

Special Protection Area (SPA) Citation

EC Directive 79/409 on the Conservation of Wild Birds Special Protection Area (SPA)

Name: Northumberland Marine SPA

Counties/Unitary Authorities: Northumberland, North Tyneside

Boundary of the SPA:

The landward boundary of the SPA covers the coastline from Scremerston near Berwick-Upon-Tweed in the north to Blyth in the south. Along this stretch of coast the boundary will follow the Mean High Water mark except around the existing Coquet Island SPA and Farne Islands SPA where the boundary will be defined by the Mean Low Water mark so as to abut the existing boundaries of those 2 SPAs where terns are already features. The seaward boundary extends up to 18 km out to sea on the basis of an analysis which identified areas of sea with the characteristics typical of areas used most heavily for foraging by breeding terns at existing colonies.

Size of SPA: The SPA covers an area of 88,498.35 ha.

Site description:

Northumberland Marine SPA is located on the Northumberland coast between Blyth and Berwick-Upon-Tweed. The coastal parts of the site consist of sandy bays separated by rocky headlands backed by dunes or soft and hard cliffs. There are extensive areas of inter-tidal rocky reef, long sandy beaches at Beadnell, Embleton and Druridge Bay and extensive sand and mud flats at Budle Bay and Fenham Flats at Lindisfarne. Discrete areas of intertidal mudflats and estuarine channels are also included where the site extends into the Aln, Coquet, Wansbeck and Blyth estuaries. The open coast habitats extend into the subtidal zone, where large shallow inlets and bays and extensive rocky reefs are present. Further offshore, soft sediments predominate.

Qualifying species:

The site qualifies under **Article 4** of the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) for the following reasons (summarised in Table 1):

- The site regularly supports more than 1% of the Great Britain breeding populations of five species listed in Annex I of the EC Birds Directive. Therefore the site qualifies for SPA Classification in accordance with the UK SPA selection guidelines (stage 1.1).
- The site regularly supports more than 1% of the biogeographical population of two regularly occurring migratory species not listed in Annex I of the EC Birds Directive. Therefore the site qualifies for SPA Classification in accordance with the UK SPA selection guidelines (stage 1.2).

Table 1 Summary of qualifying ornithological interest species in Northumberland Marine SPA

Species	Count (period)	% of subspecies or population	Interest type
Sandwich tern <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>	4,324 individuals (2010-2014) ¹	19.66% of GB population ⁵	Annex 1
Common tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i>	2,572 individuals (2010-2014) ¹	12.86% of GB population ⁵	Annex 1

Arctic tern <i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	9,564 individuals (2010-2014) ¹	9.02% of GB population ⁵	Annex 1
Roseate tern <i>Sterna dougallii</i>	160 individuals (2010-2014) ²	93.02% of GB population ⁵	Annex 1
Little tern <i>Sternula albifrons</i>	90 individuals (2010-2014) ²	2.37% of GB population ⁵	Annex 1
Puffin <i>Fratercula arctica</i>	108,484 individuals (2008-2013) ^{1,3}	1.05% of biogeographic population ⁶	Regularly occurring migratory species
Guillemot <i>Uria aalge</i>	65,751 individuals (2010-2014) ^{1,4}	1.72% of biogeographic population ⁷	Regularly occurring migratory species

Seabirds that undertake maintenance and/or foraging behaviour within Northumberland Marine SPA include those that breed at existing SPAs in Northumberland. Specifically these are; Lindisfarne, Northumbria Coast, Farne Islands and Coquet Island SPAs. Accordingly the numbers listed in the table above are summed across the relevant site specific population estimates.

¹ Data from: Seabird Monitoring Programme (SMP) and colony managers (Pairs multiplied by 2 to arrive at breeding adults; this rule applies to all species listed within the table, with the exception of guillemot.)

² Data from: Directly from colony managers (Pairs multiplied by 2 to arrive at breeding adults; this rule applies to all species listed within the table, with the exception of guillemot.)

³ Results of puffin censuses from the Seabird Monitoring Programme (SMP)

⁴ Guillemots are counted as "individuals on land"; this is multiplied by a correction factor of 0.67 (Harris 1989) to translate to breeding pairs and multiplied by 2 to yield an estimate of the number of breeding adult individuals.

⁵ GB breeding populations derived from Musgrove *et al.* (2013)

⁶ Biogeographic populations of 5,176,257 pairs (10,352,514 breeding individuals) derived from UK SPA and Ramsar Scientific Working Group (2014) paper: *International Population Estimates for some seabird species*. Figure derived in line with Mitchell *et al.* 2004 on the basis that puffins which used to be considered to be of the race *Fratercula arctica grabae* are now combined with those of the nominate race of *F.a.arctica* and a biogeographic population estimate derived by summing birds breeding in: France, GB, Isle of Man and Channel Islands, All-Ireland, all of Norway, Iceland and Russia (but excluding birds listed as *F.a.arctica* in Mitchell *et al.* (2004) and breeding in Canada, USA and Greenland.

⁷ Birds breeding at the Farne Islands and hence included within the Northumberland Marine pSPA are assumed to belong to the nominate race of *Uria aalge aalge* in line with UK SPA and Ramsar Scientific Working Group (2014) paper: *International Population Estimates for some seabird species* in which a population midpoint estimate of 1,909,417 pairs (rounded to 3,820,000 individuals) is given.

Assemblage qualification:

The site qualifies under **article 4.2** of the Directive (2009/147/EC) as it used regularly by over 20,000 seabirds in any season:

During the breeding season (2010-2014), the area supports 214,669 individual seabirds including: great cormorant (230 breeding adults), European shag (1,677 breeding adults), black-headed gull (8,745 breeding adults) and black-legged kittiwake (8,667 breeding adults), all of which are present in nationally important numbers (1.37%, 3.11%, 3.36% and 1.17% of the UK populations respectively) and therefore are named as key assemblage components.

Principal bird data sources:

Colony counts from JNCC Seabird Monitoring Programme contributed by colony managers: Natural England (Lindisfarne SPA), National Trust (Northumbria Coast and Farne Islands SPA) and RSPB (Coquet Island SPA), supplemented by most up to date counts in some instances from those colony managers.

Other data sources can be found in the Northumberland Marine SPA Departmental Brief https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/492864/northumberl-and-departmental-brief.pdf