

Managing the Flamborough Coast

A summary of the Flamborough Head Management Plan



**FLAMBOROUGH
HEAD**
SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION





The Flamborough Head Management Plan

Working to ensure the Natural Environment at Flamborough Head is protected for future generations to come, whilst making sure that the people who live in and visit Flamborough can still enjoy this special place.

Introduction and Background



Leanne Stockdale, Flamborough Project Officer

One of the last remaining stacks at Breil Nook.

Flamborough Head is one of the most prominent natural features in the East Riding of Yorkshire. Characterised by 15 kilometres of soaring chalk cliffs, reaching heights of over 130m, it makes the area one of the most spectacular sites to visit along the east coast of England. The importance of the site is recognised at a National and International level, designated as a Heritage Coast for its outstanding landscape and heritage value and as a European Marine Site for its sea bird colonies, extensive intertidal and underwater chalk reef, sea caves and sea-cliff vegetation.

To manage this unique area effectively, a Management Scheme was published in 2000, for the Flamborough Head European Marine Site. The overarching objective of the Scheme being to *'ensure that human activities are managed in ways that are compatible with the wildlife features of the European Marine Site'*. The scheme ran successfully for 5 years and in 2005 was reviewed, through a sequence of consultation workshops, to give all interested parties the opportunity to sit down together and discuss key issues and jointly agree solutions and policies for the future.

The overarching objective of the scheme has remained unchanged. However a holistic approach to management has been adopted, which looks at the needs of the natural environment and people together. To reflect the scheme's broader management role at Flamborough it has since been renamed the 'Flamborough Head Management Plan', building on the successes of the previous European Marine Site Management Scheme and the Heritage Coast Strategy.

Why is Flamborough Head so important?

The cliffs and rocky shores of Flamborough represent the most northerly outcrop of coastal chalk in the UK, accounting for 9% of all coastal chalk in Europe. The waters around the Headland support a wide diversity of marine life, which due to the site's location are often found at their northern or southern limits of distribution in the North Sea. These waters are particularly rich in marine life because of its proximity to the 'Flamborough Front', which causes an upwelling of nutrients, leading to a plentiful food supply.

The three features of interest, which make Flamborough Head a European Marine Site, are reefs, sea caves and seabirds. However these features cannot be considered in isolation. Instead an integrated approach to management is needed, promoting conservation in a fair and inclusive way.

JARGON BUSTER

What is an ecosystem approach to management?

A strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources

The fundamental idea is simple, because the elements of an ecosystem are interconnected (including species, habitats, and the range of system services they provide to humans). It makes sense to manage them as a whole rather than as a series of disconnected parts (MPA News Vol. 8:4). This approach recognises that humans are a key part of the natural environment.

Flamborough's Features



Reefs

Chalk reefs extend up to 6km offshore and support some of the best and most diverse reef habitats in the UK, comprising horizontal ledges, vertical walls, broken rock and boulder fields. The three main reef habitats found at Flamborough Head are, Rocky shores - typically covered with seaweed, which are grazed upon by limpets and winkles; Kelp habitats, which thrive in the near shore waters, down to about 6-7m in depth and in the deeper water sub tidal faunal turf, created by a diverse range of marine animals, including sponges, sea fans and sea squirts.



Leanne Stockdale, Flamborough Project Officer

Caves around the Headland at North Landing, Flamborough

Sea Caves

There are over 200 sea caves at Flamborough, created by the erosive power of the North sea. The largest caves are known to extend for more than 50m from their entrance on the coast. The variety of caves found, from submerged to partly submerged, offer shelter to a variety of bird species, including kittiwake and shag; whilst providing habitats for a number of internally important lichen and algal communities, unique to chalk shores.

Seabirds

The extensive chalk sea cliffs of Flamborough and Bempton, have been weathered by wind and sea, forming numerous crevices and ledges, which support over 200,000 breeding seabirds. These include the internationally important kittiwake populations and nationally important populations of razorbill, guillemot, puffin, fulmar, herring gull and gannet.

Heritage Coast

The Heritage Coast stretches from Reighton, in the north to Sewerby in the south, covering 19km of coastline, with an inland boundary that encloses 3265ha. Designated for its landscape quality, including the flora and fauna of the terrestrial, shoreline and marine environment; and for its heritage features of archaeological, historical and architectural interest. The current management strategy for the Heritage coast was published in 2002, outlining the objectives and priorities for sustainable development on the Headland. However, with no dedicated project officer, the strategy implementation has since declined. The importance of the Heritage Coast has been recognised by this Management Plan with the adoption of actions and policies from the strategy.



Site of Special Scientific interest (SSSI)

There are over 4,000 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) in England, covering around 7% of the country's land area, with over half of these sites, by area, being internationally important for their wildlife features. Flamborough Head SSSI, formerly known as 'Speeton and Flamborough Coast SSSI', covers a total area of 315.2ha, and comprises the coastal cliffs of Flamborough Head between Reighton and Sewerby. The area was classified as a SSSI for its internationally important coastal geomorphology and geology, the cliff top plant communities' vegetation, characterised by both a maritime and calcareous influence from the chalk underlying the surface boulder clay; and finally the species of sea bird found in the area, including the only mainland gannetry in England.



