

EC Directive 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds Special Protection Area (SPA)

Name: Falmouth Bay to St Austell Bay Special Protection Area (SPA)

Counties/Unitary Authorities: The SPA covers the area below mean high water between Nare Point and east of Gribbin Head, including intertidal parts of the Helford River and Fal complex. Its marine extension lies entirely in UK territorial waters meaning the entirety of the site is within or adjacent to the county of Cornwall.

Boundary of the SPA: See SPA map. The landward boundary of the SPA is set at Mean High Water, except for where the intertidal branches of the Fal complex do not support interest features; here the boundary spans the river or creek at its widest extent. The seaward boundary traces the 41 m depth contour of the seabed, meaning it extends approximately between 2.5 and 11 km from the landward boundary into the marine environment. The entire site is approximately bounded by Nare Point in the west and Gribbin Head in the east.

Size of SPA: The SPA covers an area of 258, 98 hectares.

Site description: Falmouth Bay to St Austell Bay SPA is on the south coast of Cornwall, covering the marine environment incorporating five shallow, sandy bays; Falmouth Bay, Gerrans Bay, Veryan Bay, Mevagissey Bay and St Austell Bay. It also includes Carrick Roads, an estuarine area which meets the sea between Falmouth and St Mawes, and part of the tidal Helford River. The river complex areas are part of a ria system, typified by steep sides and slow tidal currents, with subtidal rocky shores and exposed intertidal mud on creeks and river branches. The diversity of marine habitats is reflected in existing statutory protected area designations, some of which overlap or abut the SPA.

Qualifying species: The site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Directive (2009/147/EC) as it is used regularly by 1% or more of the Great Britain population of the following species listed in Annex I in any season:

Species	Count (period)	% of subspecies or population (pairs)	Interest type
Black-throated diver <i>Gavia arctica</i>	115 – wintering (2009/10 – 2010/11) ¹	20.5% Great Britain ²	Annex I
Great northern diver <i>Gavia immer</i>	74 individuals – wintering (2009/10 – 2010/11) ⁵	3.0% Great Britain ⁶	Annex I
Slavonian grebe <i>Podiceps auritus</i>	15 individuals – wintering (2007/08 – 2011/12) ³	1.4% Great Britain ⁶	Annex I

¹ O'Brien, S.H., Win, I., Parsons, M., Allcock, Z. & Reid, J.B. (2014). *The numbers and distribution of inshore waterbirds along the south Cornwall coast during winter*. JNCC Report No. 498.

² Great Britain population cited in: Musgrove, A.J., Austin, G.E., Hearn, R.D., Holt, C.A., Stroud, D.A. & Wotton, S.R. (2011). Overwinter population estimates of British waterbirds. *British Birds* 104, 364-397

³ Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) <http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/webs>