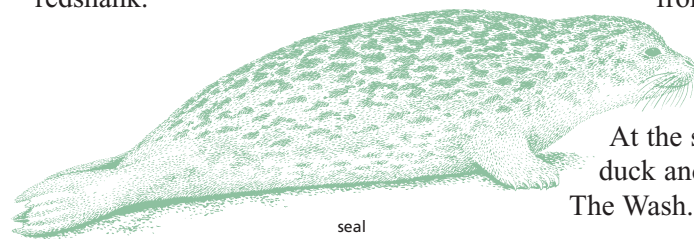


The Wash National Nature Reserve

The Wash NNR which is some 8573 ha in size, is the southeastern part of The Wash SSSI and represents a site of international importance for nature conservation. The site is composed of Lutton Outmarsh, which was declared in 1986, and the Wingland and King's Lynn Estates areas which were added to the NNR in 1992. The whole site was renamed The Wash following the additions in 1992. The site is managed under lease from the Crown Estate Commissioners (Wingland Estate and King's Lynn Estate) and from Agricultural Land Holdings (Farms) Ltd. (Lutton Outmarsh) by English Nature. Two major shipping channels run through the site. These are the channels of the rivers Nene and Ouse and are used daily by cargo and fishing vessels visiting the ports of Sutton Bridge and Wisbech, and King's Lynn respectively.

The Wash NNR forms part of The Wash Ramsar site, Special Protection Area and candidate Special Area for Conservation and European Marine Site, and is the largest National Nature Reserve in England. It is one of the most outstanding coastal wetlands in Great Britain and comprises open deep water, permanent shallow water, intertidal sand, mudflat and saltmarsh. The saltmarsh is of considerable botanical interest and is valuable for breeding birds such as redshank.

The large expanses of intertidal sand and mud hold enormous concentrations of invertebrate life, which make this one of Britain's most important feeding areas for waders and wildfowl. Enormous numbers of migrant birds such as grey plover, knot, dunlin, oystercatchers and bar-tailed godwit arrive in the autumn to feed on these areas. The best times to see large flocks of waders is on a rising tide at any time from early September to early May as the birds have to move



from the mudflats to surrounding land to wait for the tide to recede. At the same time of year, duck and geese move into The Wash.



The Wash NNR, Breast Sands area

Spectacular numbers of pink-footed geese arrive from Iceland and Greenland and roost on the offshore banks of the reserve. Brent geese, wigeon, pintail teal and mallard use the saltmarsh throughout the reserve.

These large flocks of birds attract aerial hunters such as peregrines, merlins and hen-harriers. Short-eared and barn owls use the sea wall and saltmarsh as hunting and roosting areas. The Wash is important for its large population of common seals.



short eared owl



Managed by



Fact File

LOCATION

The Wash. Landranger 132.

HABITATS

Saltmarsh, mudflats, open deep water, permanent shallow water, intertidal sand.

SPECIES

Winter wildfowl, waders, breeding birds, common seals, saltmarsh flora.

ACCESS

There are public footpaths along the seawall in the Lutton Outmarsh section of the NNR and between the River Nene and the River Ouse. Due to the hazardous nature of the mudflats and saltmarshes of The Wash, visitors are advised to stay on the seawall. Please keep dogs under close control. More information about the site can be found at The Green Quay - a discovery centre for The Wash - at South Quay, Kings Lynn (01553) 818500. Boat trips to see the seals are available daily from Hunstanton during the summer months.

CAR PARKING

A public car park and picnic site has been provided by Lincolnshire County Council to the east of the mouth of the River Nene, which is the starting point of the Peter Scott Walk to King's Lynn. Further car parking is situated at Ongar Hill on the west bank of the River Ouse and at Lutton Outmarsh, west of the River Nene.

Management

Management has involved maintenance and reinstatement of grazing regimes in specified areas to provide habitats for breeding birds (in particular redshank) and wintering wildfowl and waders. The area is shot over during the season by three clubs: this is an important part of the site management as the wildfowling clubs regulate shooting pressure in accordance with strict rules of conduct, and prevent indiscriminate shooting.



The Wash NNR, near Ongar Hill