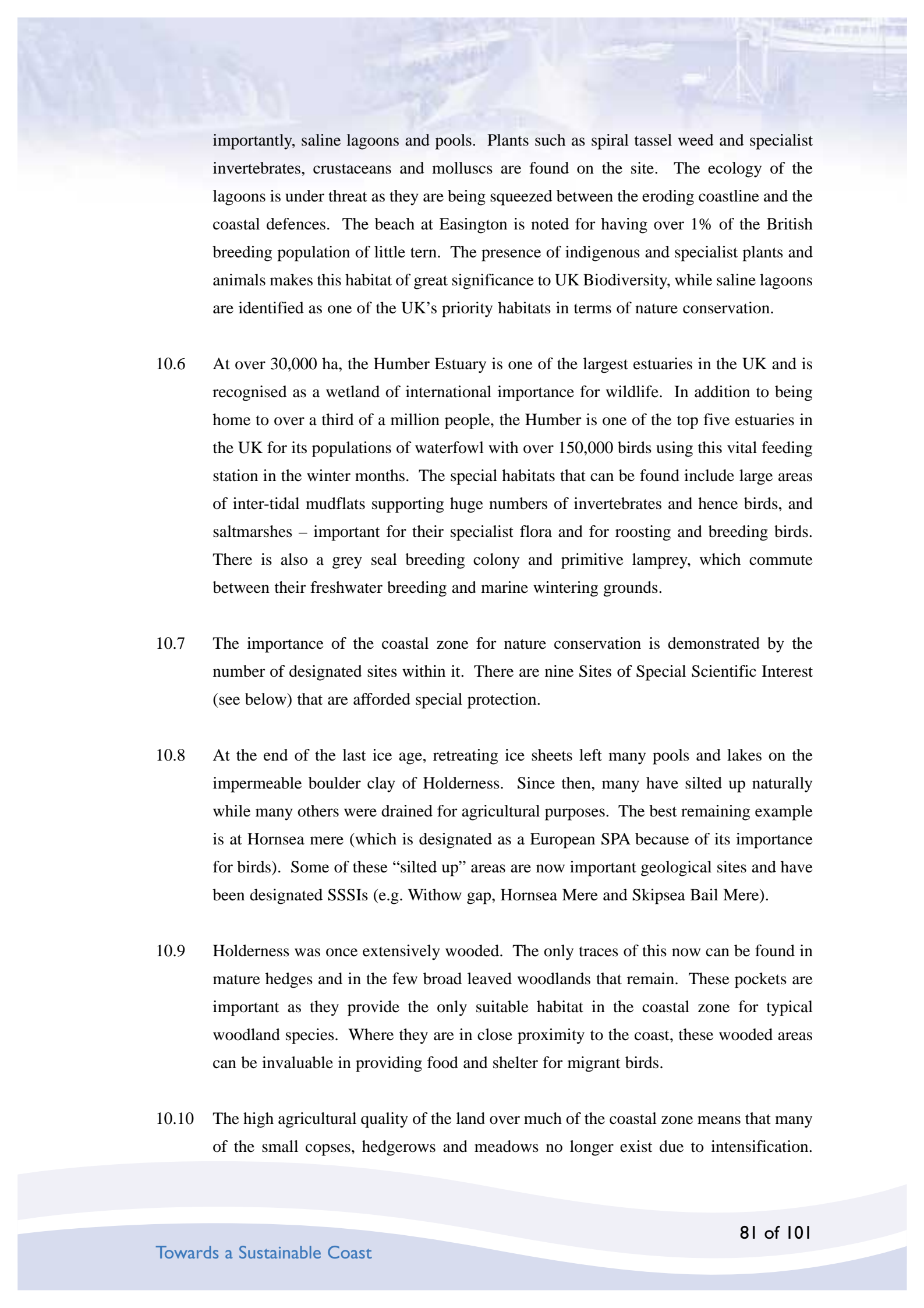


10.0 THEME NINE - NATURE CONSERVATION

- 10.1 Coastal habitats are an important and distinctive feature of the East Riding. They include chalk cliffs at Flamborough Head, soft clay cliffs along the Holderness coast, saline lagoons near Easington, sand and shingle beaches at Spurn, extensive inter-tidal mudflats in the Humber Estuary and Hornsea Mere – the largest natural lake in Yorkshire. Away from the coastal strip, the landscape is dominated by agriculture with only a few small areas of woodland (for instance around Grimston and Hornsea Mere).
- 10.2 Flamborough Head has marine habitats that are considered to be of international importance for their wildlife. The area is a candidate marine Special Area of Conservation (SAC) - a designation under the European Habitats Directive and an agreed Scheme of Management has been drawn up to ensure human activity does not adversely impact on its special features. These features include chalk reefs that support a diverse assemblage of seaweed and invertebrates species, some of which are at their northern or southern geographical limit. Sea caves support rare microscopic chalk-boring algae and lichen communities. The cliffs are amongst the most important cliff-nesting seabird colonies in Europe and as such have a further European designation as a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the Birds Directive. They provide breeding sites for a large number of sea birds including gannets, kittiwakes, guillemots, razorbills, puffins and shag.
- 10.3 The East Riding's coastal waters are rich in plankton and support important spawning and nursery grounds for fish. General commercial netting for salmon is carried out between Spurn Point and Flamborough. However, fishing activity is almost continuous along the coast covering the whole of the coastal zone. The crab and lobster fisheries of the Holderness coast are important elements of the local economy.
- 10.4 Spurn peninsula is made up of sand dunes and sandy vegetated shingle and supports many characteristic species such as sea sandwort, red fescue, marram and sea campion. Sea holly is a characteristic plant of such habitats. Many species of invertebrates are also dependent on shingle vegetation and birds such as terns use shingle areas as breeding grounds.
- 10.5 Saline lagoons are bodies of saline water partially separated from the adjacent sea. The Lagoons SSSI, near Easington, managed by South Holderness Countryside Society, comprises a variety of coastal habitats including saltmarsh, shingle, sand dune and, most



importantly, saline lagoons and pools. Plants such as spiral tassel weed and specialist invertebrates, crustaceans and molluscs are found on the site. The ecology of the lagoons is under threat as they are being squeezed between the eroding coastline and the coastal defences. The beach at Easington is noted for having over 1% of the British breeding population of little tern. The presence of indigenous and specialist plants and animals makes this habitat of great significance to UK Biodiversity, while saline lagoons are identified as one of the UK's priority habitats in terms of nature conservation.

