



**Dearne Valley Wetlands SSSI
South Yorkshire**

***Notification under Section 28 of the Wildlife
and Countryside Act 1981***

Issued by Natural England's Yorkshire and northern Lincolnshire Team on 13 May 2021

Contact points and further information

This notification package is issued by Natural England's Yorkshire and northern Lincolnshire Team.

During the current coronavirus situation, Natural England staff are working remotely and a limited number of our offices are open. Please send any correspondence relating to this notification by email or contact us by phone using the information below. Alternatively, you can send a response online using the Citizenspace link below.

Your contact point for specific enquiries relating to this notification is Emma Leighton.

Telephone number: 020 802 66230

E-mail: YNL.Hub@naturalengland.org.uk

Online: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/natural-england/dearne-valley-wetlands-sssi>

A second document (Dearne Valley Wetlands SSSI - Supporting Information) is available on request from the address above. This contains information and extracts from relevant documents that have been used in the decision to notify this SSSI.

The date of notification of Dearne Valley Wetlands SSSI is 13 May 2021

Contents

1. Summary.....	4
2. The legal background.....	4
3. Making representations.....	5
4. Reasons for notification.....	6
5. Site boundaries and relationships with other SSSIs.....	6
6. Management of the SSSI.....	6
7. Supporting information.....	7
8. Legal documents.....	7
<i>Annex 1 Citation.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Annex 2 Views about Management.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Annex 3 List of operations requiring Natural England's consent.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Annex 4 Map(s) showing the land notified.....</i>	<i>17</i>

1. Summary

- 1.1 This document explains why Dearne Valley Wetlands is notified by Natural England as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
- 1.2 Dearne Valley Wetlands SSSI is an area of post-industrial urban fringe in South Yorkshire, near Barnsley, and comprises large areas of open water and associated wetland and woodland habitat within the catchment of the River Dearne. It is of special interest for its nationally important numbers and assemblages of breeding and non-breeding birds.
- 1.3 Dearne Valley Wetlands SSSI is made up of 22 land parcels the majority of which lie within the Dearne Valley Green Heart Nature Improvement Area (NIA). This notification builds upon NIA partnership work to improve and create habitat. In total the site covers 652.43 ha.
- 1.4 The site is important for both formal and informal recreation and attracts people from a wide area. A significant part of the attraction for visitors is its nationally important wildlife interest and there are key visitor facilities at the RSPB site of Old Moor, one of five RSPB reserves within the SSSI.
- 1.5 The annexes to this document comprise the legal papers that detail the interest and the management required to maintain that interest. You have a right to make representations or objections to this notification. Part 3 of this document explains how to do this.
- 1.6 Natural England's consent is required by owners and occupiers before any of the operations listed in *Annex 3* can be carried out. We will work closely with owners and managers, as well as other bodies, to ensure that existing operations and new works that are not considered likely to damage the special features of the SSSI can be carried out.

2. The legal background

- 2.1 Dearne Valley Wetlands SSSI is notified under section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
- 2.2 Part 8 of this notification document contains the following legal documents required by section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981:
 - a citation detailing the reasons for notification (*Annex 1*);
 - a statement of Natural England's views on the management of the SSSI (*Annex 2*);
 - a list of operations requiring Natural England's consent (*Annex 3*); and
 - a map identifying the land subject to this notification (*Annex 4*).
- 2.3 This notification has several effects. The key ones can be summarised as follows:
 - owners and occupiers must give Natural England notice before carrying out, causing or permitting to be carried out any of the activities in the list of operations at *Annex 3*;
 - owners of land included in the SSSI have a legal obligation to notify Natural England within 28 days if the ownership or occupancy of the land changes;
 - it is an offence for any person intentionally or recklessly to destroy or damage the special features of the SSSI or to disturb any of the fauna;
 - other public bodies must consult Natural England before carrying out or authorising any works that may damage the SSSI; and
 - it gives Natural England the ability to require the management of the SSSI by way of management schemes and notices.
- 2.4 If you require any further information or advice on how this notification affects you, please do not hesitate to contact Natural England at the address shown at the beginning of this notification document.

