

Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay proposed SPA extension and new Ramsar designation

Frequently Asked Questions

Introduction

The areas of Dungeness, Romney Marsh, Rye Bay and Pett Levels are special places. This area already has a number of existing designations, namely Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), a Special Protection Area (SPA) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), which ensures the area's wildlife and geological interests are protected.

The protection afforded by these designations, together with careful land management benefit wildlife. The existing SPA designation has been reviewed and proposals have been put forward to extend the site to protect new areas rich in bird life. There are also eight new bird species that meet the scientific criteria for inclusion in the revised SPA including avocet, sandwich tern and bittern. The area's wetland habitats also meet the criteria for designation as a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance. They are home to rare species like the water vole, great crested newts and marshmallow moth.

Why are you contacting me?

We are writing to you as an owner/occupier and/or an interested party to let you know that the government is considering an extension to the existing Special Protection Area (SPA) and a new Ramsar Wetland of International Importance designation on the Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay and Hastings Cliff to Pett Beach SSSIs.

What should I do if I no longer own land in the Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay SSSI or have sold part of the land I used to own?

Please contact us and let us know the name and address of the person you sold your land to so we can inform them of this consultation. A form is provided for this purpose and to notify us of any other changes that are relevant. Enclosing a map of the land in question would be extremely helpful to us.

Do I need to do anything?

We welcome your views on these newly proposed designations. Please send your comments in writing to the Dungeness Consultation team by 13 December 2010 at the latest. You can also email us at: dungenessconsultation@naturalengland.org.uk

What can I comment on?

The Birds and Habitats Directives do not permit economic or social impacts to influence the choice of sites or their boundaries. The UK as a member state must identify the sites and boundaries based only on the presence of the best examples of bird populations and habitats specified in these directives. Therefore your comments should focus on the scientific basis on which the designations are being proposed.

Why have I received several consultation packs?

We rely on data that is available on title deeds obtained from the land registry and use this to send out our consultation packs. Where a property is owned by different persons, we have to send a pack to each person unless you instruct us that this is not necessary. Where you own

several parcels of land and these have different ownership addresses, we cannot tell which one is your current address and therefore have to send out to all addresses that are on the different title deeds. You can help us by using the "Updating your contact details" form that we have included in the pack to tell us of your new address including your postcode.

What will these designations mean to me?

This area is already protected as a SSSI and is being managed carefully by owners and occupiers and statutory bodies, for its wildlife and geological interests. Therefore it is unlikely that these proposed designations will impact on your current circumstances and day to day land management activities.

If you do want to make changes to the way you manage your land in the future, these proposals may need to be considered under the Habitats Regulations which is the European legislation protecting these sites. The requirements of the Habitats Regulations are outlined in more detail in the Natura 2000 leaflet which is enclosed. This already happens for new plans and projects potentially affecting the parts of the Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay SSSI within the existing Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

Will I have to manage my land differently?

If you are already managing the land in line with the existing SSSI requirements, it is unlikely that changes to your management will be required. If you wish to change the way you use your land you already need to apply for consent. In the future, as part of this consenting process, Natural England will also consider your proposal under the requirements of the Habitat Regulations.

Will the designations affect my business?

This is unlikely for your current operations if they have been previously discussed and consented by Natural England. If you wish to make changes to your business operations in the future, these proposals will need to be considered under the Habitats Regulations. It is likely that most activities can be accommodated under the legislation as long as these are carried out in such a way as to ensure that the wildlife interest is protected and not negatively impacted.

Are the designations going to affect the SSSI's wildlife?

The proposed designations will give greater protection to the area's wildlife, for instance for the birds that feed and roost in different parts of the SSSI. These designations recognise the area's international importance for wildlife.

If the sites are already protected why are you proposing two new designations?

Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay has gained both national and international recognition through its designation as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Special Protection Area (SPA). We are now recommending an extension to the existing SPA and proposing the designation of a new Ramsar site to give greater protection to these additional wetland habitats and wildlife they support. The addition of the proposed sites will help to further protect and conserve the rare and threatened habitats and wildlife that make this area special to visitors and local people.

What implications do these proposed sites have on current proposals for development?

Natural England is consulted as a statutory consultee on all proposals within or adjacent to the Dungeness Romney Marsh and Rye Bay SSSI. The advice offered by Natural England, over recent months, has included reference to the features and habitats that make up the proposed extensions to the SPA and the proposed new Ramsar and how these may potentially be impacted. This follows Government policy and there is widespread acceptance that there is a need to take these proposed sites into consideration at this stage when assessing proposals for development.

Who do I contact if I need more information or advice?

If you are unclear on anything in the consultation pack or how the proposed designations will affect your specific circumstances, you can contact the Dungeness Consultation team in several ways as follows:

By post:

Freepost RSBT - CHAB – JJAY
Dungeness Consultation Team
Natural England
International House
9th Floor
Dover Place
Ashford
Kent
TN23 1HU

By email at:

dungenessconsultation@naturalengland.org.uk

By phone on:

0300 060 4796