

Site Improvement Plan

Denby Grange Colliery Ponds

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)

UK0030036 Denby Grange Colliery Ponds SAC

Site description

Denby Grange Colliery Ponds SAC lies in the valley of Stony Cliffe Beck, a tributary of the River Calder, Wakefield, West Yorkshire. To the immediate west is the site of the former Denby Grange colliery, now supporting a timber yard.

The SAC supports three waterbodies within ancient, replanted woodland. The original breeding pond (Old Pond) was created by coal-mining activity and a second pond (Fire Pond) was created in 2000. Both ponds support breeding Great crested newts *Triturus cristatus*. A third non-breeding pond is present towards the site's northern boundary. In the 1990s this site supported the sixth-highest recorded count of Great crested newts for recent years in Great Britain and the largest known breeding colony of Great crested newts in West Yorkshire.

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 Hydrological changes | Pressure | S1166 Great crested newt | Implement recommendations of the Feasibility Study (due 2015) in order to bring the main Great crested newt breeding pond (Old Pond) back into functioning order | Environment Agency, Natural England |
| 2 Forestry and woodland management | Threat | S1166 Great crested newt | Remove trees/scrub to reduce shading around the main breeding ponds (and open up the area around the damp depression on the eastern boundary) to benefit breeding newts | Forestry Commission, Natural England |
| 3 Water Pollution | Threat | S1166 Great crested newt | If necessary, address water quality issues affecting Great crested newts using appropriate mechanisms | Environment Agency, Natural England |
| 4 Invasive species | Threat | S1166 Great crested newt | Undertake a Himalayan balsam control programme on the SAC and adjacent land | Forestry Commission, Natural England, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust |

| | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|--------|--------------------------|--|--|
| 5 | Habitat fragmentation | Threat | S1166 Great crested newt | Create new pond/s on site to make the SAC more robust in terms of supporting breeding Great crested newts | Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, Natural England |
| 6 | Habitat connectivity | Threat | S1166 Great crested newt | Seek opportunities to enhance surrounding habitat outwith the SAC to benefit Great crested newts, and investigate opportunities to implement recommendations of the Detailed Notification Review | Natural England, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust |

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 Hydrological changes

The Old Pond dries out too early in the year to allow newts to develop to their terrestrial stage. This is thought to be the main reason for the Great crested newt population crash at the site. The hydrological changes are thought to be due to a number of factors including a reduction in catchment input, changes to the terrestrial and groundwater flow and reduction of water input due to the closure of the colliery. The feasibility of improving the drainage to the ponds and creating new breeding ponds is being investigated under a Conservation and Enhancement Scheme. However, following this further steps will be needed including, further planning, negotiations with landowners and watercourse managers as well as the funding to implement the necessary measures that are identified.

| Action | Action description | Cost estimate | Timescale | Mechanism | Funding option | Delivery lead body | Delivery partner(s) |
|--------|--|---------------|-----------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1A | Secure agreements under the Conservation and Enhancement Scheme to implement the findings of the feasibility study, informed by the hydrological investigation for the site which is due for completion in 2015. The recommendations to be implemented will aim at improving the hydrological inputs and functioning of the Old Pond in order to allow this pond to sustain Great crested newt breeding. | £41,800 | 2015-17 | Conservation Enhancement Scheme (CES) | Natural England | Natural England | Environment Agency |

2 Forestry and woodland management

Both breeding ponds are situated within woodland which results in heavy shading of the pond margins causing a lack of macrophytes suitable for newt egg-laying. The trees around the two breeding ponds were coppiced in 2012 but are growing back vigorously. These trees, particularly around the southern margins, need to be permanently removed.

| <i>Action</i> | <i>Action description</i> | <i>Cost estimate</i> | <i>Timescale</i> | <i>Mechanism</i> | <i>Funding option</i> | <i>Delivery lead body</i> | <i>Delivery partner(s)</i> |
|---------------|--|----------------------|------------------|---|-----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 2A | Tree and scrub removal needs to be carried out at the Fire Pond, Old Pond and the damp depression on the eastern boundary of the SAC. Long-term control of the regrowth needs to be managed. | £2,730 | 2016 onwards | Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE): Common Agricultural Policy 2014-20 (New Environmental Land Management Scheme) | Natural England | Natural England | Forestry Commission |

3 Water Pollution

The Old Pond has been noted as having poor water quality which is being investigated under the Conservation and Enhancement Scheme. The Environment Agency have been asked to investigate the water quality of an unconsented discharge to the pond. Poor water quality can have an adverse impact on the Great crested newt population. Following these investigations further work will be required including seeking funding to implement any measures identified to remedy the poor water quality.

| <i>Action</i> | <i>Action description</i> | <i>Cost estimate</i> | <i>Timescale</i> | <i>Mechanism</i> | <i>Funding option</i> | <i>Delivery lead body</i> | <i>Delivery partner(s)</i> |
|---------------|--|----------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 3A | Secure agreements under the Conservation and Enhancement Scheme to implement recommendations set out in the Feasibility Study (due in 2015) aimed at improving water quality in the newt breeding ponds on site. | £10,000 | 2015-16 | Conservation Enhancement Scheme (CES) | Natural England | Natural England | Environment Agency |
| 3B | If recommended by the Feasibility Study, write a Diffuse Water Pollution Plan to oversee improvements to diffuse pollution sources. | £3,000 | 2015-16 | Diffuse Water Pollution Plan | Environment Agency, Natural England, Water Framework Directive (WFD) | Environment Agency | n/a |

| Action | Action description | Cost estimate | Timescale | Mechanism | Funding option | Delivery lead body | Delivery partner(s) |
|--------|---|--------------------|-----------|---|---|--------------------|---------------------|
| 3C | If recommended by the Feasibility Study, seek to secure advice and capital funding to reduce water pollution from farm sources. | Not yet determined | 2015-16 | England Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) | Rural Development Programme (RDPE), Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) | Natural England | n/a |

