

Marine Conservation Zone: Selection Assessment Document

| Version and Issue date | Amendments made |
|------------------------|--|
| V1.0 31.8.11 | Draft final recommendations refined by the RSG and Local Groups in July 2011 and finalised by the RSG 2/3 August 2011. |

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Site name Abbots Hall Farm recommended Reference Area no. 23 | 3. Site surface area 280ha 2.80km ² |
| 2. Site centre location ETRS89 N51 47' 24.070" E0 51' 1.965" N51 47.401' E0 51.033' (N.B. WGS 84 UTM 31N coordinates are provided in the map vertices) | 4. Biogeographic region Southern North Sea |

5. Features identified for specific protection within the Abbots Hall Farm rRA ¹

| Feature type | Feature name | No. of records ² |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Species FOCI Low | Lagoon Sea Slug (<i>T.Adspersa</i>) | 1 record |

6. Other features occurring within the Abbots Hall Farm rRA (to be protected)
 None

7. Map of site (see below)

8. Site summary

This rRA lies at the top of Salcott Creek within rMCZ 3, Blackwater, Colne, Roach and Crouch Estuaries, and comprises the coastal marshes of Abbots Hall Nature Reserve, at Abbots Hall Farm, headquarters of the Essex Wildlife Trust, seawards as far as the Mean Low Water Mark. It is one of two records for the Lagoon Sea Slug (*Tenellia adspersa*) within this rMCZ, which is the only location within the Balanced Seas project area where this species is found. Surveys by the Essex Wildlife Trust confirmed the presence of this species at Abbots Hall Farm and Howlands Marsh Nature Reserves, the latter situated near St Osyth, north of Colne Point (Wilson and Wilson, 1999; 2001). Precise distribution data have yet to be confirmed as the geographical co-ordinates for the few scarce records of this species are lacking, but geo-referenced spatial data was provided for the Abbot's Hall Farm record by Essex Wildlife Trust.

The Reserve covers a 25 km stretch of the Blackwater Estuary. The Essex Wildlife Trust has worked with the Environment Agency to conduct managed realignment of the coastline, breaching the seawall and creating coastal marshes. The record at Abbots Hall Farm is over 10 years old, dating back to before the sea walls around the farm were breached. The species has typically been found in the borrow dykes behind seawalls, and the RSG recommend further survey work to confirm the species presence before designation.

9. Detailed site description

Please see detailed site description for rMCZ 3.

10. Site boundary

The boundaries run landward of the coastal marshes at Abbots Hall Farm seawards as far as the Mean Low Water Mark.

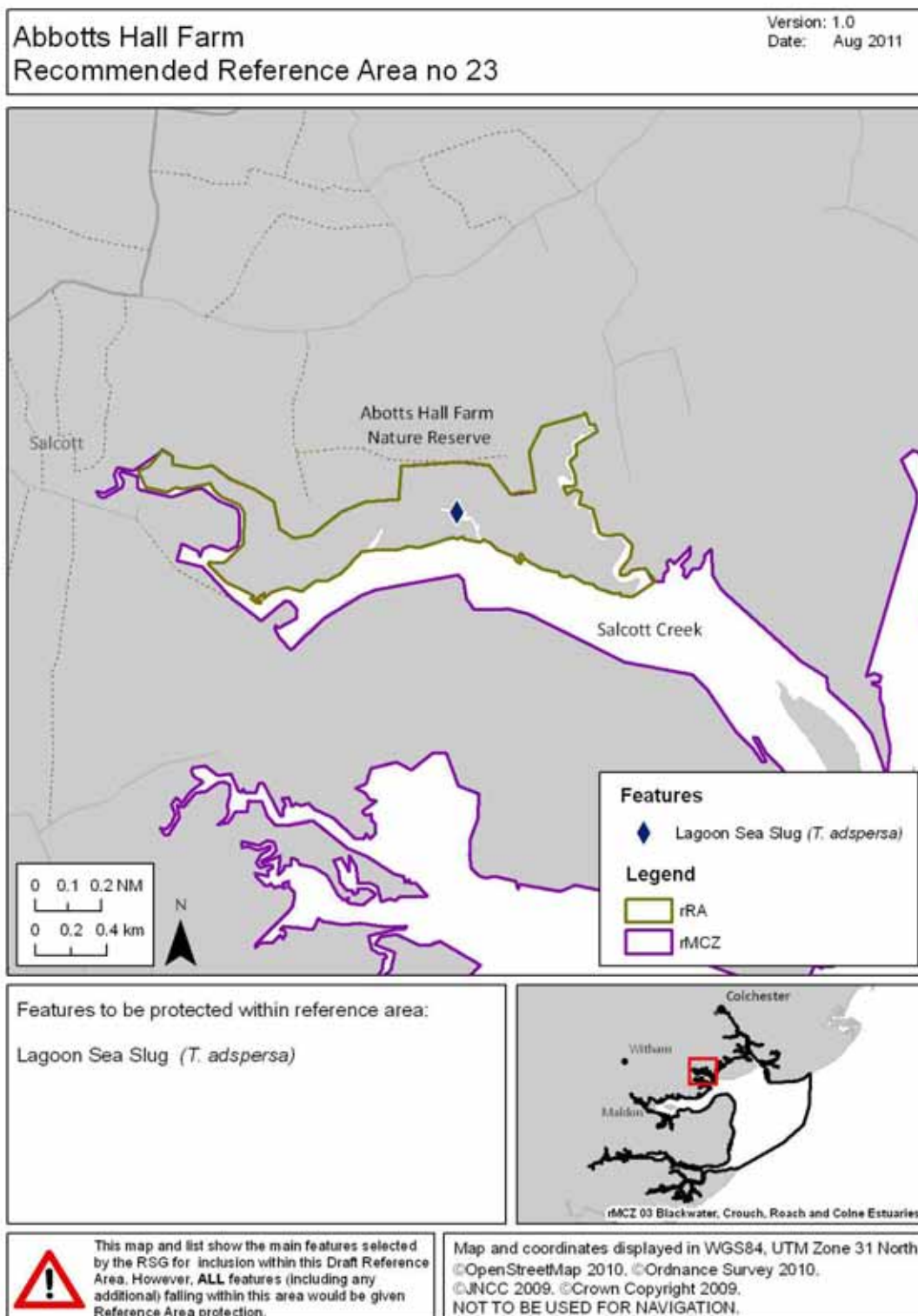
¹ Sources of information relating to these features are listed in Section 13.

