

21 Coastal sand dunes

Coastal sand dunes develop where particles of 0.2 to 2 mm in diameter are blown inland from a dry beach of sufficient size at low tide. The inland coversand areas of Lincolnshire are not included.

Status

England has 9276 ha and Great Britain has 47 118 ha of coastal dunes¹. This region holds 141 ha¹, which is 1.5% of the English resource and 0.3% of the British resource. These are mostly restricted to the mouth of the Humber, both north and south shores. There is also a small area at Scarborough, Saltburn to Bridlington Natural Area (Maddocks *pers. comm.*), not included in Table 26. These dunes form the edge of a concentration along the coasts of Lincolnshire and Norfolk; other concentrations in England are found in the North East, on the north coasts of Devon and Cornwall, on the Sefton coast, in Cumbria and the Isles of Scilly. Spurn is the most extensive area in the region and one of only 43 sites in Britain that exceed 50 ha. The Spurn peninsula is moving westwards despite attempts to stabilise it. The dunes have been invaded by sea buckthorn *Hippophae rhamnoides*. This is a naturally dynamic system and the characteristic wildlife of this reserve may be threatened by a lack of sand movement. Suffocated clover *Trifolium suffocatum*, a nationally rare plant, is found at Spurn.

Threats

Scrub invasion can over-stabilise dunes resulting in a loss of areas of bare sand and a change in the community supported there. Grazing can help prevent this. Rises in sea level may increase the rate of erosion of the dune bases.

Table 26: Sand dunes in Yorkshire and the Humber listed in the Sand Dune Vegetation Survey of Great Britain¹

Site	Area (ha)	Local Planning Authority	Natural Area
Easington	43	East Riding	101 Bridlington-Skegness
Welwick	9	East Riding	21 Humber Estuary
Spurn	64	East Riding	101 Bridlington-Skegness
Humberstone/Cleethorpes	25	North-east Lincolnshire	36 Lincs Coast & Marshes
REGIONAL TOTAL	141		