- 10.6 At over 30,000 ha, the Humber Estuary is one of the largest estuaries in the UK and is recognised as a wetland of international importance for wildlife. In addition to being home to over a third of a million people, the Humber is one of the top five estuaries in the UK for its populations of waterfowl with over 150,000 birds using this vital feeding station in the winter months. The special habitats that can be found include large areas of inter-tidal mudflats supporting huge numbers of invertebrates and hence birds, and saltmarshes – important for their specialist flora and for roosting and breeding birds. There is also a grey seal breeding colony and primitive lamprey, which commute between their freshwater breeding and marine wintering grounds.
- 10.7 The importance of the coastal zone for nature conservation is demonstrated by the number of designated sites within it. There are nine Sites of Special Scientific Interest (see below) that are afforded special protection.
- 10.8 At the end of the last ice age, retreating ice sheets left many pools and lakes on the impermeable boulder clay of Holderness. Since then, many have silted up naturally while many others were drained for agricultural purposes. The best remaining example is at Hornsea mere (which is designated as a European SPA because of its importance for birds). Some of these “silted up” areas are now important geological sites and have been designated SSSIs (e.g. Withow gap, Hornsea Mere and Skipsea Bail Mere).
- 10.9 Holderness was once extensively wooded. The only traces of this now can be found in mature hedges and in the few broad leaved woodlands that remain. These pockets are important as they provide the only suitable habitat in the coastal zone for typical woodland species. Where they are in close proximity to the coast, these wooded areas can be invaluable in providing food and shelter for migrant birds.
- 10.10 The high agricultural quality of the land over much of the coastal zone means that many of the small copses, hedgerows and meadows no longer exist due to intensification.

Farmland habitats, however, can be very important for some species in decline, such as grey partridge, skylark and tree sparrow, the East Riding coastal zone being strongholds for these species. The Countryside Stewardship Scheme was developed to enable more environmentally sensitive management of farmland and compensates farmers for loss of production as a result of taking part. Management practises that are eligible include hedgerow management, the creation of field margins and the avoidance of pesticides and fertilisers. The scheme has been promoted by East Riding Council on Flamborough Headland and the scheme at Heads farm, Flamborough (an East Riding smallholding) is seen as a good demonstration for what can be achieved in a target area. Similarly, it is hoped that the Stewardship agreement to be entered into by the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust on its Flamborough Cliffs reserve will show good practice in the future. The importance of all kinds of farmland habitat on the coast makes it a priority area for action and moves are being made by English Nature and the RSPB to ensure stewardship is effectively targeted.

