

# East Coast Flyway: England's East Coast Wetlands



A proposed UNESCO Natural World Heritage site



# Starting Local – a stones throw from Lincoln









# Then to Global



Chongming Island



National Nature Reserve





# East Coast Flyway

# Why are England's east coast wetlands important?



Global example of coastal adaptation and nature conservation management in the face of climate change

World class complex of coastal wetlands supporting globally important migratory populations

Mid-way location on the East Atlantic Flyway importance

Internationally important for 30 waterbird populations

Considerable Natural Capital, including carbon and significant FCERM benefits

# East Atlantic Flyway





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**NEWS**

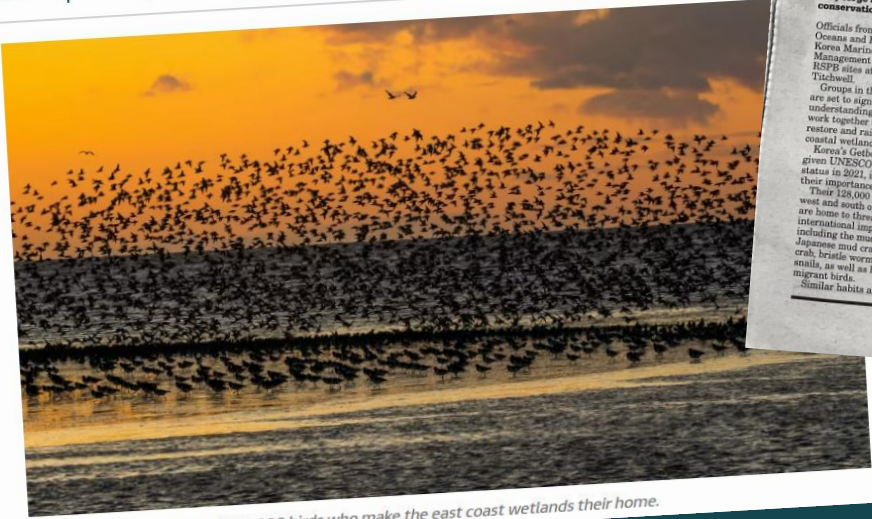
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# Humber wetlands bid for World Natural Heritage Site recognition

RSPB  
Tetney Marshes in Lincolnshire is status

## Seven images that show why the UK East Coast wetlands deserve to become a Unesco World Heritage site

ANGLIA | NATURE | UNESCO | WORLD HERITAGE | Wednesday 19 October 2022 at 1:20pm



Waders are among around 700,000 birds who make the east coast wetlands their home.

20 EASTERN DAILY PRESS MONDAY JUNE 20, 2022

**NEWS**

### Korean delegation visit reserve to forge link with UNESCO World Heritage Site

**A delegation from the Republic of Korea has been visiting some of East Anglia's flagship nature reserves as they forge new links with UK conservationists.**

**CHRIS BISHOP**  
christ.bishop@eastanglianquest.co.uk

Officials from the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries (MOF) and Korea Marine Environment Management Corporation toured RSPB sites at Shettisham and Titchwell.

Groups in the two countries are set to sign a memorandum of understanding, which pledges to work together to better protect, restore and raise awareness of coastal wetlands.

Korea's Geobol tidal flats were given UNESCO World Heritage status in 2021, in recognition of their importance.

Their 128,000 acres on the west and south of the republic are home to threatened species of international importance, including the mud octopus, Japanese mud crabs, fiddler crabs, bristle worms, and sand snails, as well as home to migrant birds.

Similar habitats along the East Coast have also been nominated and the RSPB hope they covered in protection law.

At Titchwell the reserve 70,000 peacocks, rare species, hares, and "the nature and important Steve R area manager Lincolnshire of pride for something come and "It's as world."