Leanne Stockdale, Flamborough Project Officer

A summers day at Danes Dyke, Flamborough



Aerial view of F



Sunset at South Landing, Flamborough
Leanne Stockdale, Flamborough Project Officer



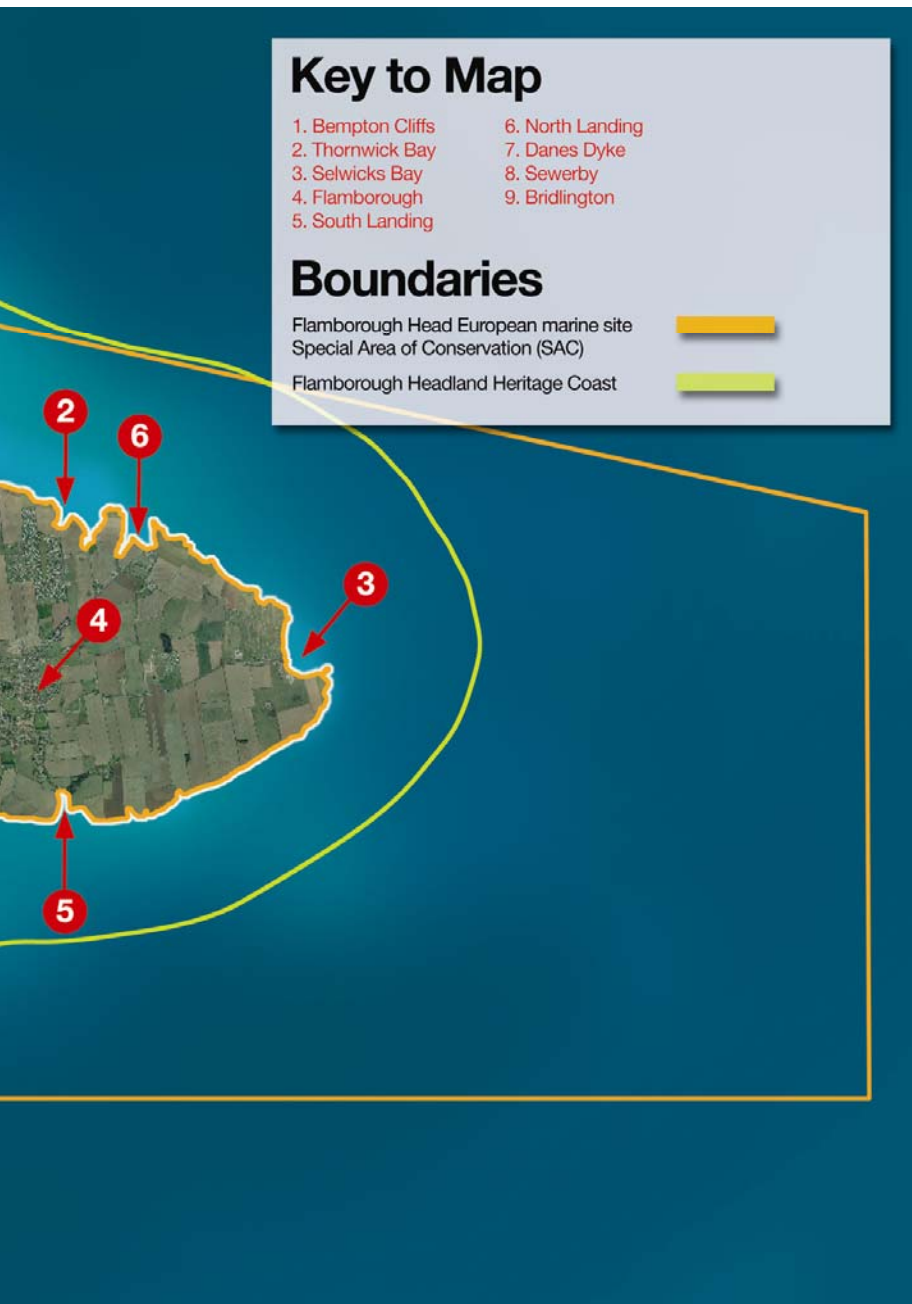
An edible crab, *Cancer pagurus* pictured within the European Marine Site
Elizabeth Wood



A suburb summers day at Sewerby
Source: Natural England



Flamborough Head



One of six benches, found on the South Landing sculpture trail
Leanne Stockdale, Flamborough Project Officer



The sun-star, *Crossaster papposus* found around the Headland at Flamborough
Elizabeth Wood



A clear day at Selwick's Bay, Flamborough
Source: Natural England



Protecting Flamborough

To protect this special coast we need to avoid any significant adverse impacts on the wildlife and habitats. The plan manages these impacts through implementing the following;

- An **Action Plan**
- **Policies** for each activity
- **Projects** to deliver specific activities



Trevor Charlton, RSPB

A nesting gannet, at Bempton RSPB Reserve

The Principles of the Management Plan are to consider wildlife and people together, whilst involving people in the decision making process; therefore improving the management of the natural environment at Flamborough.

