

# Marine consultation summary document for Poole Harbour potential Special Protection Area (pSPA)

---

## Contents

1. Purpose of this document .....	2
2. Site maps .....	2
3. Natural England’s proposal for Poole Harbour as a potential Special Protection Area .....	2
4. Site summary .....	2
5. Summary of potential economic impacts .....	3
6. How to respond .....	4
7. Confidentiality .....	4
8. Use of maps .....	4

## **1. Purpose of this document**

This document provides guidance to stakeholders for the formal consultation on Poole Harbour potential Special Protection Area (pSPA).

### **It explains:**

- Natural England's proposal
- the background information which is helpful in understanding Natural England's proposal
- how to respond

## **2. Site maps**

Available to view on the consultation page

## **3. Natural England's proposal for Poole Harbour as a potential Special Protection Area**

Terrestrial and inter-tidal areas down to mean low water (MLW) around Poole Harbour were classified as an SPA under the European Union's Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (the Birds Directive) in 1999. The UK Government has an ongoing obligation under the Birds Directive to "classify in particular the most suitable territories in number and size as Special Protection Areas for the conservation of these species in the geographical sea and land area where this Directive applies".

Natural England is responsible for recommending potential SPAs in English waters (out to 12 nautical miles) to Defra for classification. As part of that recommendation, Natural England, upon reviewing information from the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), breeding seabird data and distribution and abundance data for waterbirds in Poole Harbour, have identified additional areas and species that need to be considered for protection. The recommendations developed so far propose an extension to Poole Harbour SPA, which will include sub-tidal and inter-tidal areas not currently encompassed in the existing SPA and the addition of three species which now meet the relevant criteria: Sandwich tern, spoonbill and little egret.

The site summary and the potential economic impacts summary provide the background information to support the proposal.

The departmental brief provides the full scientific rationale for the proposal.

## **4. Site summary**

Poole Harbour SPA occupies 2,313 hectares of intertidal area of the harbour, including around Brownsea Island. The area has lagoonal characteristics and supports saltmarshes and reed-beds. The north side is largely urbanised while the south and west areas abut Dorset Heaths SPA where valley mire and heath habitats exist. Grazing marsh along the river valleys also contribute to supporting the overwintering waterbirds.

Poole Harbour, both above and below MLW, is used by a large number of seabirds and waterbirds for foraging and roosting throughout the year (including common tern, black-tailed godwit, and birds that form part of the overwintering waterbird assemblage, such as red-breasted merganser *Mergus serrator* and goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*).

The recommendations developed so far propose an extension to Poole Harbour SPA, which will include sub-tidal and inter-tidal areas not currently encompassed in the existing SPA.

The seaward boundary will be at the harbour mouth, abutting the boundary of the proposed Greater Solent and Dorset Coast SPA for foraging terns. This new boundary will also include a landward extension to include an additional area of land now subject to saline inundation that supports large numbers of qualifying species, including little egret, common shelduck, pied avocet, and birds that form part of the overwintering waterbird assemblage

In addition to the features of the current SPA the extended SPA will also include the addition of sandwich tern, little egret, and spoonbill which now meet qualifying thresholds and occur in internationally important breeding and overwintering numbers.

## **5. Summary of potential economic impacts**

A preliminary assessment of the potential economic impacts of classifying the Poole Harbour pSPA has been completed. This concluded that the additional costs imposed by the site's re-classification were relatively low as:

- The extension of the site covers important foraging areas for a large number of seabirds and waterbirds for foraging and roosting (including common tern, sandwich tern, black-tailed godwit and birds that form part of the overwintering waterbird assemblage, such as red-breasted merganser and goldeneye). As these birds are already associated with existing SPAs they are already afforded a degree of protection.
- No new management measures are needed within the existing SPA because the ecological requirements of the species being added to the pSPA (e.g. Sandwich tern, little egret and spoonbill) are the same for those species already protected by the existing designation.

The potential costs that can be attributed directly to the re-classification of the site are those required for additional site monitoring. Based on similar monitoring, it has been estimated that Natural England will need to spend an additional £10,000 every 6 years to assess and report on the condition of the site. No other significant costs have been identified.

The estimated costs of classifying the Poole Harbour pSPA are too low to trigger a requirement for Natural England to produce a full socio-economic impact assessment.

## 6. How to respond

This consultation runs for 13 weeks from 21<sup>st</sup> January to 21<sup>st</sup> April 2016 and is run in accordance with the government consultation principles.

- Read the departmental brief - setting out the scientific case for the pSPA

You may also find it useful to read:

- [Establishing marine Special Protection Areas \(TIN120\)](#)

Use these documents to help with your response. Submit your response by completing the survey on the consultation page.

Results from the consultation will be submitted as a report to the Secretary of State for the Environment (SoS). The SoS will decide if this site is suitable for designation as a European Marine Site and make a recommendation to the European Commission.

If you don't have access to the Internet, please contact us for copies of the documents you need.

## 7. Confidentiality

Using and sharing your consultation response

Natural England will publish a summary of all responses on GOV.UK. It will include a list of names of organisations that responded to the consultation but not the names, addresses or other contact details of individual respondents. See Natural England's [personal information charter](#) on how your information is handled.

If you don't want your response - including your name, contact details and any other personal information - publicly available, explain clearly why you regard the information you have provided as confidential.

Natural England will acknowledge your explanation, but can't give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances, such as a request for release of information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not be regarded as binding on Natural England.

## 8. Use of maps

Natural England has provided maps which show the complete boundary and additional maps where necessary to support the explanations given for the boundary locations.

Maps which accompany the site summary should ideally be printed on A3 paper. If you don't have this facility:

- print the relevant chapter text
- view the associated map on your computer screen, using the zoom tool to view it at a suitable size