RSPB at were many and saline wetlands Jeff Kay

Studio

Birkenhead Park

Titchwell Marsh

# Progress since tentative listing

Press attention

Partnership development

WHS development



\*



\* Supporting coordination throughout Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Suffolk and East Essex Wildlife Trust

**Dark-bellied Brent Goose**

39%



**Black-tailed Godwit**

23%



Globally-significant populations of 30 migratory waterbird species

**Red Knot**

92%

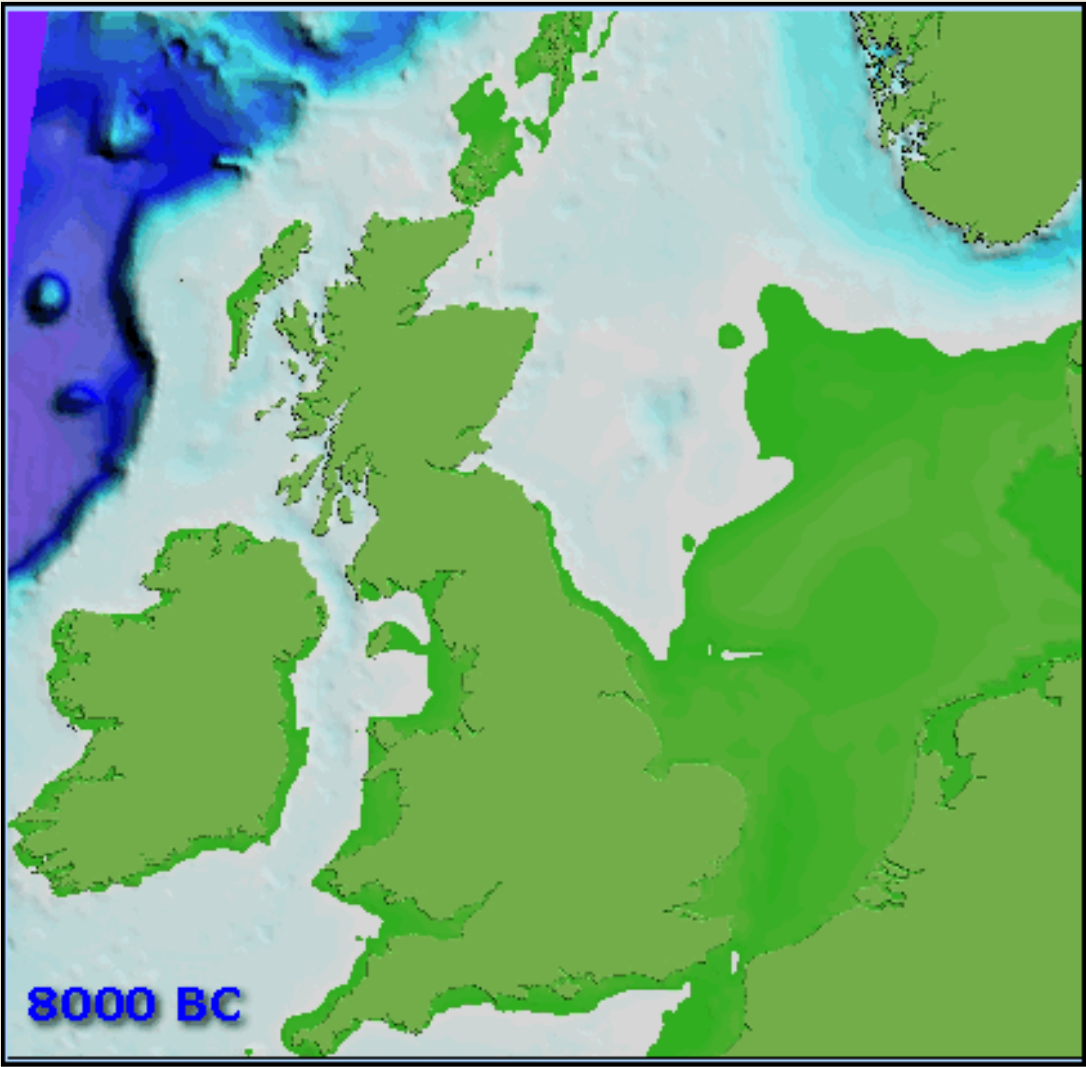


**Pink-footed Goose**

25%



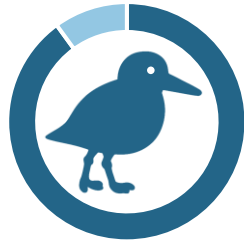
# An ever-evolving landscape



Shennan I, Lambeck K, Flather R, Horton B P, McArthur J, Innes J B, Lloyd J M, Rutherford M M and Wingfield R, 2000, Modelling