3. Making representations

- 3.1 You have a legal right to make objections and representations about this notification. Any representations, including those supporting the notification, or objections should be made in writing to Natural England's Yorkshire and northern Lincolnshire Team by **13 September 2021**. Representations can be sent by e-mail or online to the addresses shown on page 2. You may wish to seek legal or independent advice and your representative may wish to write to us on your behalf.
- 3.2 Natural England's Yorkshire and northern Lincolnshire Team will consider your objections or representations and will try to resolve them. If there are no unresolved objections, approval to confirm this notification will be considered by an appropriate Natural England Director within nine months of this notification.
- 3.3 Any unresolved objections or representations will be considered by the Board of Natural England within nine months of this notification. If there are unresolved objections, confirmation of this notification is likely to be considered at the Board meeting provisionally scheduled for January 2022. Please note that the desirability of the notification (for instance, for socio-economic reasons) will not form part of the Board's decision. Following consideration of objections and representations, the Board of Natural England may confirm or withdraw all or part of this notification. In reaching its decision the Board will consider whether, in light of the objections and representations received, Natural England remains of the opinion that the site is of special scientific interest. The desirability of the notification for socio-economic reasons will not form part of the Board's decision.
- 3.4 If you wish to emphasise any of your objections or representations to the Board in person, you should tell us when you write to us. You will then be advised of the date and location of the Board meeting
- 3.5 Natural England will accept correspondence relating to unresolved objections up to seven days prior to the Board meeting at which the confirmation is due to be considered. Correspondence received after this date will only be presented to the Board in very exceptional circumstances and you will be expected to provide justification as to why there has been a delay in providing the information. The decision whether this information will be submitted to the Board is entirely at Natural England's discretion. The reason that there is a seven day cut off is to allow Board members sufficient opportunity to consider all of the issues and read all the relevant paperwork before they meet to take their decision.
- 3.6 Natural England has a policy of openness, which reflects our obligations under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This legislation provides a legal right of access to information held by public bodies. This means that we will provide information on how we make our decisions on SSSIs to any person on request. This includes details of objections and representations received. We will assume, therefore, that your representation or objection can be made publicly available unless you indicate with clear and valid reasons which (if any) part(s) of these you wish to be excluded from this arrangement. However, you should be aware that the requirements of the legislation may mean that we cannot comply with your request that this information be withheld. We do, however, respect people's privacy and will take all reasonable steps to consult you before reaching a decision on disclosure of the information.
- 3.7 As an individual with an interest in Dearne Valley Wetlands SSSI, your information will be stored and processed on a computer database that will be operated within the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018. For the purposes of the Data Protection Act, the data controller is Natural England, Foss House, Kings Pool, 1-2 Peasholme Green, York YO1 7PX. For more information, please see the *SSSI notifications privacy notice* at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/natural-england-privacy-notices/site-of-special-scientific-interest-notification-privacy-notice> or request a copy from the address on page 2 of this document.

4. Reasons for notification

4.1 Dearne Valley Wetlands SSSI is of special interest for the following nationally important features:

- **Numbers of non-breeding birds**

The site's range of open water sizes, depths, aquatic life and marginal vegetation supports nationally important numbers of non-breeding gadwall *Mareca strepera* and shoveler *Spatula clypeata*.

- **Numbers of breeding birds**

The open water, reedbed, fen, grassland and scrub habitats at the site support nationally important numbers of breeding gadwall, shoveler, bittern *Botaurus stellaris*, garganey *Spatula querquedula*, pochard *Aythya ferina* and black-headed gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*.

- **Assemblages of breeding birds**

The site supports nationally important breeding bird assemblages associated with Lowland damp grassland, Lowland scrub and a mixed assemblage of Lowland open waters and their margins and Lowland fen.

- **Breeding willow tit**

The site supports important numbers of the rare breeding bird willow tit *Poecile montanus klieenschmidtii*. The willow tit is included in the Government's list of species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England¹ and is classed as Red-listed (i.e. of the highest conservation concern) in the UK Birds of Conservation Concern². During the five-year period 2014 to 2018 the SSSI supported territories for an estimated 18-20 breeding pairs of willow tit.

5. Site boundaries and relationships with other SSSIs

5.1 The boundary has been drawn to include land that supports the features of special interest and is required to ensure their long-term sustainability.

5.2 The Dearne Valley Wetlands SSSI consists of artificial waterbodies and surrounding habitat which are largely a result of the restoration of a post-industrial mining landscape. In most cases the boundary follows appropriate physical markers such as hedgerows, ditches, fence lines, tracks and buildings.

5.3 In places no Ordnance Survey boundary feature is present. Where there is a clear current habitat divide this has been used as the boundary, but in a few places straight lines between fixed points, or specified co-ordinates, have been drawn to exclude unsuitable areas.

5.4 Further clarification of the precise location of the boundary of the SSSI can be obtained from Natural England's Yorkshire and northern Lincolnshire Team at the email address on page 2 of this document.

5.5 The two nearest SSSIs are Carlton Main Brickworks SSSI and Stairfoot Brickworks SSSI, both of which are notified for their geological interest. The nearest biological SSSI is Denaby Ings (0.25 km to the east) notified for its wetland habitats and breeding bird assemblages.

