

Site Improvement Plan

Baston Fen

Site Improvement Plans (SIPs) have been developed for each Natura 2000 site in England as part of the Improvement Programme for England's Natura 2000 sites (IPENS). Natura 2000 sites is the combined term for sites designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protected Areas (SPA). This work has been financially supported by LIFE, a financial instrument of the European Community.

The plan provides a high level overview of the issues (both current and predicted) affecting the condition of the Natura 2000 features on the site(s) and outlines the priority measures required to improve the condition of the features. It does not cover issues where remedial actions are already in place or ongoing management activities which are required for maintenance.

The SIP consists of three parts: a Summary table, which sets out the priority Issues and Measures; a detailed Actions table, which sets out who needs to do what, when and how much it is estimated to cost; and a set of tables containing contextual information and links.

Once this current programme ends, it is anticipated that Natural England and others, working with landowners and managers, will all play a role in delivering the priority measures to improve the condition of the features on these sites.

The SIPs are based on Natural England's current evidence and knowledge. The SIPs are not legal documents, they are live documents that will be updated to reflect changes in our evidence/knowledge and as actions get underway. The information in the SIPs will be used to update England's contribution to the UK's Prioritised Action Framework (PAF).

The SIPs are not formal consultation documents, but if you have any comments about the SIP or would like more information please email us at IPENSLIFEProject@naturalengland.org.uk, or contact Natural England's Responsible Officer for the site via our enquiry service 0300 060 3900, or enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

This Site Improvement Plan covers the following Natura 2000 site(s)

UK0030085 Baston Fen SAC

Site description

Baston Fen SAC comprises long strips of permanent pasture which are subject to regular winter flooding, interspersed with a series of old flooded borrow-pits with associated swamp and fen plant communities.

Amongst the variety of fish which have been recorded from the site is the spine loach *Cobitis taenia*, significant populations of which occur in the Counter Drain and, to a lesser extent, in the River Glen. This site represents a key stronghold for this species within the Welland catchment.

Plan Summary

This table shows the prioritised issues for the site(s), the features they affect, the proposed measures to address the issues and the delivery bodies whose involvement is required to deliver the measures. The list of delivery bodies will include those who have agreed to the actions as well as those where discussions over their role in delivering the actions is on-going.

Priority & Issue	Pressure or Threat	Feature(s) affected	Measure	Delivery Bodies
1 Siltation	Threat	S1149 Spined loach	Plan the desilting of the ditch	Environment Agency, Natural England, Welland and Deepings IDB
2 Changes in species distributions	Threat	S1149 Spined loach	Monitor the population every 3-4 years	Environment Agency, Natural England

Issues and Actions

This table outlines the prioritised issues that are currently impacting or threatening the condition of the features, and the outstanding actions required to address them. It also shows, where possible, the estimated cost of the action and the delivery bodies whose involvement will be required to implement the action. Lead delivery bodies will be responsible for coordinating the implementation of the action, but not necessarily funding it. Delivery partners will need to support the lead delivery body in implementing the action. In the process of developing the SIPs Natural England has approached the delivery bodies to seek agreement on the actions and their roles in delivering them, although in some cases these discussions have not yet been concluded. Other interested parties, including landowners and managers, will be involved as the detailed actions are agreed and delivered. Funding options are indicated as potential (but not necessarily agreed or secured) sources to fund the actions.

1 Siltation

There has been no desilting of the ditch since SAC notification because of the concerns over what this could do to the Spined loach population. There is currently more silt than is considered ideal for the species, and a management programme is necessary for both the health of the Spined loach population and for the macrophyte community. It will need careful planning and monitoring.

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
1A	Carry out dredging works in the counter drain without damaging the spined loach population.	£50,000	2014-16	Mechanism not identified / develop mechanism	Internal Drainage Board (IDB)	Welland and Deepings IDB	Environment Agency, Natural England

2 Changes in species distributions

The Spined loach population is not monitored with sufficient frequency to determine population fluctuations.

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
2A	Establish a programme to monitor the population and assess the reasons for decline. Full survey every three years (150 trawls) with dense areas (near weirs) surveyed more frequently.	£10,000	2014-21	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Natural England (Evidence and Monitoring)	Natural England	Environment Agency

Site details

The tables in this section contain site-relevant contextual information and links

Qualifying features

#UK Special responsibility

Baston Fen SAC S1149 *Cobitis taenia*: Spined loach

Site location and links

Baston Fen SAC

Area (ha)	2.2	Grid reference	TF136171	Map link
Local Authorities				Lincolnshire
Site Conservation Objectives				European Site Conservation Objectives for Baston Fen SAC
European Marine Site conservation advice				n/a
Regulation 33/35 Package				n/a
Marine Management Organisation site plan				n/a

Water Framework Directive (WFD)

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) provides the main framework for managing the water environment throughout Europe. Under the WFD a management plan must be developed for each river basin district. The River Basin Management Plans (RBMP) include a summary of the measures needed for water dependent Natura 2000 sites to meet their conservation objectives. For the second round of RBMPs, SIPs are being used to capture the priorities and new measures required for water dependent habitats on Natura 2000 sites. SIP actions for non-water dependent sites/habitats do not form part of the RBMPs and associated consultation.

Baston Fen SAC

<i>River basin</i>	Anglian	Anglian RBMP
<i>WFD Management catchment</i>	Weaver/Gowy	
<i>WFD Waterbody ID (Cycle 2 draft)</i>	n/a	

Overlapping or adjacent protected sites

Site(s) of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	
Baston Fen SAC	Baston and Thurlby Fens SSSI

National Nature Reserve (NNR)	
Baston Fen SAC	n/a

Ramsar	
Baston Fen SAC	n/a

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)	
Baston Fen SAC	n/a

<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1.0	15/10/2014	

www.naturalengland.org.uk/ipens2000

