

# Site Improvement Plan

## South West London Waterbodies

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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk)

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

**UK9012171     South West London Waterbodies SPA**

## Site description

The South-West London Waterbodies SPA comprises several gravel pits and reservoirs scattered around Staines in Greater London. Hundreds of migratory wintering Gadwall *Anas strepera* and Shoveler *A.clypeata* spend the winter on and around these waterbodies. Their numbers are significant at a European level. Some sites appear to be favoured by one species more than the other whilst some are used by both, and individual birds move from one waterbody to another. The waterbodies are also of national importance to a number of other species of wintering wildfowl, namely cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*, great crested grebe *Podiceps cristatus*, tufted duck *Aythya fuligula*, pochard *Aythya ferina*, and coot *Fulica atra*.

## 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 Public Access/Disturbance	Pressure/Threat	A051(NB) Gadwall, A056(NB) Shoveler	Produce written agreement with landowners and recreational users to reduce recreational disturbance	Local Authorities, Natural England, RSPB, Thames Water Utilities Ltd, Parish Council(s), Affinity Water, Silver Wing Sailing Club, R K Leisure (Angling club), Local residents' association(s), Local bird watching group(s)
2 Changes in species distributions	Pressure/Threat	A051(NB) Gadwall, A056(NB) Shoveler	In partnership with bird recorders/watchers, review existing data and secure fit-for-purpose recording practices across the SPA and its surroundings	Local Authorities, Natural England, RSPB, University(ies), British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), Local bird watching group(s)
3 Invasive species	Pressure/Threat	A051(NB) Gadwall, A056(NB) Shoveler	Manage <i>Crassula helmsii</i> and equip recreational users and landowners to monitor for the plant	Environment Agency, Natural England, Thames Water Utilities Ltd, GB Non-native Species Secretariat (NNSS), R K Leisure (Angling club)

4	Natural changes to site conditions	Pressure/ Threat	A051(NB) Gadwall, A056(NB) Shoveler	Carry out strategic habitat management, including management of bankside vegetation	Natural England, Thames Water Utilities Ltd, Landowner(s), Local conservation group, Affinity Water
5	Fisheries: Fish stocking	Pressure	A051(NB) Gadwall, A056(NB) Shoveler	Secure appropriate fish stocking levels	Natural England, Thames Water Utilities Ltd, R K Leisure (Angling club), Local angling club(s)
6	Inappropriate weed control	Threat	A051(NB) Gadwall, A056(NB) Shoveler	Clarify appropriate weed control with owners and tenants through consents, and carry out enforcement action where necessary	Natural England, RSPB, Thames Water Utilities Ltd, Royal Yachting Association (RYA), Silver Wing Sailing Club
7	Invasive species	Threat	A051(NB) Gadwall, A056(NB) Shoveler	Research Egyptian geese, and control if necessary	Natural England, RSPB, Thames Water Utilities Ltd, GB Non-native Species Secretariat (NNSS), Local bird watching group(s), Heathrow Airport

## 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 Public Access/Disturbance

Most of the sites have some level of formal or informal public access, including water-based activities on some waterbodies (angling, sailing, waterskiing). People can potentially disturb wintering Gadwall and Shoveler, and management for recreational uses may reduce the area of suitable habitat. Research by Briggs (2007) and Briggs et al (2012) indicates low numbers of Gadwall and Shoveler are associated with higher levels of disturbance.

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
1A	Seek agreement with the landowners and, where applicable, leaseholders/tenants, local authorities and parish councils about how each can avoid and manage recreational pressures upon the SPA birds. Confirm what aspects of each recreation activity or timing of activity or location of activity are detrimental to SPA interest features and explain the sensitivities of the SPA birds. Draw on lessons learnt from previous experiences, for example of fish de-stocking and temporal controls on watersports. Produce a written management agreement with each landowner/leaseholder/tenant. Ensure the entire geographical area of the SPA is addressed by the agreement.	Not yet determined	2014-16	Advice: Education & awareness raising	Not yet determined	Natural England	Elmbridge Borough Council, London Borough of Hillingdon, London Borough of Hounslow, RSPB, Runnymede Borough Council, Slough Borough Council, Spelthorne Borough Council, Surrey County Council, Thames Water Utilities Ltd, Windsor and Maidenhead Royal Borough Council, Parish Council(s), Affinity Water, Silver Wing Sailing Club, R K Leisure (Angling club)

