

# Bawdsey Quay

on the Deben Estuary

in the Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Welcome to Bawdsey Quay at the mouth of the River Deben. There has been a ferry crossing here to Old Felixstowe for hundreds of years, including two steam chain ferries that carried vehicles as well as people from 1894 to 1931.

The Martello Tower you can see across the river from here, is one of many still standing on the Suffolk coast. They were built between 1810-12 to repel any Napoleonic invasion.



## Bawdsey Manor

Bawdsey Manor stands in wooded grounds behind you. Sir Cuthbert Quilter began building it in 1873 and it took over 18 years to complete. The Quilter family sold the Manor to the Air Ministry in 1936. Following the development of radar here, the site became the first operational RAF Radar Station in 1936/37. Without radar in 1940 the Battle of Britain would have been lost and maybe World War II. RAF Bawdsey closed in 1991 and Bawdsey Manor is now an outdoor educational centre.



The Deben Estuary is designated as a 'Special Protection Area' because of the important species and numbers of birds that breed or overwinter here, such as the Dark bellied Brent Goose, Avocet, Shelduck and Redshank. The mouth of the estuary is protected by distinctive shifting banks of shingle called the Knolls.



The estuary contains 40% of Suffolk's saltmarshes (areas of coastal grassland that are regularly flooded by seawater) and a wide range of vegetation able to survive in salty water. Saltmarsh can absorb carbon as well as acting as a natural sea defence – absorbing wave energy and helping to protect river walls.

Seals are occasionally seen in the river. Marsh harriers nest in the reeds and hunt for food over the fields and saltmarsh. The estuary area is a very valuable feeding station for birds on migration in spring



Marsh Harrier

The coast along this stretch is dynamic and ever changing. Going north, towards Shingle Street, the Bawdsey cliffs are a Site of Special Scientific Interest due to the geological importance of exposed Gelasian Red Crag (early Pleistocene).

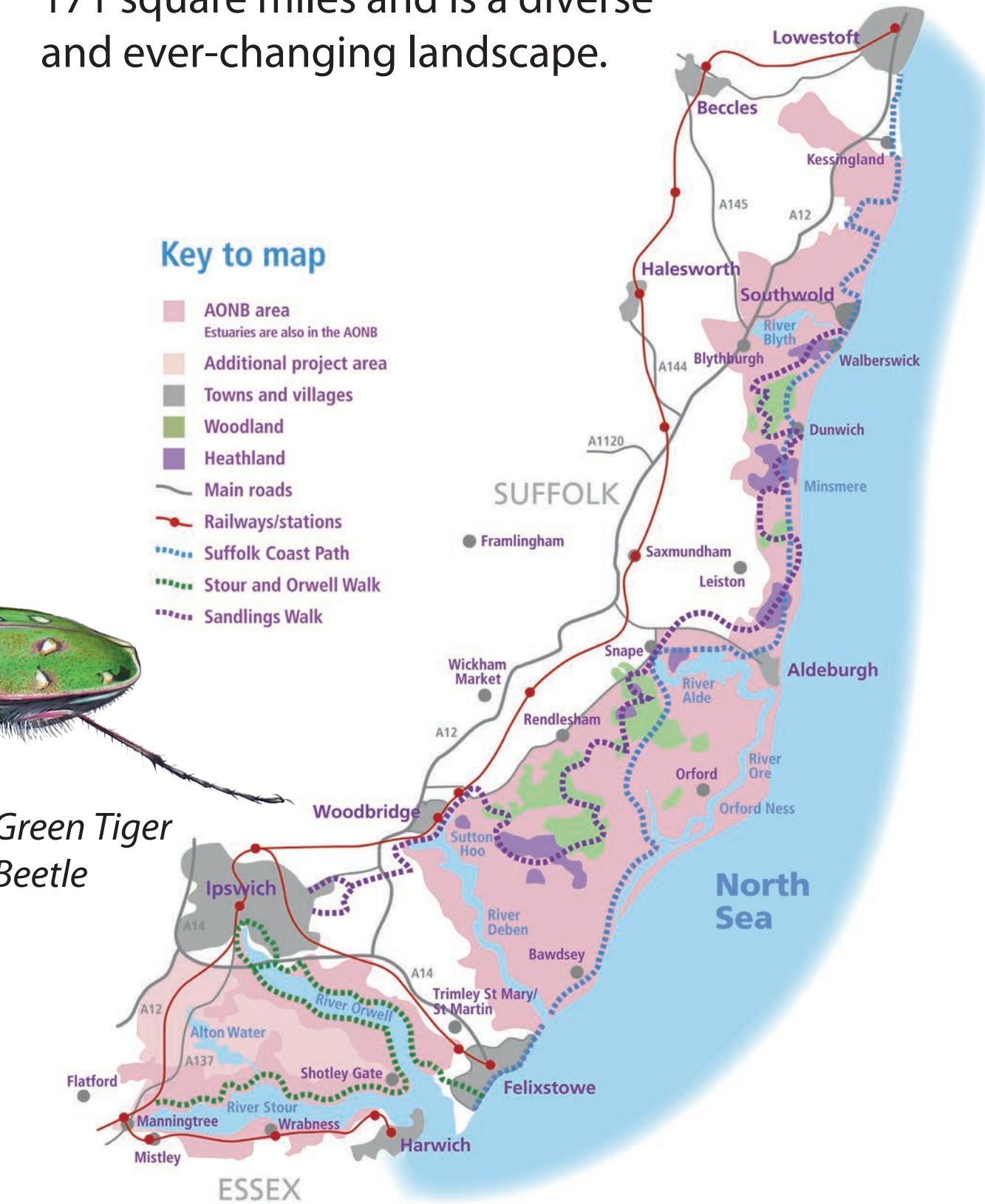
The area was designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1970 with the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty seen in wildlife and habitats of the special heathlands, woodlands, estuaries and coast.

