

Marine consultation summary document for Northumberland Marine potential Special Protection Area (pSPA)

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1. Purpose of this document

This document provides guidance to stakeholders for the formal consultation on the Northumberland Marine pSPA and amendment of the associated existing terrestrial SPAs (Farne Islands SPA, Coquet Island SPA and Northumbria Coast SPA).

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 Northumberland Marine as a potential SPA

The proposal is to create a new marine pSPA off the Northumberland coast to protect the foraging waters used by breeding seabirds including common, Sandwich, Arctic, little and roseate tern. The site will also protect the waters used for maintenance activities by auks (namely Atlantic puffin and common guillemot) around the Farne Islands and Coquet Island. Additional features will also be added to the Northumbria Coast SPA, Coquet Island SPA and the Farne Islands SPAs.

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

The Northumberland Marine pSPA is proposed to protect important areas for breeding seabirds and auk species when they are foraging or performing maintenance behaviours (such as preening, bathing and sleeping) in the marine waters around the existing terrestrial SPAs: Coquet Island, Farne Islands, Lindisfarne and the Northumbria Coast.

The Northumberland Marine site qualifies for selection as an SPA for roseate tern, little tern, common tern, Arctic tern and Sandwich tern and a breeding seabird assemblage. The boundary of the pSPA will cover an area from Scremerston, near Berwick-Upon-Tweed, in the north to Blyth in the south. It will have a landward boundary up to the Mean High Water except around the existing SPAs of the Farne Islands and Coquet Island, where the landward boundary will be defined by the Mean Low Water Mark. The boundary will also include a 1 km seaward extension around Coquet Island and the Farne Islands to protect the maintenance behaviours of auk species; specifically Atlantic puffin and common guillemot.

Alongside the classification of the Northumberland Marine pSPA it is proposed that the associated, existing SPAs will be amended at the same time to include additional features identified by a review of the seabird population. Whilst their boundaries will remain the same the following features will be added:

- Coquet Island SPA – An internationally important seabird assemblage of over 20,000 individuals
- Farne Islands SPA – Common guillemot and internationally important seabird assemblage of over 20,000 individuals
- Northumbria Coast SPA – Arctic tern.

5. Summary of potential economic impacts

A summary of the potential economic impacts predicted should the site become a marine protected area is provided below. A full version of this assessment is available on request.

Cost to authorities

- The total cost to authorities has been calculated at £80,000 over the next 10 years.
- The majority of money has been allocated to fund a monitoring programme looking at the impacts of recreational activities and fisheries by-catch on SPA features to determine if any further management measures are required.
- An improved Code of Conduct to help minimise the impacts of recreational activities may need to be developed and is dependent on the outcome of the disturbance monitoring.
- A site monitoring programme may be required every 6 years.

Competent authorities will be responsible for:

- Conducting a targeted study of incidental bycatch and effects of recreational disturbance in the SPA and managing the site accordingly.
- Developing of a Code of Conduct to cover the marine SPA waters.
- Developing a management plan with targets for management of the SPA
- Implementing this management plan, for example through agreements, working practices and training, including direct liaison with stakeholders.
- Establishing and carrying out a monitoring plan for periodic assessment.
- Review of the site in consultation with Natural England.
- Integration of the site into the revised approach for fisheries.

Additional costs may be incurred by ‘competent authorities’ and Natural England when reviewing outstanding permissions, consents and other existing activities, and undertaking assessment of future plans and projects.

Cost to industry

The only industry that may incur a cost impact as a result of this site is the fixed/drift net fishery. The risk and level of bycatch (where birds get caught in fishing nets leading to mortality) is unknown within the Northumberland Marine pSPA. The size of the risk posed by netting depends on many factors including:

- type of netting (e.g. colour or mesh size),
- location,
- frequency,
- seasonality,
- intensity of the fishing activity, and
- behaviour and distribution of the birds.

There is a need for a site-specific monitoring study to be carried out to investigate the incidence of bycatch on the interest features as a result of net fisheries within the pSPA.

Benefits of the pSPA

The site will provide benefits for:

- waterbirds,
- education,
- research,
- people who value conservation, and
- people who watch wildlife.

There are no socio-economic impacts for the existing terrestrial sites Coquet Island SPA, Farne Islands SPA and Northumbria Coast SPA. The boundaries of the existing SPA's will remain the same and therefore no new management is expected to be required for the additional SPA features as they have similar ecology to the existing features.

6. How to respond

This consultation runs for 13 weeks from 21st January 2016 to 21st 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, and
- view the associated map on your computer screen, using the zoom tool to view it at a suitable size.