<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>
<b>1B</b>	Clarify who the recreational users of the SPA are and produce information and events to address them on-site and online regarding what is special about the SPA and responsible recreational behaviour. Ensure this work is informed by the recreation management plans developed with landowners/leaseholders; draws on the local knowledge and assistance of parish councils, local authorities, community groups etc, and is ongoing in order to capture new audiences.	Not yet determined	2015 onwards	Advice: Education & awareness raising	Not yet determined	Natural England	Elmbridge Borough Council, London Borough of Hillingdon, London Borough of Hounslow, RSPB, Runnymede Borough Council, Slough Borough Council, Spelthorne Borough Council, Surrey County Council, Thames Water Utilities Ltd, Windsor and Maidenhead Royal Borough Council, Parish Council(s), Affinity Water, Silver Wing Sailing Club, R K Leisure (Angling club), Local residents' association(s), Local bird watching group(s)

<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>
<b>1C</b>	Introduce new recreation opportunities to attract people away from ecologically sensitive areas, including well managed/constructed through routes. Incorporate such measures into plans for the area, including flood alleviation schemes. Discourage recreational disturbance by promoting sustainable and appealing recreation opportunities to the public and providing on-site signage. Work in partnership with local planning and highway authorities, nature conservation organisations, parish councils, community groups etc.	Not yet determined	2016 onwards	Flood Risk Maintenance Programme: Flood Risk Management - Capital/Improvement Schemes	Environment Agency, Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) 2015-21, Developer Contributions Scheme (DCS), Other stakeholder(s) contributions	To be agreed	Elmbridge Borough Council, Environment Agency, London Borough of Hillingdon, London Borough of Hounslow, RSPB, Runnymede Borough Council, Slough Borough Council, Spelthorne Borough Council, Surrey County Council, Thames Water Utilities Ltd, Windsor and Maidenhead Royal Borough Council, Parish Council(s), Affinity Water, Silver Wing Sailing Club, R K Leisure (Angling club)

## 2 Changes in species distributions

Cook et al 2013 reports that Gadwall numbers have been in decline on this SPA (-51% over 10 years up to 2009/10), which is not consistent with upwards national population trend. It is not yet confirmed that the changes in Gadwall and Shoveler numbers at the SPA is indicative of changing species distribution or of changing population size. There is research available (Briggs 2007 and Briggs et al 2012) as well as WeBS data to inform an assessment by Natural England but further survey/research may be necessary. Briggs research suggests that wetland and terrestrial habitat outside the SPA (more than 50 waterbodies according to Briggs et al 2012) is making a significant contribution to sustaining the SPA population and there are specified non-designated sites that are unofficially recognised locally as supporting the SPA population. Changes can be managed and foreseen through the planning system, e.g. there have been new mineral restoration schemes since designation which will have most probably affected species distribution (e.g. London Wildfowl Centre at Barnes). Natural and inevitable maturation of gravel pits also influences the future capacity of the SPA to support the SPA population.

<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>
<b>2A</b>	Gather together information to inform any potential review of the SPA and to secure effective monitoring of population over the longterm. Draw on previous research by Briggs and others and existing recording activities. Assess the resource availability across the SPA, considering future availability in light of maturing gravel pits, mineral restoration opportunities schemes, development and recreational pressure. Engage local bird watching groups, local authorities and local community groups in monitoring activities.	Not yet determined	2014-16	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Not yet determined	Natural England	Elmbridge Borough Council, London Borough of Hillingdon, London Borough of Hounslow, RSPB, Runnymede Borough Council, Slough Borough Council, Spelthorne Borough Council, Surrey County Council, Thames Water Utilities Ltd, Windsor and Maidenhead Royal Borough Council, University(ies), British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), Local bird watching group(s)

