

ORWELL ESTUARY SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST (SSSI) SUFFOLK

The Stour and Orwell Estuaries are internationally important for birds and their habitats. In consequence the Orwell Estuary is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and is also part of the Stour and Orwell Estuaries Special Protection Area (SPA) a European designation for internationally important bird sites.

In common with other users of the estuaries, boat owners have the responsibility to ensure that their activities do not have a detrimental impact on the environment. General guidance on environmentally responsible boating is provided by the Green Blue Scheme and in the 'Tide Lines' pamphlet produced by the Royal Yachting Association.

Outside the breeding season (late July onwards) large numbers of wading birds such as redshank, curlew, dunlin and black-tailed godwit use the mud flats exposed during ebb tide to feed and at high tide they roost in the salt marshes. They are very vulnerable to disturbance by activities on the foreshore. Disturbance disrupts feeding and uses up vital energy, which they need to survive on migration and during the winter. For these reasons, please avoid putting shoreline wintering birds to flight by keeping away from their feeding grounds and by avoiding large groups of roosting birds. Walking and letting dogs run across saltmarsh and mudflats is likely to cause disturbance. Please also avoid causing any physical damage to these habitats, for instance by beaching boats on them. It is an offence to cause damage or disturbance on an SSSI – see below for details.

If you find yourself close to a large group of roosting birds, move quietly away, avoiding fast and sudden movements. Try to avoid the main roost sites, particularly around high tide, after dark, or during prolonged periods of hard weather.

If you have any further queries, please contact the Harbour Master for further information about the SSSI please see the Natural England website www.naturalengland.co.uk Section 28P of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 as incorporated by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Notice is hereby given that the land shown on the map overleaf has been notified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest by reason of the features described in the citation, a copy of which can be obtained from Natural England on its website or at Regent House, 110 Northgate Street, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk. IP31 2DF, Tel: 0300 060 493.

It is an offence under Section 28P (6) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as incorporated by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, without reasonable excuse, intentionally or recklessly to destroy or damage any of the flora, fauna or geological or physiographical features by reason of which land is of special interest, or intentionally or recklessly disturb any of those fauna. A person found guilty of any such an offence may be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding £20,000 or on conviction of indictment to a fine.

See over for map.

The Stour and Orwell estuaries SPA

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