

What are we telling you about?

This year has seen a significant loss of mudflats along the north bank of the Thames estuary in Essex.

Where is this happening?

The greatest impact of this can be seen at Leigh on Sea, Chalkwell and Thorpe Bay, Southend.

When?

The erosion has been more noticeable during this year.

What is being done?

The reason for this erosion is being investigated by Southend Council and the Environment Agency, with the support of DP World London Gateway and the Kent & Essex Inland Fisheries & Conservation Authority (IFCA).

DP World London Gateway undertakes very extensive and detailed monitoring of the estuary to establish any impact of the deepening of the navigation channel that is required for the new London Gateway Port development. This includes monitoring the quality of the river water and the sediments, and any changes to the level of the inter-tidal areas.

Kent & Essex IFCA manages the cockle and fish populations of the estuary and ensures that the commercial fishery industry operates in a sustainable manner.

Why?

Mudflats are a very important feature of the fringes of the Thames estuary and provide valuable habitat for a wide range of species including burrowing animals and insects, crustacians such as cockles, and internationally important wading birds.

In addition, mudflats protect the underlying coarser aggregate which, in turn, supports the coastal defences along this part of the estuary.

How will this benefit you?

This investigation could help to explain the reason for the loss in mudflats and may suggest a course of action that might prevent a worsening of the situation and, possibly, a restoration of this valuable habitat.

What should you do and how can you get involved?

We would welcome information as to when the mudflats started to decrease to see whether it coincided with any particular event, such as the rather uncharacteristic weather conditions that have occurred over recent months.

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