The Coast & Heaths AONB originally stretched from Kessingland in the north of Suffolk, along the coast and south to Shotley. In 2020, in an historic decision, the AONB boundary was extended to include the Stour Estuary and associated areas in the north east of Essex.

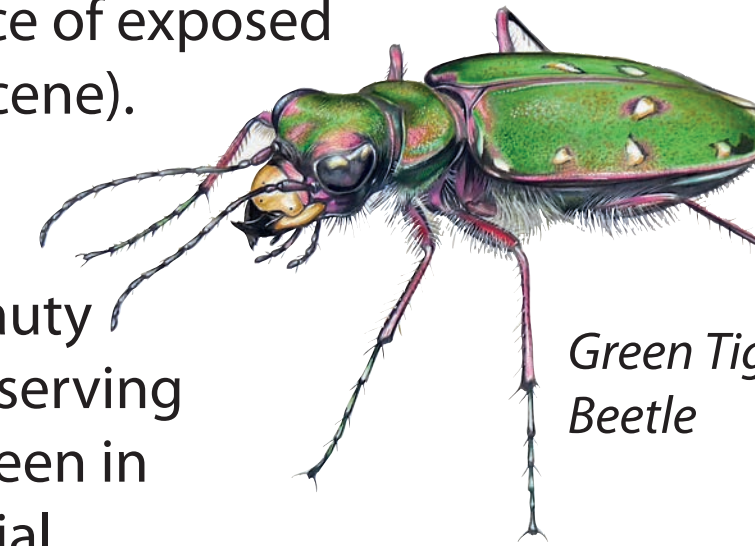
Bawdsey Quay Car Park and Picnic Area is owned by East Suffolk Council



This special designation now covers an area of 171 square miles and is a diverse and ever-changing landscape.



Green Tiger Beetle



Please help us keep this area special by taking litter home, keeping dogs on leads and walking on designated paths. Thank you.

