

03 July 2019

Our ref: RFI 4673



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Dear Brodie

Access to Information Request – Request No RFI 4673

Thank you for your request for information about the management of Sea Buckthorn at Seacroft near Skegness, which we received on 30 May 2019 and extended on 26 June 2019. Your request has been carefully considered under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 ("EIR's").

Sea Buckthorn has a negative impact upon dune vegetation community, therefore, when suitable it is eradicated but this is costly work to complete and can have an impact on other vegetation communities. So clearance has to be well targeted to ensure that the full dune community will flourish once again.

Sea Buckthorn is also protected under European Site Designations so a balance has to be stricken between dunes demonstrating the various growth stages of Sea Buckthorn whilst ensuring it doesn't become dominant and over power other dune species.

I have provided the information you have requested under each of your questions set out below for clarity. You specifically asked for:-

1. How often is removal of Sea Buckthorn taking place over the ten year period?

A one off major removal was first carried out to control areas of dominance. Then every year after that for a period of 3-5 years chemical treatment of re-growth was completed.

Additional information is provided in the literature references below regarding the expansion/colonisation of Sea Buckthorn.

The Sea Buckthorn habitats on the East Coast appear to behave differently from other parts of Europe e.g. Holland. There the shrub is limited by a number of edaphic and biological factors which allow bushes to exist in a mosaic of dune grassland without forming dense, tall monocultures typical of the Lincolnshire coast.

2. What areas in particular are being managed, and is removal occurring on the foredunes, dune scrub or woodland? What area would be best for me to investigate?

Seacroft received a scrub removal in c.2004. Gibraltar Point Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust (LWT) land received several targeted treatments at Measure's 40 Acres and the LWT are best placed to provide further information on the management they carried out. Land managed by East Lindsey District Council (ELDC) received major treatment in 2014/15 and again ELDC are best place to provide information on this. Areas of interest are sections where shrub re-growth can be controlled (esp. between sections of dunes with pathways or around zones of intertidal inundation)

3. What evidence is there so far that it has been successful?

The evidence is in how well the grassland community regrows in the targeted treatment areas (before/after assessments) and whether or not the Sea Buckthorn has all growth phases where this is the aim of the management.

4. What negative effects (such as damage or disruption) will the removal of invasive buckthorn have?

Uncertainty over the duration of the disposal of soil nutrient. Where soil has been removed there is the chance of a weed issue arising especially noxious weeds. Various protected species may be disrupted.

As corresponded to you previously Delphine Suty has reviewed the following sources of other information that may be useful in your studies and these can be made available to you at Natural England's Lincoln office (not all are available in electronic copies but where possible links have been provided below):

- *No. 82 National Sand Dune Survey – Site report No. 41 Skegness to Sutton On Sea;*
- *North Lincolnshire Coast NVC Survey of Coastal Habitat;*
- [Survey and analysis of vegetation and hydrological change in English dune slack habitats;](#)
- *TEP NVC Survey Gibraltar Point 2008;*
- *Ecological Assessment Hippophae rhamnoides 2002;*
- *Sand dune survey of Great Britain no. 91 'Toby Hill' Saltfleet';*
- *Other literature research should include [Tom Dargie;](#)*
- [Designated Sites Views – Natural England;](#)
- [European Site Conservation Objectives for Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes & Gibraltar Point SAC \(UK0030270\);](#)
- *Mapping [Magic](#) SSSI boundaries, agri-environment evidence present and historic;*
- [JNCC – 2160 Dunes with Hippophae rhamnoides – Sea Buckthorn;](#)

I hope the information provided above answers your specific questions and the links/offer of additional sources of information provide sufficient detail for you to be able to complete your geography assignment.

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If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. As you may be aware, under the legislation should you have any concerns with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to make a complaint or request a review of our decision, please email me at foi@naturalengland.org.uk and I will arrange for a review to take place. Under Regulation 11(2) this needs to be done no later than 40 working days after the date of this letter.

If you are not content with the outcome of that complaint or the internal review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the internal review procedure provided by Natural England.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Telephone: 0303 123 1113 (local rate), www.ico.org.uk

Yours sincerely

Kate Donovan, Adviser – Access to Information
Legal & Governance Team