



Cresswell Pond © NBP Photographer John Williamson



Working with Wildlife

Saline Lagoon Habitat Action Plan

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Latest version	January 2008

Conservation Status

EC Habitats Directive, Annex 1 – 'Priority Habitat'
 UK Biodiversity Action Plan Habitat
 North East Biodiversity Action Plan Habitat

Description

Lagoons in the UK are bodies of saline water, natural or artificial, and partially separated from the sea. They retain a proportion of their sea-water at low tide and may develop as brackish, fully saline or hyper-saline water bodies. The largest lagoon in the UK is in excess of 800 ha (Loch of Stenness), although the rest are usually much smaller. There are several different types of lagoons, ranging from those separated from the adjacent sea by a barrier of sand or shingle ('typical lagoons'), to those arising as ponded waters in depressions on soft sedimentary shores, to those separated by an impermeable structure such as a rocky sill or sea wall. A notable number in Northumberland have arisen due to mining subsidence of land near the sea. Seawater exchange in lagoons occurs through a natural or man-modified channel or by percolation through, or overtopping of, the barrier. Various levels of fresh water input from ground or surface waters determine the salinity of the systems.

Lagoons can contain a variety of substrata, often soft sediments which in turn may support tasselweeds and stoneworts as well as filamentous green and brown algae. In addition, lagoons contain invertebrates rarely found elsewhere. They also provide important habitat for waterfowl, marshland birds and seabirds. The flora and invertebrate fauna present can be divided into three main components: those that are essentially fresh-water in origin; those that are marine/brackish species; and those that are more specialist lagoonal species. The presence of certain indigenous and specialist plants and animals makes this habitat important to the UK's overall biodiversity.

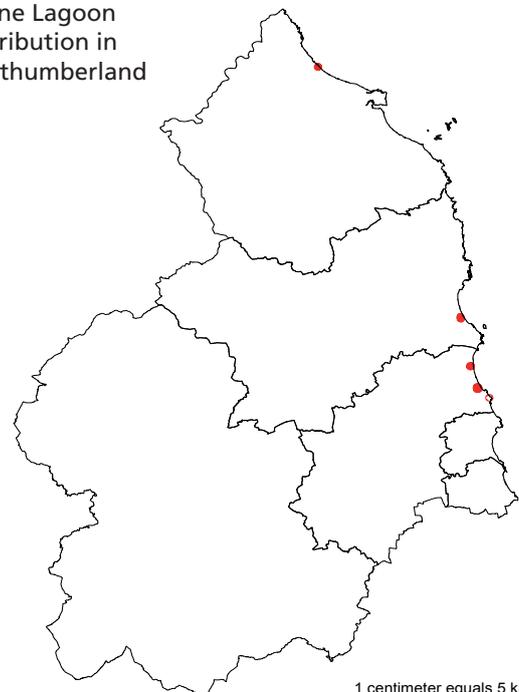
Of the 177 lagoon sites surveyed in England, covering 1200 ha, just over 50% occur within existing SSSIs and about 10% occur within NNRs and as many in LNRs. Internationally important lagoons have been designated for their bird interest as SPAs under the EC Birds Directive.

Current Extent in Northumberland

There are five saline lagoons in Northumberland totalling approximately 9 ha; 0.75% of England's total (based on the UK BAP figure of 1200 hectares).

- Cresswell Pond
- Bog Hall Quarry – Cresswell Links
- Chibburn Mouth – Chibburn Links
- Far Skerr – Cocklawburn Dunes
- Coquet View Caravan Park – Coquet Estuary

Saline Lagoon distribution in Northumberland



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Current Factors Causing Loss or Decline

- Pollution from agricultural run-off
- Erosion and over poaching of edges due to excessive stock access
- Artificial control of water inputs (sea and fresh)
- Natural processes (such as succession to Carr or other vegetation types) drying up lagoon
- Mining subsidence causing altered lagoon profile and altered salinity
- Rising sea levels, erosion of dunes or land in front of the lagoon causing increased salinity
- Coastal defence works that interfere with the water inputs or outputs of the lagoon system, or change the barriers of the lagoon but making them either more solid (such as a sea wall) or weaker (by deflected erosion power from a hard sea defence elsewhere)

Associated Action Plans

Otter

Coastal Birds

Coastal Sand Dune

Further Information

This saline lagoons plan links to the saline lagoons UK BAP action plan, whose lead partner is Natural England

Targets

Maintain the current extent of saline lagoons in Northumberland of 5 sites by 2010.

Code	Priority Actions	Date
SL A01	Maintain and monitor the stable exchange of waters to and from lagoonal habitats as part of site management plans	ongoing
SL A02	Establish the current condition of the saline lagoon resource by measuring physico-chemical form and function and community and species diversity	2009
SL A03	Use the survey results to create targets for achieving condition for saline lagoons in Northumberland	2009
SL A04	Assess sluice licences on a case-by-case basis to ensure optimum salinity levels are achieved for brackish lagoon species	ongoing
SL A05	Encourage the production of management plans for lagoonal sites, especially designated sites. Plans should include objectives for BAP priority species and ideally objectives for all relevant Red Data Book species.	2009
SL A06	Contribute to the different stages of producing shoreline management plans (including guidance on their preparation) to ensure that processes relevant to coastal lagoons are taken into account	ongoing
SL A07	Establish environmental stewardship agreements for saline lagoon sites in poor condition, or on agricultural land adjacent to saline lagoons	2011
SL A08	Identify possible sites for saline lagoon restoration, utilising the survey results from existing sites	2011
SL A09	Use the site identification information to create targets for saline lagoon restoration	2011