western North Sea palaeogeographies and tidal changes during the Holocene, In: Holocene land-ocean interaction and environmental change around the North Sea, Series: Special Publication 166, Shennan I and Andrews J E (eds), pp. 299–319, Geological Society, London.

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# Critical corridor for waterbird survival and migration



90%  
of red knot



50%  
of black-tailed  
godwit

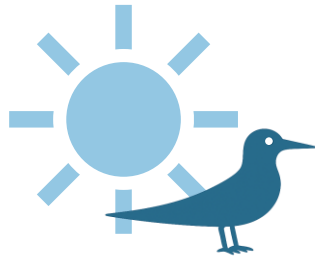


4 vulnerable species  
on the European Red List

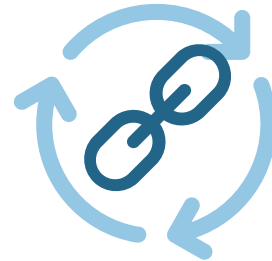
30 species



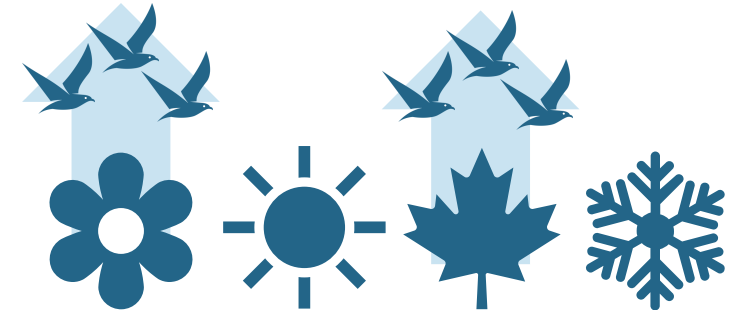
in globally  
important numbers



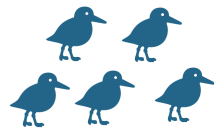
summer breeding  
ground for tern species