4 Invasive species

Himalayan balsam is present within the woodland and the basin of the Old Pond. If this species is left unchecked it could come to dominate the woodland flora, shading saplings and hampering tree regeneration. This could be a problem for the Great crested newt in the long run as the woodland provides important terrestrial habitat for the newts. Himalayan balsam within the pond will shade macrophytes which could reduce or prevent the development of species utilised by Great crested newts for egg-laying. By reducing egg-laying opportunities the balsam could prevent the newt population achieving favourable condition. Himalayan balsam is not negatively impacting on the Great crested newt population at present. This is partly due to the fact that the pond it is affecting currently does not sustain breeding newts due to hydrological issues. Once this pond is restored hydrologically the balsam if left could start to impact on the Great crested newts by preventing the development of macrophytes.

| Action | Action description | Cost estimate | Timescale | Mechanism | Funding option | Delivery lead body | Delivery partner(s) |
|--------|---|---------------|-----------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|---|
| 4A | Secure agreements under the Conservation and Enhancement Scheme to map Himalayan balsam <i>Impatiens glandulifera</i> within the SAC, on upstream areas and land adjacent to the SAC. Draw up and implement a Himalayan balsam control plan for the site. | £16,500 | 2016-19 | Conservation Enhancement Scheme (CES) | Natural England | Natural England | Forestry Commission, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust |

| Action | Action description | Cost estimate | Timescale | Mechanism | Funding option | Delivery lead body | Delivery partner(s) |
|--------|--|--------------------|-----------|---|-----------------|--------------------|---|
| 4B | Secure agreements under NELMS to map Himalayan balsam <i>Impatiens glandulifera</i> within the SAC, on upstream areas and land adjacent to the SAC and implement a Himalayan balsam control plan for the site. | Not yet determined | 2017 | Invasive Control Plan: Invasive Species Control Programme | Natural England | Natural England | Forestry Commission, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust |

| <i>Action</i> | <i>Action description</i> | <i>Cost estimate</i> | <i>Timescale</i> | <i>Mechanism</i> | <i>Funding option</i> | <i>Delivery lead body</i> | <i>Delivery partner(s)</i> |
|---------------|---|----------------------|------------------|---|------------------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| 4C | Draw up and implement a Himalayan balsam control plan for the site. | Not yet determined | 2017-19 | Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE): Common Agricultural Policy 2014-20 (New Environmental Land Management Scheme) | Rural Development Programme (RDPE) | Natural England | Forestry Commission, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust |

5 Habitat fragmentation

There are only two Great crested newt breeding ponds within the SAC. This leaves the site vulnerable to change e.g. from impacts of pollution events, establishment of fish, or pond drying of a single pond. Further suitable breeding ponds are required for metapopulation dynamics to establish, which makes for much more robust populations as they are able to express their natural mechanisms for coping with changes and events such as successional changes to the ponds.

| <i>Action</i> | <i>Action description</i> | <i>Cost estimate</i> | <i>Timescale</i> | <i>Mechanism</i> | <i>Funding option</i> | <i>Delivery lead body</i> | <i>Delivery partner(s)</i> |
|---------------|---|----------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|---|
| 5A | Secure agreements under the Conservation and Enhancement Scheme to implement the recommendations for pond creation within the SAC set out in the Feasibility Study (due in 2015). To include a method statement for pond construction and management. | £45,000 | 2015-16 | Conservation Enhancement Scheme (CES) | Natural England | Natural England | Forestry Commission, Environment Agency (CSF) |

6 Habitat connectivity

Appropriate management of Great crested newt habitat is required outwith the SAC to improve metapopulation dynamics.

| <i>Action</i> | <i>Action description</i> | <i>Cost estimate</i> | <i>Timescale</i> | <i>Mechanism</i> | <i>Funding option</i> | <i>Delivery lead body</i> | <i>Delivery partner(s)</i> |
|---------------|---|----------------------|------------------|---|------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 6A | Seek opportunities to enhance surrounding habitat outwith the SAC to support the Great crested newt metapopulation, such as through voluntary partnership with Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and agri-environment. Investigate opportunities to implement recommendations of the Detailed Notification Review. | £5,000 | 2016-17 | Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE): Common Agricultural Policy 2014-20 (New Environmental Land Management Scheme) | Rural Development Programme (RDPE) | Natural England | Yorkshire Wildlife Trust |

Site details

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

Qualifying features

#UK Special responsibility

Denby Grange Colliery Ponds SAC S1166 *Triturus cristatus*: Great crested newt

Site location and links

Denby Grange Colliery Ponds SAC

Area (ha) **18.53** Grid reference **SE271153** [Map link](#)

Local Authorities Wakefield

Site Conservation Objectives [European Site Conservation Objectives for Denby Grange Colliery Ponds 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.

Denby Grange Colliery Ponds SAC

River basin

[Humber RBMP](#)

WFD Management catchment

Aire and Calder

WFD Waterbody ID (Cycle 2 draft)

GB104027062631

Overlapping or adjacent protected sites

| Site(s) of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Denby Grange Colliery Ponds SAC | Denby Grange Colliery Ponds SSSI |

| National Nature Reserve (NNR) | |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| Denby Grange Colliery Ponds SAC | n/a |

| Ramsar | |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| Denby Grange Colliery Ponds SAC | n/a |

| Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA) | |
|--|-----|
| Denby Grange Colliery Ponds SAC | n/a |

| <i>Version</i> | <i>Date</i> | <i>Comment</i> |
|----------------|-------------|----------------|
| 1.0 | 21/11/2014 | |

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