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
<b>2B</b>	Following a precautionary principle and until evidence to the contrary is obtained, continue to recognise the contribution of specified non-designated sites in supporting the SPA bird population and manage these sites accordingly.	Not yet determined	2014 onwards	Existing Local Project	Not yet determined	Local Authorities	Elmbridge Borough Council, London Borough of Hillingdon, London Borough of Hounslow, Runnymede Borough Council, Slough Borough Council, Spelthorne Borough Council, Surrey County Council, Thames Water Utilities Ltd, Windsor and Maidenhead Royal Borough Council

### 3 Invasive species

Large areas of wetland and terrestrial habitat are infested with *Crassula helmsii* and this is likely to be reducing invertebrate numbers - Gadwall and Shoveler feed on invertebrates. An eradication project is tackling *Crassula helmsii* but it is not fully effective so far.

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
<b>3A</b>	Continue to manage and monitor <i>Crassula helmsii</i> at Kempton. Review management, drawing on examples of successful management from elsewhere and making use of resources available through the Non Native Species Secretariat. Working with Environment Agency, Thames Water, landowners and recreation interest groups, secure preventative measures at other waterbodies to prevent spread across SPA. Share information about invasive species with Environment Agency and others in relation to any flood alleviation schemes or other works which could assist spread of <i>Crassula helmsii</i> .	Not yet determined	2014 onwards	Existing Local Project	Water Framework Directive (WFD), Thames Water	Thames Water Utilities Ltd	Environment Agency, Natural England, GB Non-native Species Secretariat (NNS), R K Leisure (Angling club)

<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>
<b>3B</b>	Provide information sheets to landowners and recreation interest groups so that they can identify and report <i>Crassula helmsii</i> .	£200	2014 onwards	Advice: Education & awareness raising	n/a	Natural England	Thames Water Utilities Ltd, Affinity Water, R K Leisure (Angling club)

#### 4 Natural changes to site conditions

The inevitable maturation of gravel pits is altering roosting and feeding provision in terms of bankside vegetation, water chemistry and aquatic biodiversity. For example, research by Briggs indicates that bankside tree growth is an obvious problem for both Gadwall and Shoveler at the SPA. There is limited potential to manage natural processes of maturation of gravel pits but some actions are feasible. (SPA birds may prefer non-designated sites in the short to longer term, despite efforts to manage changing habitat at designated gravel pits).

<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>
<b>4A</b>	In partnership with landowners and community groups, carry out habitat management across maturing gravel pits in order to maintain or enhance provision for Gadwall and Shoveler. Draw on research such as Briggs et al 2012 to inform management. For example, manage bankside willows at key locations to benefit both species. Incorporate habitat management and expansion of suitable habitat into plans for the area, including flood alleviation schemes and mineral restoration schemes. Seek local community volunteer involvement where appropriate.	Not yet determined	2015 onwards	Conservation Enhancement Scheme (CES)	Not yet determined	Natural England	Thames Water Utilities Ltd, Landowner(s), Local conservation group, Affinity Water

## 5 Fisheries: Fish stocking

Research by Briggs (2007) and Briggs et al (2012) indicated that stocking of fish for recreation angling negatively impacts upon SPA bird populations. Fish de-stocking has been carried out in the past. Carp is particularly problematic. R K Leisure, for example, promotes waterbodies that are internationally recognised for carp fishing.

<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>
<b>5A</b>	Drawing on previous research by Briggs and previous experiences of managing recreational fish stocks at the SPA and elsewhere, work with anglers and landowners to ensure appropriate stocking levels (levels specific to the particular fish species).	Not yet determined	2015 onwards	Advice	Not yet determined	Natural England	Thames Water Utilities Ltd, R K Leisure (Angling club), Local angling club(s)

## 6 Inappropriate weed control

Control or removal of waterweed for watersports potentially impacts upon the availability of food for Gadwall and Shoveler. Natural England can advise upon appropriate management of waterweed through the consenting process although there is potential that some weed clearance has been carried out in the past without consent.

