

THORNEY ISLAND HABITAT CREATION SCHEME NEWSLETTER

APRIL – 2024 - ISSUE #1

Our Vision

Creation of 30 hectares of compensatory intertidal habitat on the western side of Thorney Island by 2030 to contribute to the Solent and South Downs Habitat Creation Restoration Programme

What's been happening?

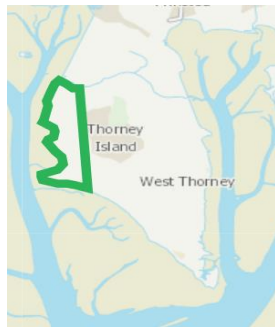
Welcome to the first edition of the Thorney Island Habitat Creation Scheme newsletter. On behalf of the Project Team, we hope you find this new style newsletter interesting and informative, keeping you up to date with current progress on the Project.

Project Background

In 2019 the Environment Agency (EA) in partnership with the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and Chichester Harbour Conservancy (CHC), came to together to explore developing a habitat creation scheme on Thorney Island to increase much needed intertidal habitat.

Saltmarsh within Chichester Harbour has been in rapid decline in recent years, due to climate change and sea level rise. Existing sea defences prevent the intertidal zone moving inland and saltmarsh is destroyed. This process is called coastal squeeze. Our project will provide compensatory habitat and secure the future of this important habitat within Chichester Harbour.

The Thorney Island Habitat Creation Scheme aims to realign the coast along the western edge of the Island and create a new robust flood defence further inland and along this western side, maintaining flood protection. This will then give us the ability to break open parts of the existing sea defence to allow sea water to slowly enter the land and create new intertidal habitat (saltmarsh and mudflats) over time. This change will bring significant benefits to the environment and wildlife, securing vital saltmarsh habitat within Chichester Harbour for future generations to enjoy.



Meet the Team

The Thorney Island Project Team have a wealth of experience between them and is made up of colleagues from the Environment Agency, JBA Consulting and Chichester Harbour Conservancy.



Thorney Island Project Team

Ground Investigation

In 2020 ground investigation results confirmed low but significant concentrations of the insecticide Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT) in sample points within the project area. Whilst the DDT levels found are safe and acceptable for current farming uses, the lack of UK regulation regarding safe levels of DDT when released into the marine environment have unfortunately slowed the pace of our project.

In order to address this issue, the Project Team have been working closely with several partners including globally recognised marine consultants and modellers, EA specialists, the MOD.....

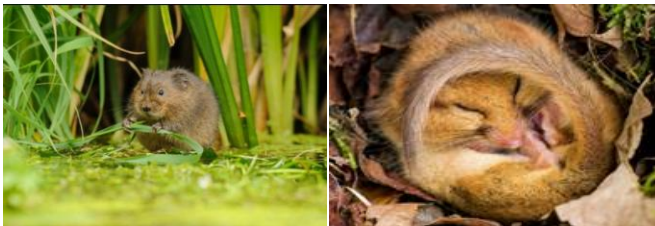
Ground Investigation cont....

Chichester Harbour Conservancy and Natural England to develop a comprehensive DDT risk assessment. This was to ensure that our project considers how to mitigate any risks identified.

We are nearing the end of this extensive three-year DDT research, investigation and modelling phase, to help us better understand the risks of DDT entering the marine environment and to identify ways to minimise these risks through several mitigation options. These options may include removal of soil and containment of contamination.

Ecology Surveys

We have been monitoring the project area to check if any protected species live in the existing habitat. Bat surveys detected a number of species on Thorney Island but have concluded, there are unlikely to be significant negative impacts on bat populations in the area. Soon we will focus on a long-term survey to check for water voles and Hazel Dormice.



Source: Water Vole, Wildlife Trust and Hazel Dormice, Woodland Trust

Stay in contact

The next edition of the newsletter will provide more information about the next steps for the habitat creation project. If you would like to be added to the monthly newsletter distribution list or have any questions, please email the address below. Or use the QR code to take you to the information page.



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[Thorney Island Habitat Creation Scheme Information Page - Environment Agency - Citizen Space \(environment-agency.gov.uk\)](#)

Other news

We have been working with the MOD to review how best to secure the future of Thorney Island in the face of climate change and rising sea levels. Following Storm Ciaran, the only access road onto Thorney Island was cut off due to a failed sea defence asset. This caused the MOD to undertake a full review of the sea defences around the Island. We continue to work closely with them to make sure the new defence we construct as part of our project aligns with the MOD's plans for the rest of the Island.

Spotlight on species

The Thorney Island Scheme will support and benefit numerous habitats and wildlife in the area, to raise awareness of this we will be highlighting a different species each month. This month it is the Oystercatcher, it is a widespread breeding bird in northern England and Scotland but in southern England and Wales they are restricted to the coast. The Oystercatcher is our only wading bird that is black and white with an orange beak.



Source: RSPB Two Oystercatchers walking down large ridge rock