6. Management of the SSSI

6.1 This notification includes at Annex 2 a statement of the management that Natural England considers is needed to conserve and enhance the features of special interest. Different management may be appropriate in different parts of the site and this statement is not intended to detail the exact requirements at specific locations. The statement is intended to

¹ Under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

² Eaton *et al.* 2015

explain how we can work with and support owners and managers in continuing to achieve positive management of the SSSI.

- 6.2 This notification also includes a list of the operations requiring Natural England's consent at *Annex 3*. Some of the operations may already be taking place and where they do not cause any damage they will be given consent. We will work with landowners and managers to agree lists of such existing and planned activities, which can be approved.
- 6.3 Where an operation has been granted a consent, licence or permission from another public body a separate consent will not generally be required from Natural England. However, other public bodies are required to consult Natural England before such consents, licences or permissions are issued.
- 6.4 In particular we recognise the important roles of the owners and managers of the land in managing this site. We will continue to work with them to develop means to secure the sustainable management of Dearne Valley Wetlands SSSI.

7. Supporting information

- 7.1 The detailed information, which has been used to assess the importance of this SSSI, is available on request from the address on page 2 of this document.

8. Legal documents

- 8.1 Attached at *Annexes 1 - 4* are the legal documents, which are required by section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Annex 1

Citation

This is a legal document on which you have a right to make objections or representations, as explained in part 3 of this notification document

Site name: Dearne Valley Wetlands

County: South
Yorkshire

District: Barnsley Metropolitan Borough, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

Local Planning Authority: Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 sheets: 111 **National grid reference:** SE434027

Notification date: 13 May 2021 **Area:** 652.43 ha

Reasons for notification:

Dearne Valley Wetlands SSSI is of special interest for the following nationally important features:

- Breeding gadwall *Mareca strepera*, shoveler *Spatula clypeata*, garganey *Spatula querquedula*, pochard *Aythya ferina*, bittern *Botaurus stellaris*, black-headed gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* and willow tit *Poecile montanus klienschmidtii*.
- Non-breeding gadwall *Mareca strepera* and shoveler *Spatula clypeata*.
- Diverse assemblages of breeding birds of Lowland damp grasslands, Lowland scrub and a mixed assemblage of Lowland open waters and their margins and Lowland fen.

General description:

Dearne Valley Wetlands SSSI is situated in South Yorkshire and comprises a network of 22 wetland, scrub and woodland areas that extends through the catchment of the River Dearne. The site lies within the local authority areas of Barnsley, Rotherham and Doncaster and is within the Dearne Valley Green Heart Nature Improvement Area.

The area is post-industrial urban fringe comprising former mining settlements set in a mosaic of farmland, woodland, wetland and floodplain habitats. Large areas of open water and associated habitats within the River Dearne catchment have been created as a result of post-industrial restoration and these areas now support a substantial ornithological interest.

Dearne Valley Wetlands comprises a series of shallow and deep open waters with an associated range of marginal habitats including ditches, reedbed, marsh, wet grassland, scrub and woodland. This range of habitats provides valuable nesting, resting and feeding conditions which support nationally important numbers and assemblages of birds in the breeding and non-breeding seasons.

The open water sites and associated habitats support nationally important numbers of breeding gadwall *Mareca strepera*, shoveler *Spatula clypeata*, garganey *S. querquedula*, pochard *Aythya ferina*, bittern *Botaurus stellaris* and black-headed gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*. The site also supports nationally important numbers of non-breeding gadwall and shoveler.

Dearne Valley Wetlands is a stronghold for the nationally rare and declining willow tit, *Poecile montanus klienschmidtii*, its wet woodland and scrub habitats supporting ideal breeding territories for the species.

The network of wetland and scrub habitats across the site supports a range of breeding bird assemblages. The large areas of open water and marginal habitats, fen and wet grassland at sites including Carlton Marsh, Edderthorpe Flash, Wombwell Ings, Broomhill Flash, Old Moor, Bolton Ings and Adwick Washlands provide a range of water depths, vegetation structure and food availability which support a large range of breeding bird species. Deeper water provides an abundance of fish for bittern whilst shallower water supports a range of aquatic invertebrates and plants for dabbling and diving ducks such as garganey, shoveler, tufted duck *Aythya fuligula* and pochard, and waders such as avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*. Marginal vegetation, fen and wet

grassland provide a variety of vegetation heights for nesting and concealment for species such as garganey, gadwall, shoveler, sedge warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*, water rail *Rallus aquaticus*, reed bunting *Emberiza schoeniculus* and bearded tit *Panurus biarmicus* and an abundance of soil and ground-surface invertebrates for species such as lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*, snipe *Gallinago gallinago* and redshank *Tringa tetanus*.

