

LANCASHIRE  
HISTORIC LANDSCAPE  
CHARACTER TYPE

SALTMARSH

Definition:

**Saltmarsh** has been important for grazing since the medieval period if not earlier. Much saltmarsh has been reclaimed through drainage in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> to mid-19<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, through failure and redundancy of these schemes **Saltmarsh** has been increasing in area and new areas have been established for the benefit of wildlife. Many of the larger saltmarshes are located along the rivers Lune and Ribble.

Typical historical and archaeological components

Evidence for human intervention within the **Saltmarsh** HLC type includes the boundaries of internal subdivision and sea defences at the interface of the type, usually with either **Sand and Mudflats** or wholly reclaimed land. Such boundaries may comprise ditches or fences, but more usually take the form of marker posts and stones. Otherwise archaeological components are related to relic land uses and may include ruined sea walls and lines of stakes marking successive retreats of sea defences, landing jetties, tide mills, abandoned and buried boats, a railway line and, at Middleton, the remains of a WWII bombing range.

Enhancing and safeguarding the type

- *Conserve* the historic pattern of coastal reclamation, giving priority to active and then relict sea dykes and defences.
- *Improve* interpretation of the historic dimension of what is commonly perceived to be a 'natural' landscape, in particular the story of land reclamation and saltmarsh management. Any opportunities for interpretation will need to be compatible with the issues of sustainable tourism and their impact upon the wildlife and nature conservation interest.
- *Assess* the impact of coastal protection measures and any other coastal developments that could affect the Saltmarsh HLC type – such consideration should be incorporated within management plans, the Joint Structure Plan and district Local Plans.
- *Develop* opportunities for joint management and monitoring projects in partnership with the regional offices of the Countryside Agency, the Environment Agency and English Nature.
- *Integrate*, with other coastal HLC types (**Sand and Mudflats, Dunes, Coastal Rough Ground**), the attributes and historic landscape of the **Saltmarsh** into Shoreline Management Plans.
- **Saltmarsh** clearly has a positive role in terms of broader coastal management. In some areas the construction of 20<sup>th</sup> century sea walls without saltmarsh in front contrasts and potentially conflicts with the general character of the surrounding historic landscape. A softer option would be for the maintenance of an earthwork sea-bank behind a periodically flooded saltmarsh, which may be historically and ecologically more desirable. Elsewhere the issue of managed retreat would necessarily involve the potential to create more saltmarsh.