This information board has been funded by the Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Sustainable Development Fund





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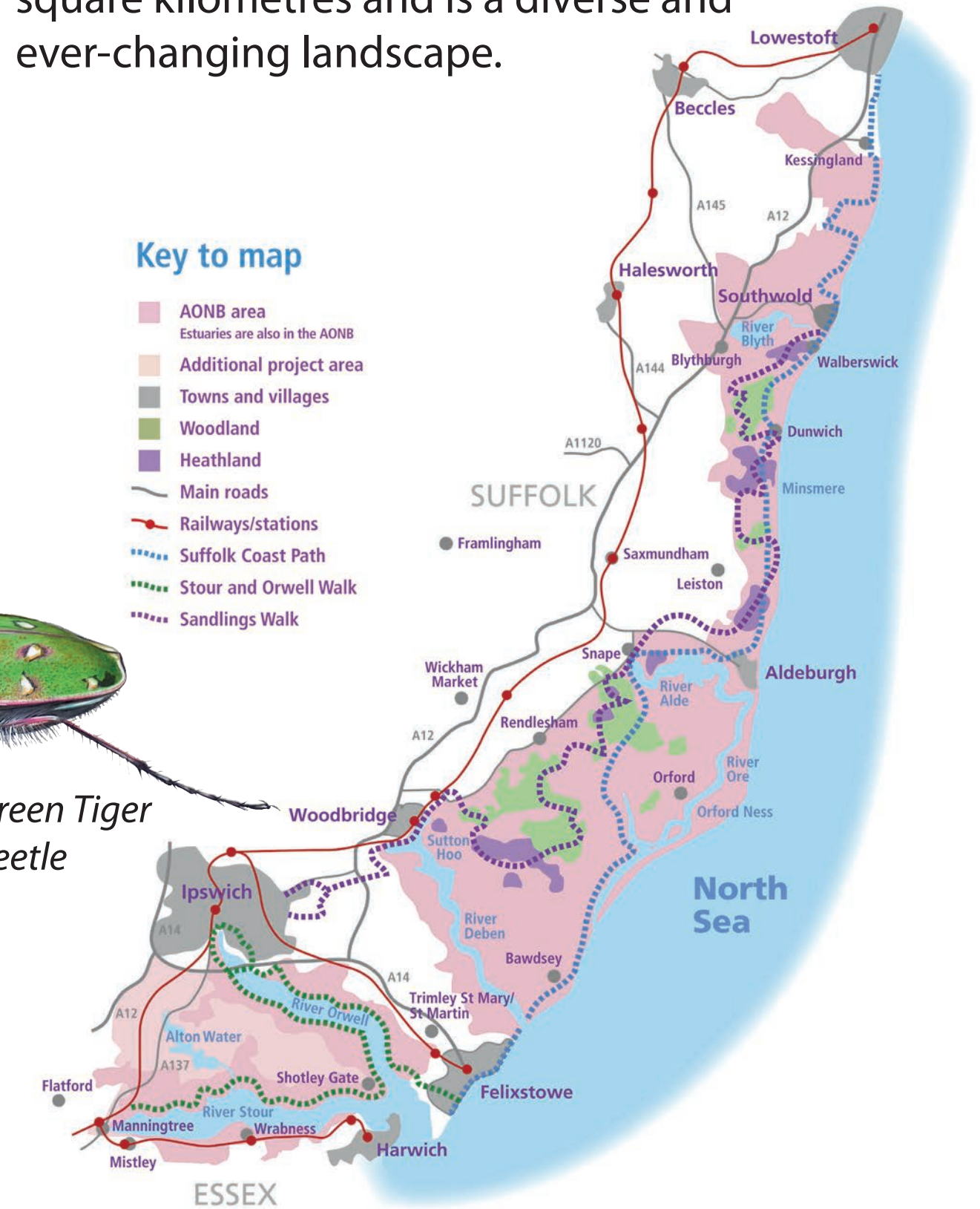
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### Key to map

- AONB area
- Estuaries are also in the AONB
- Additional project area
- Towns and villages
- Woodland
- Heathland
- Main roads
- Railways/stations
- Suffolk Coast Path
- Stour and Orwell Walk
- Sandlings Walk



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