Areas of scrub are also present throughout the site, either scattered or in distinct blocks with key areas at Carlton Marsh, Warbler Way, The Mullins and Barrow Colliery Site. The nesting and feeding opportunities provided support species such as long-tailed tit *Aegithalos caudatus*, garden warbler *Sylvia borin*, grasshopper warbler *Locustella naevia*, willow tit, lesser whitethroat *Sylvia curruca* , linnet *Carduelis cannabina* and yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*.

Annex 2

Views about Management

This is a legal document on which you have a right to make objections or representations, as explained in part 3 of this notification document.



Views About Management

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Section 28(4)

A statement of Natural England's views about the management of Dearne Valley Wetlands Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

This statement represents Natural England's views about the management of the SSSI for nature conservation. This statement sets out, in principle, our views on how the site's special conservation interest can be conserved and enhanced. Natural England has a duty to notify the owners and occupiers of SSSI of its views about the management of the site.

Not all of the management principles will be equally appropriate to all parts of the SSSI. Also, there may be other management activities, additional to our current views, which can be beneficial to the conservation and enhancement of the features of interest.

This Statement does not constitute consent for any of the 'operations requiring Natural England's consent'. The written consent of Natural England is required before carrying out any of those operations. Natural England welcomes consultation with owners, occupiers and users of the SSSI to ensure that the management of this site conserves and enhances the features of interest, and to ensure that all necessary prior consents are obtained.

Background

Despite previously being at the forefront of coal mining heavy industry, reclamation and restoration of post-industrial sites in this area has led to the development of several open water sites with associated habitat features of ditches, reedbed, fen, wet grassland scrub and wet woodland which now support important populations and assemblages of breeding and non-breeding birds.

Management Principles

The waterbodies should provide a variety of water levels and be of sufficient water quality to support the breeding and non-breeding bird interest. Increases in the amount of nutrients within the waterbody can lead to a loss of aquatic plants in favour of excessive growths of algae. This may result in a fundamental shift in the way a waterbody functions, reducing plant and invertebrate abundance and diversity, both of which are important food sources for a range of wetland birds. Increases in the amount of sediment entering a waterbody may smother stony beds and plants, reduce water depth in shallow waterbodies and increase the amount of nutrients present.

Sympathetic management of water levels is necessary for the maintenance of optimal water depths throughout the year (according to the requirements of the bird species present). For example, the presence of extensive shallow water and wet marginal substrates will provide the feeding conditions required by a variety of wintering, passage and breeding wildfowl, such as dabbling ducks and waders, whilst other species may require larger areas of open deep water. Structural diversity within and between stands of aquatic vegetation (including emergent, floating and submerged vegetation) can provide important habitat for the immature stages of many fish, and invertebrates including different dragonfly and damselfly species that require a wide variety of vegetation types. All of these features are essential in supporting large populations of waterbirds. In common with other freshwater systems, artificial water bodies are susceptible to the introduction of invasive species and some management may be necessary to control these if they occur.

Associated supporting habitats of reedbeds, fen, wet grassland, scrub and wet woodland should be managed in a way that supports the breeding and non-breeding bird interest, and this may require cutting and/or grazing. Timing and intensity of any grazing will depend on local conditions and the need to avoid trampling ground nesting birds. Agricultural operations in general should be avoided before mid-June to minimise disturbance to breeding birds or the destruction of nests and any

management should seek to minimise any harmful disturbance when the bird populations are likely to be under stress, such as the nesting season and severely cold conditions.

Habitats that support willow tit include wet woodlands, damp woodland margins, scrubby wetland margins, post-industrial sites with scrub and a high-water table, and occasionally mixed damp scrub along the edges of young plantations. There is a preference for thickets of young trees with populations faring best in woodland and scrub up to 30 years old. Willow tits rely on decaying standing timber in which to excavate nest holes and spend most of their time foraging in a dense shrub layer. They feed mainly on insects during the breeding season, and wet features within the habitat (such as springs, ponds, or a high-water table) will increase food abundance. Populations are more stable where suitable patches of habitat are connected through scrubby corridors. Mature hedgerows and scrub-lined river corridors and disused or active railway lines can all provide connectivity. Management should look to maintain early-successional woodland and scrub by slowing down or reversing the maturation of young woodlands; maintaining a low canopy with a dense shrub layer; maintaining or increasing soil moisture, particularly around nest sites to encourage deadwood availability. Exclusion or low intensity grazing from livestock or wild browsing animals (such as deer) may be required and there should be good connectivity between patches of habitat. Where wet features already exist, they should be maintained.