<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>
<b>6A</b>	Working with sailing club(s), review the management of weed and develop a management response tailored to the amount of weed/growing conditions of any particular summer. Review the size and location of the area that needs to be clear of weed and also the requirements by gadwall for the particular weeds growing in the sailing area. Draw on examples of successful management from elsewhere and monitor outcomes of management on the SPA. Produce written guidance note to inform weed control, drawing on review so far described and issue consent accordingly.	Not yet determined	2015-17	Non-Natural England funded site management plan	Not yet determined	Natural England	RSPB, Thames Water Utilities Ltd, Royal Yachting Association (RYA), Silver Wing Sailing Club

## 7 Invasive species

There are concerns that Egyptian geese are showing significant increases. Impacts on gadwall and shoveler not yet confirmed or quantified but there is potential that geese are competing with Gadwall and Shoveler for habitat and food.

<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>
<b>7A</b>	Determine the interaction between Egyptian geese and gadwall/shoveller in order to establish whether there are negative direct or indirect impacts upon the SPA birds.	Not yet determined	2015-17	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Heathrow Airport	To be agreed	Natural England, RSPB, Thames Water Utilities Ltd, GB Non-native Species Secretariat (NNS), Local bird watching group(s)
<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>
<b>7B</b>	If necessary, explore potential to reduce numbers of Egyptian geese in tandem with Canada geese controls (oiling of eggs).	Not yet determined	2017 onwards	Invasive Control Plan: Invasive Species Control Programme	Heathrow Airport	To be agreed	Natural England, RSPB, Thames Water Utilities Ltd, Heathrow Airport

## Site details

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

### Qualifying features

#UK Special responsibility

<b>South West London Waterbodies SPA</b>	A056(NB) <i>Anas clypeata</i> : Northern shoveler
	A051(NB) <i>Anas strepera</i> : Gadwall

### Site location and links

#### South West London Waterbodies SPA

Area (ha) **828.14**      Grid reference **TQ025747**      [Map link](#)

Local Authorities      Greater London; Surrey; Windsor and Maidenhead

Site Conservation Objectives      [European Site Conservation Objectives for South West London Waterbodies SPA](#)

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.*

### South West London Waterbodies SPA

*River basin*

Thames

[Thames RBMP](#)

*WFD Management catchment*

Colne, Maidenhead to Sunbury, Weaver/Gowy

*WFD Waterbody ID (Cycle 2 draft)*

GB106039017060, GB106039017070, GB106039023040, GB30642417, GB30642430, GB30642488, GB30642489, GB30642490, GB30642525, GB30642614, GB30642753, GB30642779, GB30642791

## Overlapping or adjacent protected sites

Site(s) of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	
South West London Waterbodies SPA	Kempton Park Reservoirs SSSI Knight & Bessborough Reservoirs SSSI Thorpe Park No. 1 Gravel Pit SSSI Wraysbury No. 1 Gravel Pit SSSI Wraysbury Reservoir SSSI Wraysbury & Hythe End Gravel Pits SSSI Staines Moor SSSI
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	
South West London Waterbodies SPA	n/a
Ramsar	
South West London Waterbodies SPA	South West London Waterbodies
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)	
South West London Waterbodies SPA	n/a
Other relevant documents and links	
<a href="#">Cook A.S.C.P., Barimore C., Holt C.A., Read W.J. &amp; Austin G.E. 2013. Wetland Bird Survey Alerts 2009/2010: Changes in numbers of wintering waterbirds in the Constituent Countries of the United Kingdom. Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Sites of Special</a>	WeBS alerts (link to website)
<a href="#">Briggs B.D.J., Hill D.A. &amp; Gosler A.G. 2012. Habitat selection and waterbody-complex use by wintering Gadwall and Shoveler in South West London: Implications for the designation and management of multi-site protected areas. Journal for Nature Conservation</a>	Research document



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

[www.naturalengland.org.uk/ipens2000](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ipens2000)

