

Why do we need a code of conduct?

Our aim is to reduce disturbance to birds and wildlife on the Stour and Orwell estuaries. Every autumn over 40,000 wildfowl and wading birds make an incredible journey to reach vital feeding and roosting areas on the Stour and Orwell estuaries. The estuaries are a critical winter sanctuary.

The estuaries are very popular for recreation and industry and some disturbance is inevitable, but your actions can make a real difference!

You are asked to follow these guidelines in order to:

- Ensure that wildlife is protected
- Ensure that there is enough bait for everyone
- Enable others to carry on work and leisure activities.



Following the code means better bait digging and more food for the birds. The seasonal closure of specified areas, shown in red and orange on the map, will allow for the worms breeding season between the 1st of November and the 30th of April.



The estuaries are protected by international legislation under which all organisations, including the ports, operate.

We all have a moral and legal duty to ensure we do not harm these areas. Please help us to look after these special estuaries!

For any information regarding the voluntary code please call Trazar Astley-Reid, Suffolk Estuaries Officer 01394 384948 trazar.astley-reid@suffolk.gov.uk

The Crown Estate Tel No. 01206 505707

Ipswich Borough Council Wildlife Ranger Team
01473 433993 country.park@ipswich.gov.uk

Voluntary code of conduct

Please do not dig or allow dogs to chase birds, particularly in sustained harsh weather conditions.

Be a responsible bait digger

- Between the months of November and April, please only dig in areas **shown in green on the map**
- Please fill in any holes that you dig, to help the mudflats recover and reduce the risk of people falling in
- Reduce disturbance on birds and other wildlife by not wandering across large areas of mudflat
- Leave enough worms in the mud to recolonise the area
- Follow bye-laws which apply to the shore, and respect private land ownership
- Commercial diggers need the permission of the landowner to dig bait. The landowners are The Crown Estate on the Stour estuary and Ipswich Borough Council on the Orwell estuary

Be a responsible dog owner

- Please do not let your dog chase birds
- Please clean up after your dog
- Be aware some people are scared of dogs

Be a responsible boat owner

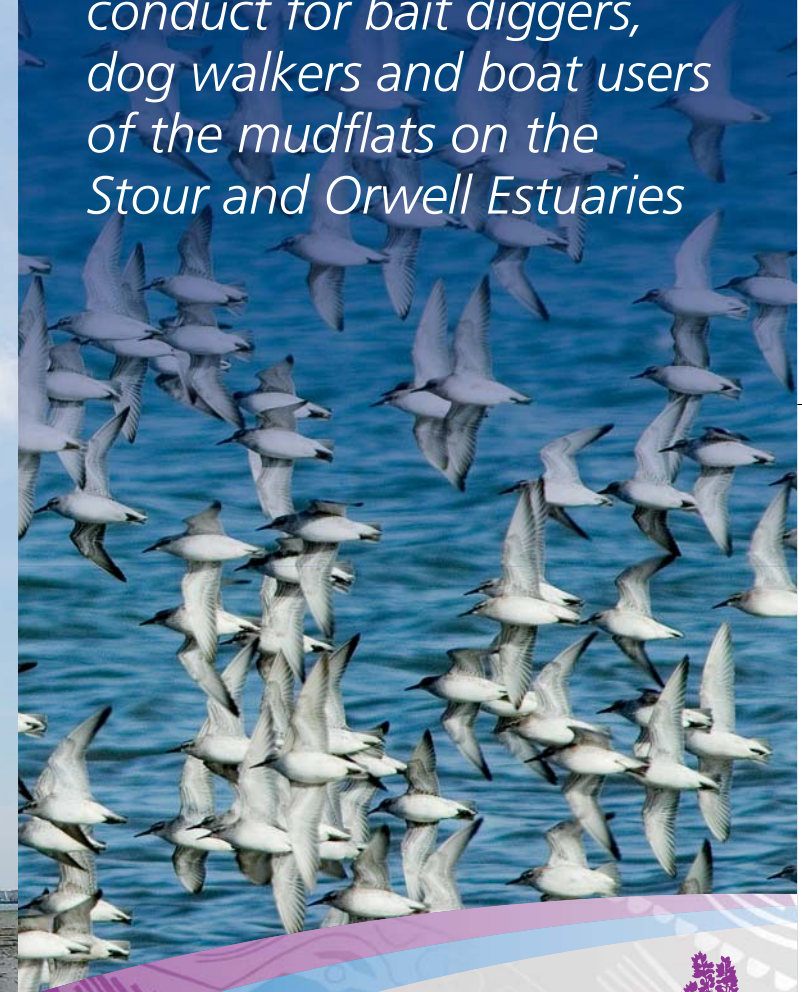
- Please do not drive vehicles onto the foreshore
- Please do not leave or drag your boats over saltmarsh; this is a fragile habitat
- Please keep to the speed limits; this reduces bird disturbance and limits erosion of the shore caused by your wake

If you go onto the mudflats, be aware of the risks!