- 10.11 Cowden Range, owned by the Ministry of Defence has, due to its past use, been unmanaged for many years. The habitats to be found here are therefore particularly valuable. The Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and the MOD are working together to monitor the wildlife to be found here. It is hoped that this partnership can be developed to ensure that this valuable habitat can be safeguarded for the future.

Table 6: Sites of Special Scientific Interest in the Coastal Zone

Site	Importance
Dimlington Cliff Easington	1. A nationally important geological site, important from a glaciological viewpoint in providing sedimentary evidence for the superimposition of two till units associated with a single ice sheet.
Flamborough Head Also designated as SPA (under the Birds Directive) and candidate SAC (under the Habitats Directive)	1. Internationally important geological site has numerous features of interest within a rock sequence spanning the Upper Jurassic period, 2. Important for studies of coastal geomorphology` 3. Bempton Cliffs is particularly important for it's exceptionally important breeding seabird numbers. 4. Parts of the site are managed as nature reserves by the RSPB and YWT.

Flamborough Railway Cutting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supports a mosaic of well vegetated areas with patches of bare chalk chippings 2. Supports a variety of grasses. 3. The railway cutting is principally valued for its orchid populations
Hoddy Cows Spring, near Buckton	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One of only four areas of species-rich fen in the area
Skipsea Bail Mere	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A geological site – a lake with pollen and organic deposits
Withow Gap, Skipsea	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A geological exposure of a sequence of mere deposits
Hornsea Mere Also designated as SPA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is a site of international ornithological importance 2. The Mere is principally valued for its importance as a refuge and feeding area for duck. 3. Protected by the Wild Birds (Hornsea Mere Sanctuary) order 1980 Statutory Instrument No. 403 4. Hornsea Mere is the largest natural lake in Yorkshire
Humber Flats & Marshes Spurn Head to Salt End Flats Also a possible SAC under the Habitats Directive Also designated as a SPA and Ramsar site.	<p>Incorporates an extensive area of intertidal mud and sand with fringing saltmarsh, small associated freshwater pools and sand dune system of Spurn Peninsula.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supports a diverse invertebrate fauna 2. Fulfils the criteria for designation as a Special Protection Area under the terms of the European Community Directive 79/409EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds and for inclusion on the list of Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention 3. Spurn is managed as a nature reserve by the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust
The Lagoons Holderness coast, 2 kilometres north of Spurn peninsula and south West of Easington village. A potential SPA and proposed Ramsar site	<p>Comprises a variety of coastal habitats</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Saline lagoons are a UK priority habitat 2. Important for its colony of over 1% of the British breeding population of little terns 3. Part of site designated as an Area of Special Protection under Section 3 (1) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 by the Easington Lagoons (Areas of Special Protection order 1987)

10.12 In addition there are a number of Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINCs) which are non-statutory designations that reflect local importance. Survey work is currently underway to ascertain the status of sites put forward as possible SINCs and criteria for designation is being developed.

10.13 Several conservation organisations own and manage land on the coast. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), owns the Bempton Cliffs Nature Reserve on Flamborough Head, the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust owns Spurn as well as Flamborough

Cliffs Nature Reserve and Welwick Saltmarsh. The South Holderness Countryside Society has several reserves within the coastal zone including Beacon Lagoons, Winsetts Bank and Hollym Carrs.

- 10.14 The East Riding of Yorkshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan sets targets for coastal habitats. The plan was formulated and will be implemented through a partnership of statutory and voluntary nature conservation agencies. A draft Biodiversity Action Plan for the Humber Estuary is also in development. In addition there are specific national targets for habitats and species in the National Biodiversity Action Plan.
- 10.15 An issue of national and international concern is the effect that overfishing of certain species might have on populations of seabirds. This is of particular local significance due to the large seabird colonies at Flamborough and Bempton and is discussed further in the fisheries section.



Bridlington

10.16 POLICY AIMS:

- EN7. To support the work of the East Riding Nature Conservation Liaison Group in promoting measures to enhance and restore farmland habitats in the coastal zone, including drainage ditches**
- EN8. To investigate opportunities for re-creation of important habitats in the coastal zone and the conservation of existing areas.**
- EN9. To ensure that endangered flora and fauna species are protected and the geological resource is safeguarded**
- EN10. To investigate any link between fishing and the seabird populations at Flamborough and to lobby for action as appropriate.**
- EN11. To encourage commitment by all parties to the actions in the Flamborough Head European Marine Site management scheme.**
- EN12. To ensure, through interpretation and education, a wide appreciation of the coastal and marine nature conservation resource.**
- EN 13. To ensure that the protection of the coastal nature conservation resource is fully taken into account in strategic planning and development control**