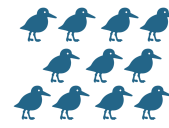
high connectivity



seasonal migration spikes



5 endangered



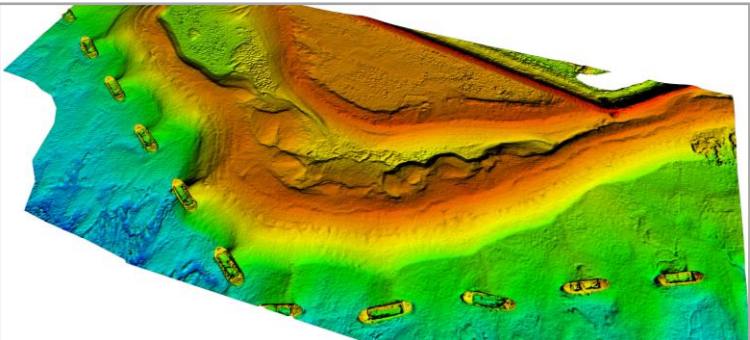
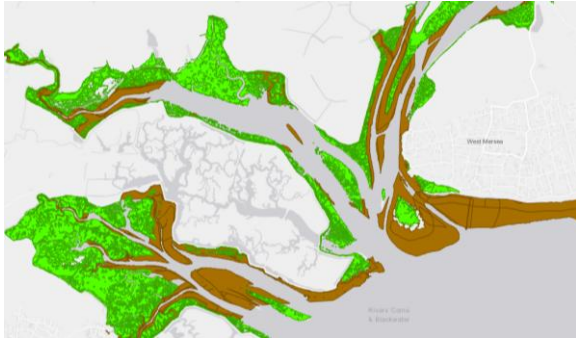
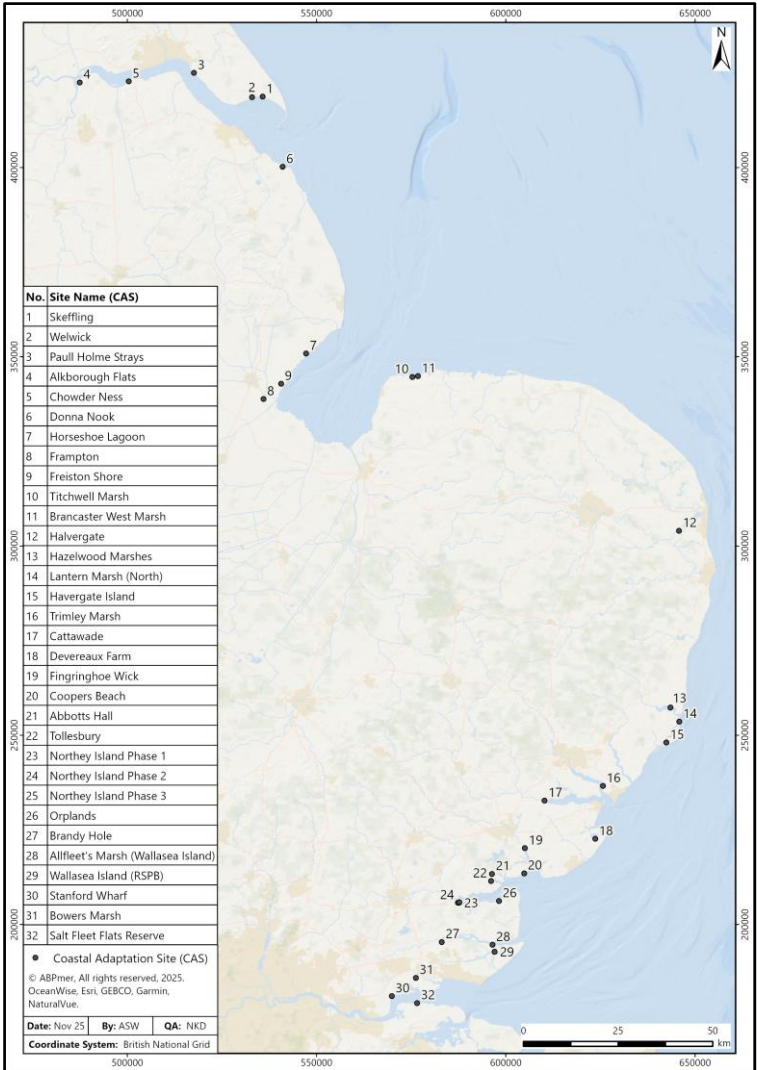
11 vulnerable