- Check the tide timetable first
- The risk of drowning or getting stuck is real. Let others know your whereabouts and keep in contact

Looking after our estuaries

A voluntary code of conduct for bait diggers, dog walkers and boat users of the mudflats on the Stour and Orwell Estuaries



Permitted bait digging areas in green November 1st to 30th April

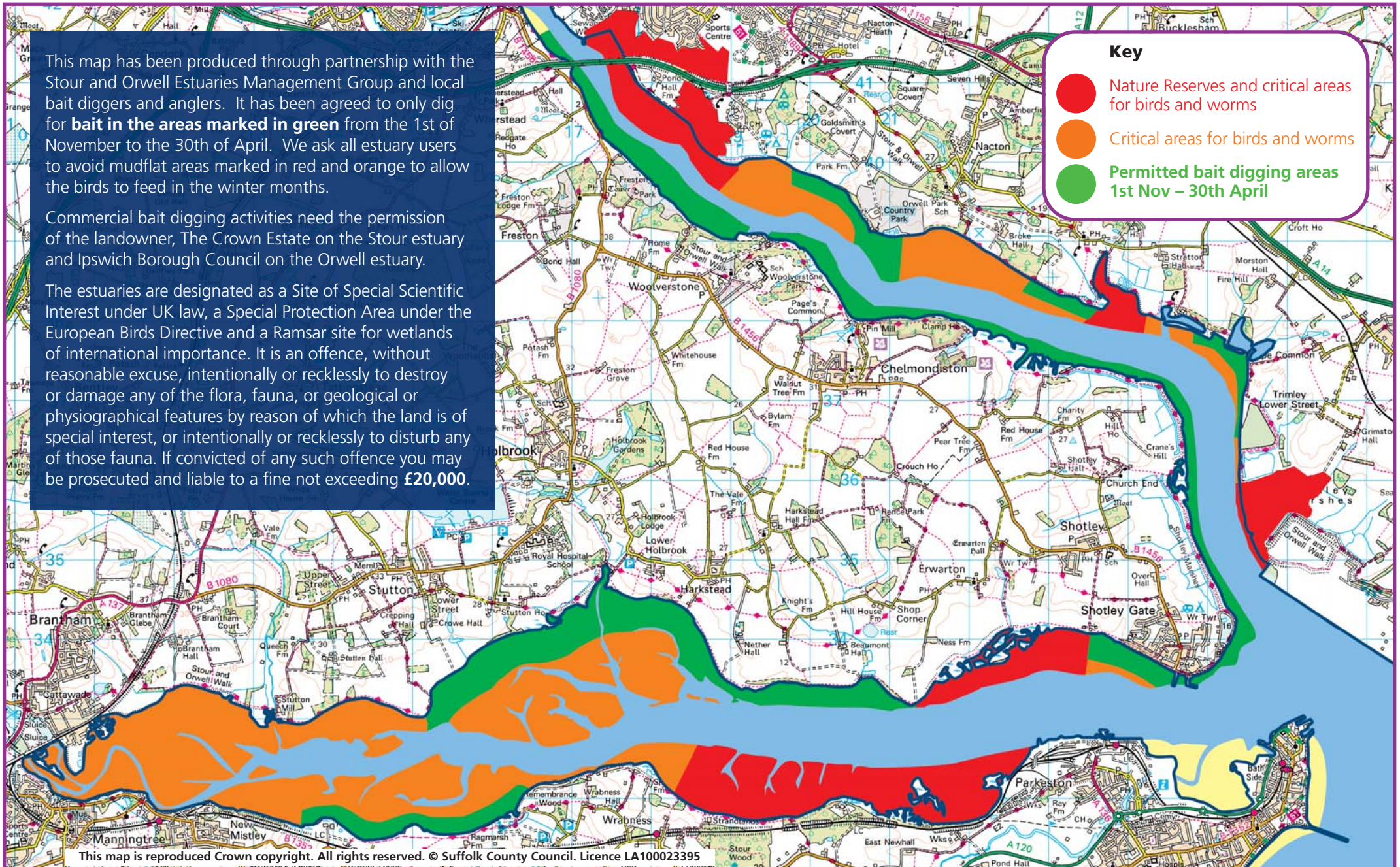
This map has been produced through partnership with the Stour and Orwell Estuaries Management Group and local bait diggers and anglers. It has been agreed to only dig for **bait in the areas marked in green** from the 1st of November to the 30th of April. We ask all estuary users to avoid mudflat areas marked in red and orange to allow the birds to feed in the winter months.

Commercial bait digging activities need the permission of the landowner, The Crown Estate on the Stour estuary and Ipswich Borough Council on the Orwell estuary.

The estuaries are designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest under UK law, a Special Protection Area under the European Birds Directive and a Ramsar site for wetlands of international importance. It is an offence, without reasonable excuse, intentionally or recklessly to destroy or damage any of the flora, fauna, or geological or physiographical features by reason of which the land is of special interest, or intentionally or recklessly to disturb any of those fauna. If convicted of any such offence you may be prosecuted and liable to a fine not exceeding **£20,000**.

Key

- Nature Reserves and critical areas for birds and worms
- Critical areas for birds and worms
- Permitted bait digging areas 1st Nov – 30th April



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