

NATURA 2000

STANDARD DATA FORM

FOR SPECIAL PROTECTION AREAS (SPA)
FOR SITES ELIGIBLE FOR IDENTIFICATION AS SITES OF COMMUNITY IMPORTANCE (SCI)
AND
FOR SPECIAL AREAS OF CONSERVATION (SAC)

1. Site identification:

1.1 Type 1.2 Site code

1.3 Compilation date 1.4 Update

1.5 Relationship with other Natura 2000 sites

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1.6 Respondent(s)

1.7 Site name

1.8 Site indication and designation classification dates

date site proposed as eligible as SCI	
date confirmed as SCI	
date site classified as SPA	198511
date site designated as SAC	

2. Site location:

2.1 Site centre location

longitude	latitude
02 47 31 W	54 10 03 N

2.2 Site area (ha) 2.3 Site length (km)

2.5 Administrative region

NUTS code	Region name	% cover
UK83	Lancashire	100.00%

2.6 Biogeographic region

Alpine

Atlantic

Boreal

Continental

Macaronesia

Mediterranean

3. Ecological information:

3.1 Annex I habitats

Habitat types present on the site and the site assessment for them:

Annex I habitat	% cover	Representativity	Relative surface	Conservation status	Global assessment

3.2 Annex I birds and regularly occurring migratory birds not listed on Annex I

Code	Species name	Population			Site assessment			
		Resident	Migratory		Population	Conservation	Isolation	Global
Breed	Winter	Stage						
A021	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>		4 P		A		B	
A081	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>		2 P		C		A	

4. Site description:

4.1 General site character

Habitat classes	% cover
Marine areas. Sea inlets	
Tidal rivers. Estuaries. Mud flats. Sand flats. Lagoons (including saltwork basins)	
Salt marshes. Salt pastures. Salt steppes	
Coastal sand dunes. Sand beaches. Machair	
Shingle. Sea cliffs. Islets	
Inland water bodies (standing water, running water)	16.0
Bogs. Marshes. Water fringed vegetation. Fens	75.0
Heath. Scrub. Maquis and garrigue. Phygrana	9.0
Dry grassland. Steppes	
Humid grassland. Mesophile grassland	
Alpine and sub-alpine grassland	
Improved grassland	
Other arable land	
Broad-leaved deciduous woodland	
Coniferous woodland	
Evergreen woodland	
Mixed woodland	
Non-forest areas cultivated with woody plants (including orchards, groves, vineyards, dehesas)	
Inland rocks. Screes. Sands. Permanent snow and ice	
Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites)	
Total habitat cover	100%

4.1 Other site characteristics

Soil & geology:

Basic, Clay, Limestone, Nutrient-rich, Peat, Sedimentary

Geomorphology & landscape:

Coastal, Floodplain, Lowland

4.2 Quality and importance

ARTICLE 4.1 QUALIFICATION (79/409/EEC)

During the breeding season the area regularly supports:

<i>Botaurus stellaris</i> (Europe - breeding)	20% of the GB breeding population No count period specified.
<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	1.3% of the GB breeding population No count period specified.

ARTICLE 4.2 QUALIFICATION (79/409/EEC)

4.3 Vulnerability

Leighton Moss is the largest reedbed in North West England and is vulnerable to changes in water quality and water levels. Since the establishment of a reserve at Leighton Moss in 1964 the RSPB has raised water levels and actively managed the site in order to maintain and enhance its Phragmites dominated fen and open water to provide optimum conditions for its nationally important reedbed birds. This has involved water level management, ditch maintenance work, the coppicing and control of invading willow scrub, as well as the annual rotational cutting of reedbeds. The decline of booming bitterns on the site, reflecting a national trend, has been halted through detailed research and improved management of the site. This management, which also benefits other birds on the site, has involved further refinement of reedbed management and the manipulation of the reed/open water interface and with increased water level control.

The maintenance of a high quality spring fed water supply is important and although there are few opportunities for this to become polluted within the catchment, agricultural run-off from land immediately adjacent to the reserve has been identified as a potential hazard in recent years. Initiatives are currently being initiated to reduce/remove this threat by the EA.

The Moss is also susceptible to saline intrusion upstream of its tidal sluice from Morecambe Bay. This is potentially one of the most damaging threats to the reserve, there having been three inundations since 1964 caused by gales pushing in unusually high 10 metre tides. Fortunately these have occurred during the winter when the vegetation has been dormant and as such the effects have only been minor. It is proposed that the lowest point of the sea wall next to the tidal sluice be raised when strengthening the Quaker Stang sea defences, taking into account predicted sea level rise due to global warming in order to improve the tidal defences in the area.

5. Site protection status and relation with CORINE biotopes:

5.1 Designation types at national and regional level

Code	% cover
UK04 (SSSI/ASSI)	100.0