Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima*); estuaries; annual vegetation of drift lines; vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts; embryonic shifting dunes; shifting dunes along the shoreline; fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation and humid dune slacks. The site also supports sea lampreys (*Petromyzon marinus*) and river lampreys (*Lampetra fluviatilis*) and petalwort (*Petalophyllum ralfsii*).

The site has been designated as an SPA for supporting the following over wintering species: bar-tailed godwit (*Limosa lapponica*), black-tailed godwit (*Limosa limosa islandica*), curlew (*Numenius arquata*), dunlin (*Calidris alpina alpina*), grey plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*), knot (*Calidris canutus*), oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*), pintail (*Anas acuta*), redshank (*Tringa totanus*), shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*) and teal (*Anas crecca*). The site has also supports breeding common tern (*Sterna hirundo*) and little tern (*Sterna albifrons*), as well as supporting on passage sandwich tern (*Sterna sandvicensis*) and redshank (*Tringa totanus*). The SPA also regularly supports at least 20,000 waterfowl.

Management:

- [Foreshore permit](#) required for vehicle access and boat launching.
- Sand yachting/ parakarting is managed by the Metropolitan Borough of Wirral and [Wirral Sand Yacht Club](#) which restrict activity areas.

Stakeholder Concerns:

Aircraft were noted as an increasing problem, and can create significant bird disturbance when flying very low. Incidents on the Wirral side of the estuary occur on 10-20 days a year, usually on relatively windless days. Contacts have been made with local airports to advise helicopter pilots of the disturbance and safety issues involved.

Board sports are launching from various points and causing disturbance to the wader roosts. Kite surfing was originally restricted to outside the yellow marker buoys at West Kirby (Marine lake area) and didn't cause any disturbance. However launching has moved to Stanley Road, Hoylake and has become a major problem at Red Rocks/Bird Rock and Hoylake. Bird Rock is often disturbed, which is a refuge area for waders at high tide.

Paddle sports can cause disturbance from late summer onwards, particularly on Middle Eye, if paddlers land and walk over the island disturbing roosting waders.

Motorsports (e.g. quad bikes, trail bikes, 4x4s) are a sporadic problem on the Dee Estuary. Occasional and slightly increasing use of trail bikes on the beach at West Kirby/Hoylake and riding out to Hilbre island. Trail bikes are occasionally seen on saltmarsh areas on the Welsh side of the estuary where they can disturb roosts and damage vegetation.

The use of drones was reported as becoming more frequent. Some users have flown them low over roosting/nesting birds. Incidents noted by Hilbre Island Observatory of disturbance to waders feeding at low tide around the gutter and edge of East Hoyle sandbank.

MPA: Dee Estuary SPA and SAC				No. Stakeholders: 4 online & 2 workshop			
Activity	Frequency	Duration	Participation	Intensity	Confidence	MPA Extent	Trend
Board sports	1	2	1	2	H	1	↑
Geophysical surveys	0	0	0	0	L	0	?
Motor boating	2	2	1	4	H	1	→
Jetskis	2	2	1	4	L	1	→
Paddle sports	2	3	3	18	H	1	↑
Parascending	0	0	0	0	M	0	→
Sailing (non-motorised)	2	3	3	18	H	1	↑
SCUBA diving	0	0	0	0	H	0	→
Swimming / Snorkelling	2	1	1	2	M	1	→
Towed water sports	0	0	0	0	H	0	→
Wildlife watching from the sea	2	2	1	4	M	1	↑
Bait collection	1	1	1	1	M	1	→
Beach recreation	4	2	6	48	H	1	↑
Coasteering	0	0	0	0	?	0	→
Land boarding	2	3	3	18	H	1	↑
Motorsports (quad bikes, motorbikes)	1	1	1	1	M	1	→
Vehicle access (cars on foreshore)	3	3	5	45	M	1	→
Wildlife watching from the land	4	1	3	12	M	2	↑
Drone use	1	1	1	1	H	1	↑
Gliding (unpowered)	1	1	1	1	M	1	↑
Aircraft (powered)	3	1	1	3	M	1	↑

KEY

FREQUENCY	DURATION	PARTICIPATION	INTENSITY	CONFIDENCE	EXTENT	TREND
4 Regular/daily	4 >8 hours	6 >100	45-96 High	H High	2 Whole MPA (solid)	↑ Increase
3 Regular/weekends	3 4-8 hours	5 51-100	24-40 Med-high	M Medium	1 Part of MPA (shaded)	→ Stay the same
2 Seasonally	2 2-4 hours	4 21-50	9-20 Low-med	L Low	0 Does not occur	↓ Decrease
1 Sporadically	1 <2 hours	3 11-20	1-8 Low	? Data missing	? Data missing	? Data missing
0 Does not occur	0 Does not occur	2 6-10	0 Does not occur			
? Data missing	? Data missing	1 1-5	? Data missing			
		0 Does not occur				
		? Data missing				



Non-licensable activities which occur in and around the Dee Estuary SAC and SPA

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Water based activities

- Board sports
- Motor boating
- Jetskis
- Paddle sports
- Sailing
- Swimming / Snorkelling
- Wildlife watching from the sea