Creating an Action Plan

Activities taking place within and adjacent to the European Marine Site have been grouped together into broad categories and the possible impact of these activities on the features of the site identified. Where impact was not likely to have an effect, no further action is proposed. However where there are obvious gaps in management, or not enough information to be sure whether or not there is a problem, further management action will be required. The full action plan can be found in the Management Plan, available from www.hull.ac.uk/coastalobs/flamborough/conservation/index.html.

Key actions for 2006-2009

- Establish a fisheries liaison group to discuss fisheries issues at Flamborough Head;
- Establish land management liaison group to assess feasibility of progressing an integrated approach to the use of Agri-environment Schemes at Flamborough Head;
- Produce a comprehensive site condition assessment of the terrestrial environment, to assess the impact of access on the Headland in line with conservation objectives;
- Provide information on the importance of the site using existing mechanisms, wherever possible, and/or new initiatives e.g. website, leaflets;
- Joint working with partners to protect and enhance Biodiversity Action Plan habitats at Flamborough Head;
- Permanent employment of a Project Officer, on the Headland.

What activities are covered by the plan?

The operations/activities taking place around Flamborough Head have been grouped by broad category:

- Collection
- Energy industries
- Fishing
- Industrial activity and consented discharges to sea
- Land management
- Mineral extraction
- Planning and development
- Water quality
- Recreation and tourism
- Research and education
- Shipping, navigation and deposits at sea
- Shoreline management



Berthed vessels at Bridlington Harbour

Source: North Eastern Sea Fisheries Committee

Graham Megson, North Yorkshire County Council



Harrow patterned fields at Flamborough Head



Key Policies and Projects

Policies

To ensure the action plan is delivered a number of policies have been adopted, integrating policies from the Heritage Coast Strategy (2002) and the previous Management Scheme (2000).

Key Policies

- To effectively manage the area, ensuring that all activities are compatible with the wildlife, access and landscape features;
- Support diversification schemes that assist with promoting tourism and maintaining employment, without affecting the natural environment;
- Ensure close working between fishermen, fisheries managers and nature conservation bodies;
- To maintain a viable agricultural economy that delivers maximum environmental benefit, whilst contributing to the farming economy;
- Encourage the development and exploration of access opportunities for as wide a range of the public as possible, whilst ensuring they are compatible with the natural environment at Flamborough;
- Seek to identify opportunities for raising public awareness, encouraging a better understanding of the Headland, Heritage Coast and the marine and terrestrial ecology and issues relevant to their sustainable management.



Robbie Fisher, Natural England

An educational visit taking place at North Landing, Flamborough

Projects

Throughout the consultation process a number of projects were proposed and formulated. These are contained within the projects section of the management plan. It is hoped that these projects will be completed alongside the actions of the plan, with the guidance of a project officer. A number of these projects are listed below. The delivery of them is due to start over the next 3 years;

Access and interpretation audit: To conduct an audit of the current condition of access and interpretation facilities at Flamborough. In partnership with ERYC Public Rights of Way, the audit will be developed into an implementation plan that will be used to bid for funds for improvements to access facilities and interpretation panels.

Interpretation signs and leaflets: To produce high quality leaflets for Flamborough Head and develop interpretation materials to improve visitor experience and raise awareness of environmental, landscape and cultural assets at Flamborough.

Voluntary codes of conduct: To raise public awareness whilst encouraging a better understanding of the area and why it is important (to be combined with the above project).

The monitoring and gathering of baseline information, in keeping with the Ecosystem Approach. To gain a better understanding of the area, so more informed decisions can be made about factors which may affect the future of the site.

Marine Stewardship Council accreditation: The aim of this project is to promote sustainable fisheries and raise the profile of Yorkshire Coast fisheries.

Flamborough Head Management Plan

How does it work?

The management group, which is made up of a number of Relevant Authorities, manages the Flamborough Head Management Plan. This group meets twice a year to review the action plan and to report back on any research completed. This group is informed by The Flamborough Head Maritime Forum, which provides a focus for stakeholder involvement in the management of the Flamborough Head. The chair of the Forum also sits on the management group to ensure open dialogue between the two groups. The Flamborough Head Project Officer, who can be contacted on the details below, manages both the forum and the management group.



Robbie Fisher, Natural England

Rockpooling at Thornwick Bay, Flamborough

How to be involved.....

Who are the Relevant Authorities for the European Marine Site?

Bridlington Harbour Commissioners
East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Environment Agency
Natural England
North Landing Harbour Commissioners
North Eastern Sea Fisheries Committee
North Yorkshire County Council
Scarborough Borough Council
Trinity House Lighthouse Service
Yorkshire Water Ltd

The **Flamborough Head Maritime Forum**: meetings through the forum take place at least once a year, to discuss issues related to the management plan and identify any new actions and/or projects. If you would like to be involved in the forum events please contact the Flamborough Head Project Officer, using the details below.

If you require further information please contact:

The Flamborough Head Project Officer
Town Hall, Bridlington, YO16 4LP
Telephone: (01482) 393694

