

# EC Directive 791409 on the Conservation of Wild Birds: Special Protection Area

## North Norfolk Coast (Norfolk)

The site qualifies under Article 4(1) by supporting up to 4500 pairs of sandwich terns *Sterna sandvicensis* (12% of the EC breeding population and one-third of the British breeding population), up to 1000 pairs of common terns *Sterna hirundo* (3% of the EC and 9% of the British breeding populations) and up to 400 pairs of little terns *Sterna albifrons* (9% of the, EC and 20% of the British breeding populations). The site qualifies also under Article 4(1) by supporting nationally important numbers of bitterns *Botaurus stellaris* (about 10% of the British breeding population), marsh harriers *Circus aeruginosus* (about 30%), Montagu's harrier *Circus pygargus*, and avocets *Recurvirostra avosetta* (about. 30%). Smaller proportions of the national breeding populations of other species listed on Annex 1 of the Directive, arctic tern *Sterna paradisaea*, kingfisher *Algedo atthis* and short-eared owl *Asio flammeus* are also supported.

The site qualifies under Article 4(2) as an internationally important wetland, regularly supporting, in winter, over 10,000 wildfowl (average over 20,000) and internationally important numbers of the following waterfowl species: 9000 dark-bellied Brent geese *Branta bernicla bernicla* (7,% of the European wintering population), 6000 pink-footed-geese *Anser brachyrhynchus* (6%), 6000 knot *Calidris canutus* (2%) and 5600 wigeon *Anas penelope* (1%). Nationally important wintering numbers of the following species are also supported: 270 European white-fronted geese *Anser albifrons albifrons* (4% of the British wintering population), 450 pintails *Anas acuta* (2%), 2600 shelducks *Tadorna tadorna* (1%), 500 grey plovers *Pluvialis squatarola* (2%), 400 ringed plovers *Charadrius hiaticula* (2%), 5000 oyster catchers *Haematopus ostralegus* (2%) and 800 redshanks *Tringa totanus* (1%). In addition, many of the huge wader flocks which feed in The Wash regularly use the western parts of this site as a safe high-water roost. The site supports also nationally important breeding populations of rare species, including gadwall *Anas strepera*, shoveler *Anas clypeata*, garganey *Anas querquedula*, black-tailed godwit *Limosa limosa*, bearded tit *Panurus biarmicus* and parrot crossbill *Loxia pytyopsittacus*.

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Signed..........  
on behalf of the Secretary of State for the Environment