Date notified: 13 May 2021

Annex 3

List of operations requiring Natural England's consent

This is a legal document on which you have a right to make objections or representations, as explained in part 3 of this notification document.

Operations requiring Natural England's consent

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Section 28 (4)(b)

The operations listed below may damage the features of interest of **Dearne Valley Wetlands SSSI**. Before any of these operations are undertaken you must consult Natural England and may require consent.

It is usually possible to carry out some of these operations in certain ways, or at specific times of year, or on certain parts of the SSSI, without damaging the features of interest. If you wish to carry out any of these activities please contact the Natural England Area Team, who will give you advice and where appropriate issue a consent. Please help us by using the 'notice form' (provided at notification and available on request) to ask us for consent to carry out these operations.

In certain circumstances it will not be possible to consent these operations, because they would damage the features of interest. Where possible the Area Team will suggest alternative ways in which you may proceed, which would enable a consent to be issued. To proceed without Natural England's consent may constitute an offence. If consent is refused, or conditions attached to it, which are not acceptable to you, you will be provided with details of how you may appeal to the Secretary of State.

Standard reference number	Type of operation
1.	Cultivation, including ploughing, rotovating, harrowing and re-seeding.
2.	Grazing and alterations to the grazing regime (including type of stock, intensity or seasonal pattern of grazing).
3.	Stock feeding and alterations to stock feeding practice.
4.	Mowing or cutting vegetation and alterations to the mowing or cutting regime (such as from haymaking to silage).
5.	Application of manure, slurry, silage liquor, fertilisers and lime.
6.	Application of pesticides, including herbicides (weed killers) whether terrestrial or aquatic, and veterinary products.
7.	Dumping, spreading or discharging of any materials.
8.	Burning and alterations to the pattern or frequency of burning.
9.	Release into the site of any wild, feral, captive-bred or domestic animal, plant, seed or micro-organism (including genetically modified organisms).
10.	Killing, injuring, taking or removal of any wild animal (including dead animals or parts thereof), or their eggs and nests, including pest control and disturbing them in their places of shelter.
11.	Destruction, displacement, removal or cutting of any plant or plant remains, including tree, shrub, herb, hedge, dead or decaying wood, moss, lichen, fungus, leaf-mould or turf.
12.	Tree and/or woodland management and alterations to tree and/or woodland management (including, planting, felling, pruning and tree surgery, thinning, coppicing, changes in species composition, removal of fallen timber).
13a.	Draining (including the use of mole, tile, tunnel or other artificial drains).
13b.	Modification to the structure of water courses (rivers, streams, springs, ditches, dykes and drains), including their banks and beds, as by re-alignment, regrading, damming or dredging.

Standard reference number	Type of operation
13c.	Management of aquatic and bank vegetation for drainage purposes.
14.	Alterations to water levels and tables and water utilisation (including irrigation, storage and abstraction from existing water bodies and through boreholes). Also the modification of current drainage operations (such as through the installation of new pumps).
15.	Infilling or digging of ditches, dykes, drains, ponds, pools, marshes or pits.
16a.	Freshwater fishery production and/or management, including sporting fishing and angling and alterations to freshwater fishery production and/or management.
20.	Extraction of minerals including, hard rock, sand and gravel, topsoil, subsoil, and spoil.
21.	Destruction, construction, removal, rerouting, or regrading of roads, tracks, walls, fences, hardstands, banks, ditches or other earthworks, including soil and soft rock exposures or the laying, maintenance or removal of pipelines and cables, above or below ground.
22.	Storage of materials.
23.	Erection of permanent or temporary structures or the undertaking of engineering works, including drilling.
26.	Use of vehicles or craft.
27.	Recreational or other activities likely to damage or disturb the features of special interest.
28a.	Game and waterfowl management and hunting practices and alterations to game and waterfowl management and hunting practice.
28b.	Use of lead shot.

Notes

- i. This is a list of operations appearing to Natural England to be likely to damage the special features of the SSSI, as required under section 28 (4) (b) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
- ii. Where an operation has been granted a consent, licence or permission from another authority separate consent will not be required from Natural England. However, other authorities are required to consult Natural England before such consents, licences or permissions are issued.
- iii. Any reference to 'animal' in this list shall be taken to include any mammal, reptile, amphibian, bird, fish, or invertebrate.

Date notified: 13 May 2021

National Grid Reference: SE434027

Annex 4

Map showing the land notified

This is a legal document on which you have a legal right to make objections or representations, as explained in part 3 of this notification document.