² A "record" is a survey point where a single individual, population or habitat has been found.

Abbots Hall Farm rRA no 23

11. Conservation objectives

Individual conservation objective forms for each feature can be found in Appendix 1. In selecting the reference areas, stakeholders have identified specific features that merit reference area protection. ALL features in a reference area will, by default, have a Conservation Objective of "RECOVER to Reference Condition."



Abbots Hall Farm rRA no 23

12. Sites to which this site is related

This rRA is in or adjacent to the Blackwater Estuary SSSI and the Essex Estuaries SAC.

13. Supporting documentation (information relating to ENG features only)

| Information | Type of information | Source | Name of survey | No of points | Dates |
|--|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------|-------|
| All broad scale habitats | Modelled data | UKSeaMap/MESH v7 | Combined | n/a | 2011 |
| Lagoon Sea Slug (<i>Tenellia adspersa</i>) | Survey | Essex Wildlife Trust | Abbott's Hall Farm | 1 | 2011 |

References

Please refer to the references in the site description of rMCZ 3.

14. Stakeholder support for the site

The Local Group support this site as long as the boundaries are kept within the Nature Reserve and not extended out into the channel. The RSG as a group reached consensus that this site should be put forward in their final recommendations recommending that a survey be completed to ascertain the occurrence and distribution of the feature.

Individual sectors wishing to note their support or concerns about the site recorded the following at the final RSG meeting in August 2011; their comments have been transcribed verbatim from the form that they completed:

| SECTOR | ORGANISATION | COMMENT for rRA 23 Abbots Hall Farm |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Yachting | RYA | Requires new boundaries and new survey to establish presence and location of lagoon sea slug before consideration for designation. |
| Kite surfing | BKSA | Support - however again a need for survey. |
| Sea Angling | | Again more evidence is required for support. |
| Fisheries | Local Fisheries Representatives | Grave concerns generally because of the total numbers of RA and dMCZ all around island. Support is difficult to achieve. |
| Fisheries –static gear | NUTFA | Broadly agree. |
| Fishing over 10s | Gilson &Co | You can not please all. |
| Birds | RSPB | Support - subject to information from Essex Wildlife Trust on feature. |
| Wildlife Trusts | Hampshire Wildlife Trust | Support this |
| Statutory | Environment Agency | Support as sea defences have been re-aligned here. |
| Marine Wildlife | Marine Conservation Society | Support |
| IFCA | Kent & Essex | Site should only cover Essex WT site not adjoining Salcott Creek where there is commercial oyster fishery. |

15. Evolution of the site recommendations

Initially rRA 1 Colne Point was identified as a potential reference area for Lagoon Sea Slug (*Tenellia adspersa*) as project data showed records near here. These records turned out to be incorrectly mapped, as the species typically occurs behind the sea walls in the borrow dykes. The Essex Wildlife Trust provided spatial data for known occurrences at Abbots Hall Farm instead. An initial boundary was drawn around the intertidal area of the Nature Reserve extending out into the mid channel. Subsequently the boundary of the site was adjusted to include the boundary of the farm only in response to objections from several sectors of the Local Group whose activities would be impacted if the site extended into the channel.

For greater detail on discussions relating to the site and the network, please refer to both RSG and Local Group stakeholder meeting reports at www.balancedseas.org.

16. Implications for Stakeholders

The following issues are associated with this site:

- The Nature Reserve is privately owned by Essex Wildlife Trust and therefore general access is restricted. Any impacts are to be determined.

This list represents only the major issues associated with the site. To see all stakeholder discussions, please refer to the Balanced Seas RSG and Local Group meeting reports at www.balancedseas.org.