Land based activities

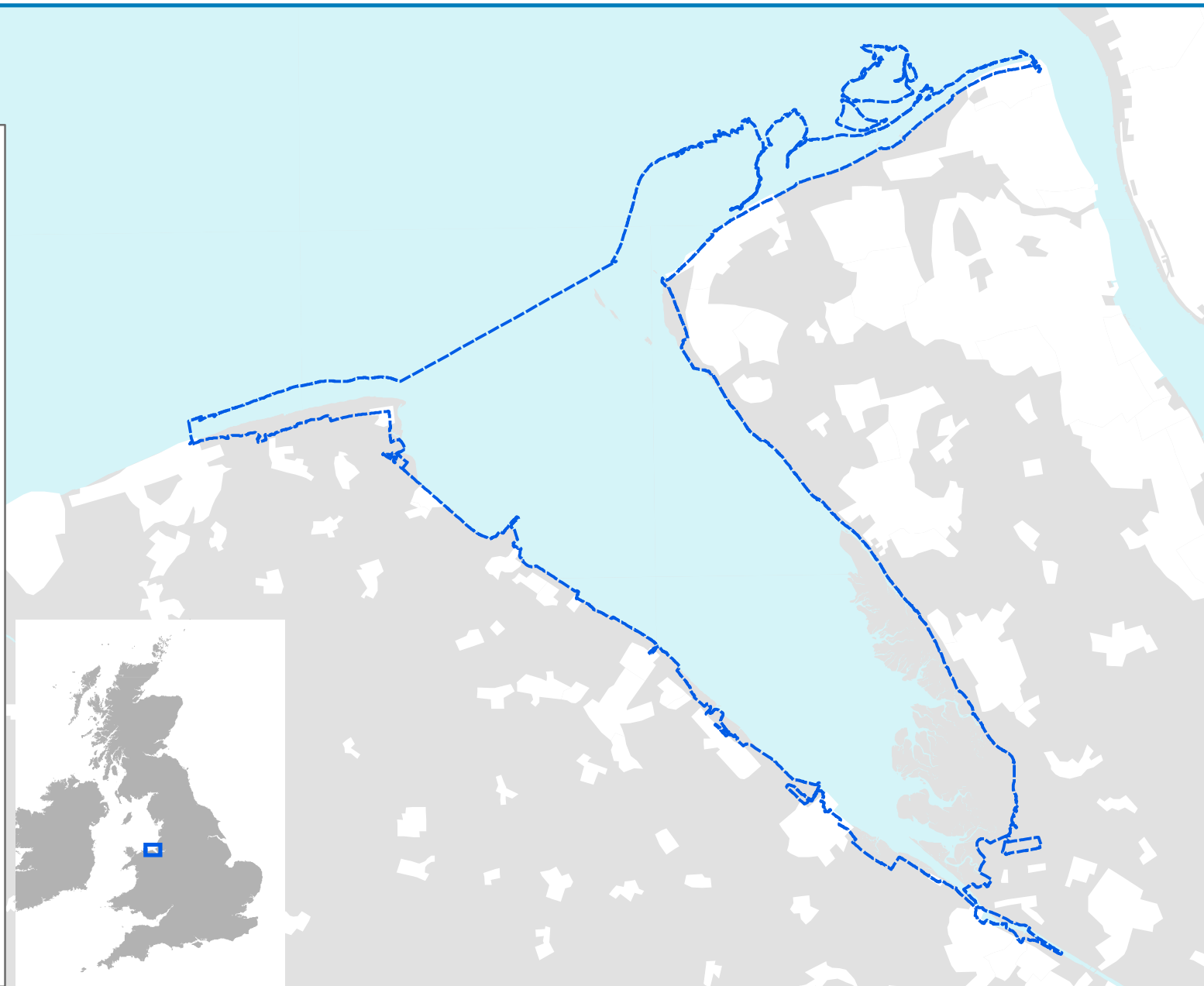
- Bait collection
- Beach recreation
- Land boarding
- Motorsports
- Vehicle access (cars on foreshore)
- Wildlife watching from the land

Aerial activities

- Drone use
- Gliding (unpowered)
- Aircraft (powered)

Supplementary data



- General boating areas (RYA)
- MPA boundary



Marine Protected Area Designated Features - Marine SAC and Subfeatures






SAC Complex features (Polygons)

SAC_SFCD

-  Estuaries (H1130)
-  Large shallow inlets and bays (H1160)







Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide (H1140) polygons

SAC_SFCD

-  Intertidal coarse sediment (A2.1)
-  Intertidal sand and muddy sand (A2.2)
-  Intertidal mud (A2.3)
-  Intertidal mixed sediments (A2.4)
-  Intertidal seagrass beds (A2.61)








Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time (H1110) polygons

SAC_SFCD

-  Subtidal coarse sediment (A5.1)
-  Subtidal sand (A5.2)
-  Subtidal mud (A5.3)
-  Subtidal mixed sediment (A5.4)
-  Maerl beds (A5.51)
-  Subtidal seagrass beds (A5.53)








Reefs (H1170) points

SAC_SFCD

-  Intertidal rock (A1)
-  Intertidal biogenic reefs: (*Sabellaria alveolata*) (A2.71)
-  Intertidal biogenic reefs: mussel beds (SF_SH_5)
-  Infralittoral rock (A3)
-  Circalittoral rock (A4)
-  Subtidal biogenic reefs: (*Sabellaria spp.*) (A5.61)
-  Subtidal biogenic reefs: mussel beds (SF_SH_6)

Reefs (H1170) polygons

SAC_SFCD

-  Intertidal rock (A1)
-  Intertidal biogenic reefs: (*Sabellaria alveolata*) (A2.71)
-  Intertidal biogenic reefs: mussel beds (SF_SH_5)
-  Infralittoral rock (A3)
-  Circalittoral rock (A4)
-  Subtidal biogenic reefs: (*Sabellaria spp.*) (A5.61)
-  Subtidal biogenic reefs: mussel beds (SF_SH_6)

SAC_SFCD

-  Sea Caves (H8330)

SAC_SFCD

-  Saltmarsh (A2.5)