

Escalating Coastal Erosion

The combination of intense easterly gales with continuing offshore dredging, resulting in beach sand stripping, coupled with the severe cuts in the sea defence funding and people pressure on the marrams, have resulted in a critical loss of our once naturally protective Norfolk and Suffolk dune frontage. As a consequence a high risk factor is now presented to properties and people now much closer to the sea.

Numerous sea facing areas and properties have now become very vulnerable to high tides, a few of which may be seen in the following photographs taken by Mike King and Pat Gowen and also kindly provided to us gratis by aerial photographer Mike Page.



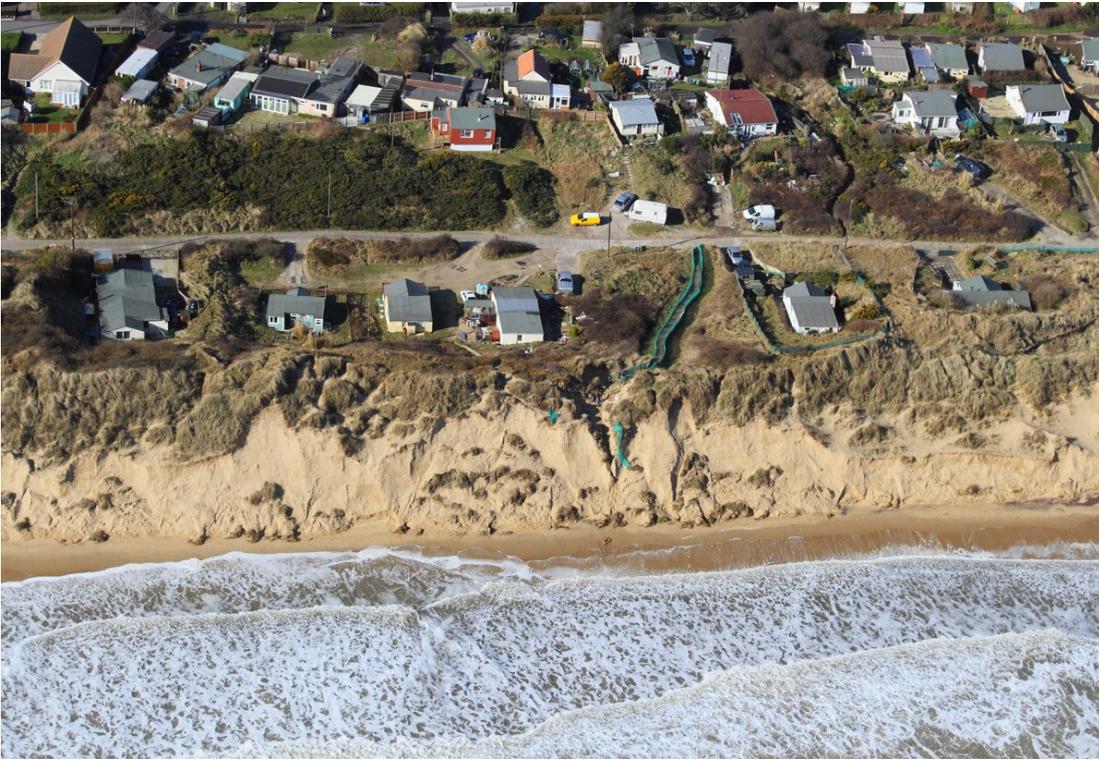
Above, the Caister Lifeboat housing, now left with a sheer three metre drop to the sand stripped beach.

Below, what remains of the Hemsby ILB launch ramp, where the huge concrete blocks and heavy ex-railway sleepers forming the slope have been undermined and tossed aside by wave power.



Below, the remains of the Hopton Beach, its access steps left dangling in the air since the beach was stripped of most of its sand. Access is currently impossible.





Above are some of the bungalows now 'on the edge' at Hemsby South Marrams (South of Hemsby Gap) People are living in them full time (!) The dune face will fall to a 40-45 degree slope over the next month placing them even more 'on the edge' if not over it.



Above, the threatened bungalows at Hemsby North Marrams to the north of Hemsby Gap. The second bungalow from the left, that closest to the rapidly eroding dune front is Pat Gowen's G3IOR/A summer residence.

This photo below shows the 1945 WWII V2 crater once over 100 metres back from the dune edge. It formed a delightful sun-trap out of the wind for day trippers. Now the sea is about to break through to flood the entirety of the Great Winterton Valley. Once the beach itself, this accreted forming a quadruple high dune frontage until three years following the commencement of commercial scale offshore aggregate dredging when erosion first commenced.



All along the coast from Caister to Winterton-on-Sea, a favourite walk for many, the dune face is now cut back to a 5 - 6 metre high vertical, impossible to climb. If a freak wave or sudden sea rise suddenly results, there is no escape from the beach and a high likelihood of being covered by sand if one attempts to scramble up the dune face.

This will eventually destabilise as it dries out to reform a 40 – 45 degree slope, until the next major high tide with high waves further erodes the base to reform another vertical dune front set further back.

The picture below, mid way between Hemsby Gap and Winterton shows the face there beginning to slip.



Pat Gowen, G3IOR. 25 March 2013