used by over  
**1 million**  
waterbirds annually

species on IUCN Red List Assessment for Great Britain

# Global exemplar in coastal adaptation





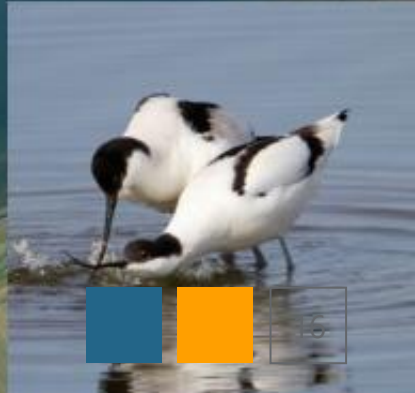
Regulated tidal exchange 2018

Regulated tidal exchange 2016

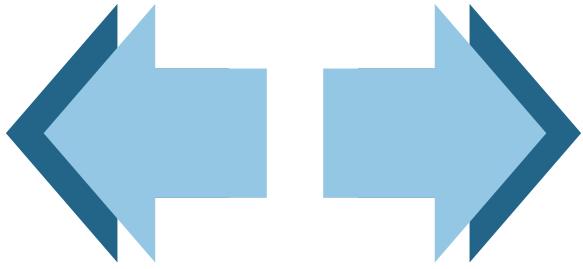
Managed realignment 2015

Managed realignment 2006

Largest number of breeding avocets of any UK wetlands



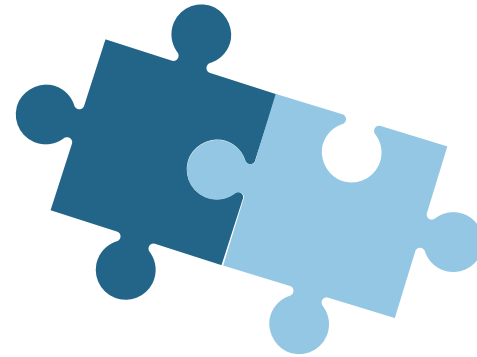
# Early comparison findings



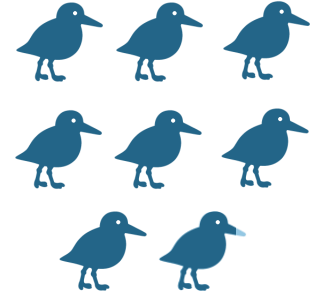
first UK site to cover an expansive coastal wetland area



