

## Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat

**Name:** Crouch and Roach Estuaries (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 3)

**Unitary Authority/County:** Essex

**Boundary of the Ramsar site:** The Ramsar site boundary is coincident with the boundaries of Crouch and Roach Estuaries Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

**Site description:** The Crouch and Roach Estuaries are located on the coast of south Essex in eastern England. The River Crouch occupies a shallow valley between two ridges of London Clay, whilst the River Roach is set predominantly between areas of brick earth and loams with patches of sand and gravel. The intertidal zone along the Rivers Crouch and Roach is 'squeezed' between the sea walls along both banks and the river channel. Unlike more extensive estuaries elsewhere in Essex, this leaves a relatively narrow strip of tidal mud which, nonetheless, is used by significant numbers of birds. The site is of importance for wintering waterbirds, especially dark-bellied brent goose *Branta bernicla bernicla*.

The Crouch and Roach Estuaries is an integral component of the phased Mid-Essex Coast Ramsar sites (see overleaf).

**Size of Ramsar site:** 1,847.87 hectares (ha).

**International importance of Ramsar site:** The Ramsar site is a Wetland of International Importance because (according to the Montreux 1990 criteria):

- a) It regularly supports 20,000 waterbirds. (Ramsar site selection criterion 3a):  
The area is regularly used by 27,021 individual waterbirds over winter (5 year peak mean 1990/91 – 1994/95).
- b) It regularly support 1% of the individuals in a population of waterbirds (Ramsar site selection criterion 3c):

Waterbird species	Season	5-yr peak mean (1989/90-1993/94)
Dark-bellied brent goose <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>	Winter	5,509 individuals (2.2% World)

- c) They support an appreciable assemblage of rare, vulnerable or endangered species or subspecies of plant or animal, or an appreciable number of individuals of any one or more of these species (Ramsar site selection criterion 2a). These are:
  - (i) 13 nationally scarce plant species: Slender Hare's Ear *Bupleurum tenuissimum*, Divided Sedge *Carex divisa*, Sea Barley *Hordeum marinum*, Golden-samphire *Inula crithmoides*, Lax-flowered Sea-lavender *Limonium humile*, Curved Hard Grass *Parapholis incurva*, Borrer's Saltmarsh Grass *Puccinellia fasciculata*, Stiff Saltmarsh Grass *Puccinellia rupestris*, Spiral Tasselweed *Ruppia cirrhosa*, One Flowered Glasswort *Salicornia pusilla*, Small Cord-grass *Spartina maritima*, Shrubby Sea-blite *Suaeda vera* and Sea Clover *Trifolium squamosum*.
  - (ii) Several rare and/or vulnerable invertebrate species, e.g.: Scarce Emerald Damselfly *Lestes dryas*, the shorefly *Parydroptera discomyzina*, the soldierfly *Stratiomys singularior*, the large horsefly *Hybomitra expollicata*, the beetles *Graptodytes bilineatus* and *Malachius vulneratus*, Ground Lackey Moth *Malacosoma castrensis* and *Eucosma catoptrana*.



**Bird counts from:**

CRANSWICK, P.A., WALTERS, R.J., EVANS, J. & POLLITT, M.S. 1995. The Wetland Bird Survey 1993-94: Wildfowl and Wader Counts. BTO/WWT/RSPB/JNCC, Slimbridge

**Status of Ramsar site:**

- 1) River Crouch Marshes Ramsar site was designated on 24 March 1995;
- 2) Extensions to the River Crouch Marshes Ramsar site were designated on 29 June 1998 and the site was re-named Crouch and Roach Estuaries (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 3) Ramsar site.

The Crouch and Roach Estuaries (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 3) Ramsar site is a component part of the linked series of Mid-Essex Coast Ramsar sites. These are:

Ramsar site	Date Designated	Component SSSI	Area (ha)
Dengie (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 1)	24 March 1994	Dengie	3,0127.22
Colne Estuary (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 2)	28 July 1994	Colne Estuary	2,701.37
Crouch and Roach Estuaries (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 3)	24 March 1995 (extended 11 July 2018)	Crouch & Roach Estuaries	1,847.87
Blackwater Estuary (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 4)	12 May 1995	Blackwater Estuary	3,657.10
Foulness (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 5)	4 October 1996	Foulness	10,968.97