no WHS within east coast of England



complementary to Wadden Sea; important connectivity between sites



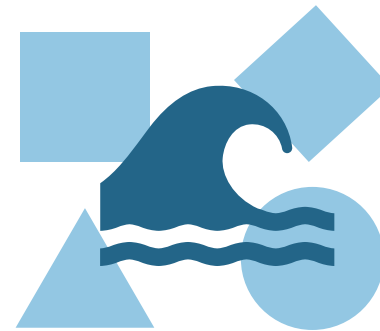
7.9 birds per ha; second highest in EAF



1/5 size of Wadden Sea, but nearly double the birds per ha



mid-size compared to similar WHS

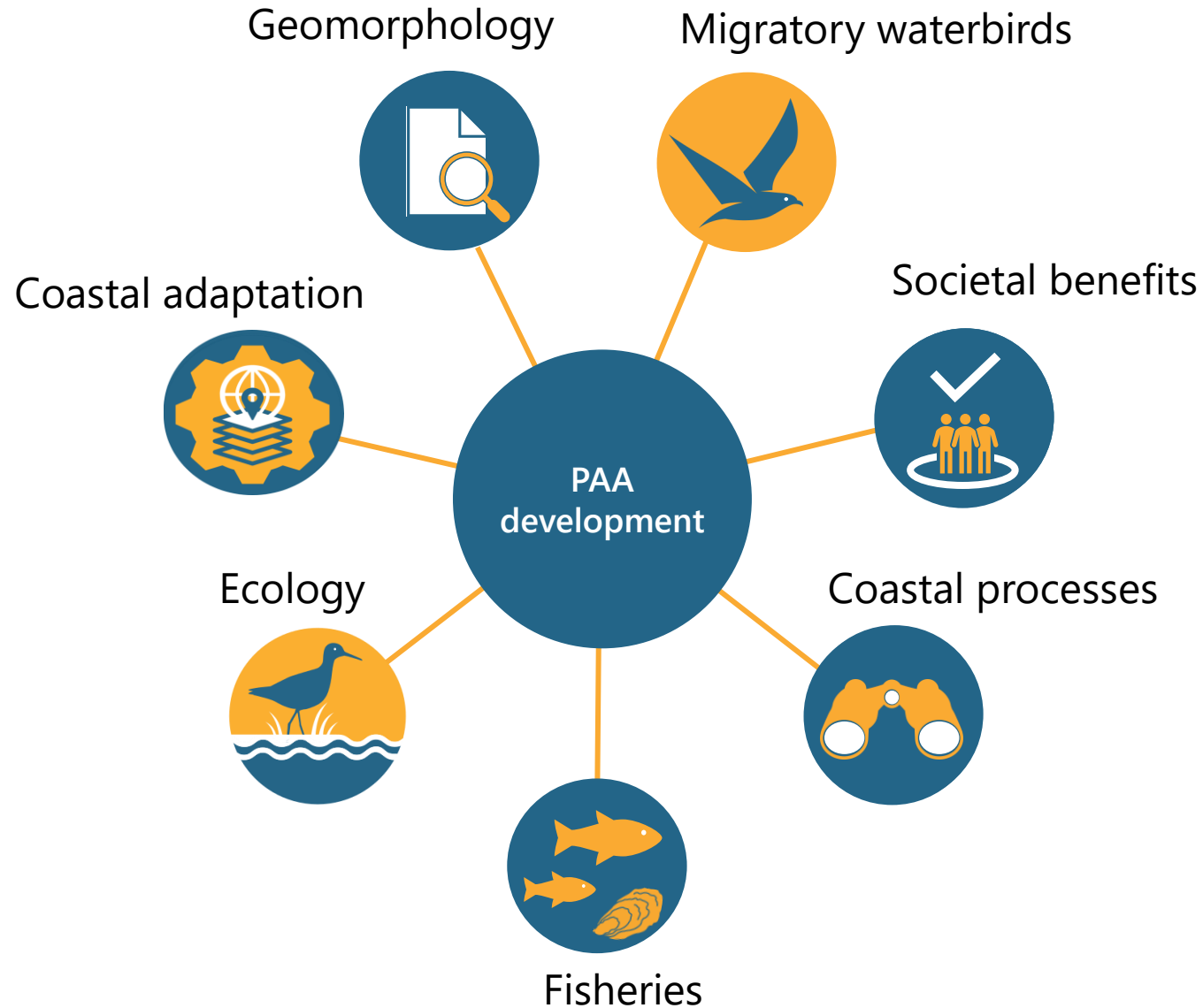


physically diverse and sea-dominated sediment source



global exemplar in coastal adaptation and partnership initiatives

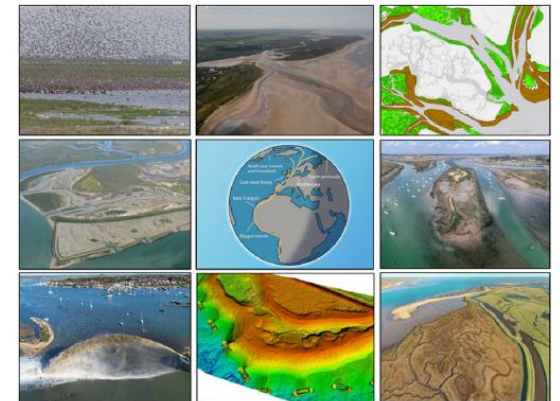
# Development and delivery of PAA



## East Coast Flyway World Heritage Site: Preliminary Assessment Appraisal

Submission to DCMS for expert review

October 2025





# What can you do?

- **Talk to us to find out how to get involved**
- **Consider how Natural World Heritage status could benefit you, your stakeholders and your communities.**
- Can you **contribute** to future communications and/or engagement?
- **If so – do contact Milo Sumner or Jeff Kew @rspb.org.uk**

A message of Hope and  
Opportunity

Thank you and have a brilliant  
day in Lincoln with the EASTME  
Conference

RSPB England Director – Michael  
Copleston

