

## **News**

### **[Launch of formal consultation of Outer Thames Estuary pSPA and Liverpool Bay/Bae Lerpwl pSPA](#)**

On 27 November, JNCC, Natural England and the Countryside Council for Wales began a formal consultation on two potential Special Protection Areas (along with 10 possible Special Areas of Conservation) in English, Welsh and offshore waters. The Outer Thames pSPA has been proposed because it holds up to 38% of the GB red-throated diver population in winter. Liverpool Bay/Bae Lerpwl pSPA holds up to 3.4% of north-west Europe's wintering common scoters and 5.4% of GB's wintering red-throated divers. More details, including how to respond to the consultation, are available [here](#).



### **Seabird Colony SPA Extensions**

On 25 September 2009, Scottish Government announced that 31 of Scotland's seabird breeding colony Special Protection Areas (SPAs) were to be extended to protect their adjacent marine habitats. The announcement followed a consultation on the SPA extensions, carried out on behalf of Scottish Government by SNH in summer 2008, which recommended the extensions based on work carried out by JNCC's Marine SPA team. The extensions go

out to 1, 2 or 4km, depending on which species are protected within the existing terrestrial SPA. Although there are already a number of coastal or island SPAs which have marine components, these are the first seabird SPAs in Scotland which extend below the mean low water springs mark.

### **Inshore aggregations of waterbirds**

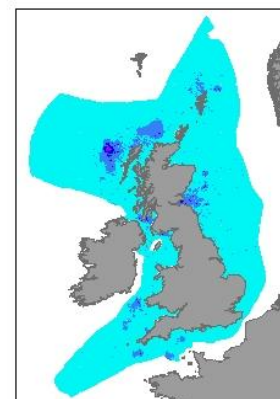
Spatial analyses of ten inshore areas around the UK which qualify for SPA status due to their important aggregations of waterbirds, are currently being carried out by Sue O'Brien, Chris Bingham and Ilka Win. The results of this work will be presented to the Country Agencies in the Spring for further discussion.

### **Tern data analysis underway**

Following a successful first summer field season of data collection on tern at-sea distributions, we have spent the autumn collating these data and carrying out preliminary analyses. The project involves integrating the tern distribution data, along with various oceanographic variables, into a model to assess which marine habitat features are important for terns, with a view to informing the identification of possible marine SPAs. As part of this work, Julie Black and Linda Wilson gave a seminar at the University of Aberdeen on 12 November, focussing specifically on the data analysis methods which provided useful discussion and feedback.

### **Identifying important seabird concentrations at sea**

Substantial progress is being made in determining important seabird concentrations at sea involving the analysis of the European Seabirds at Sea database. This strand of work is being led by Kerstin Kober and aims to identify areas at sea that may be suitable for classification as SPAs for various species of seabird. Progress with the work was discussed with the Country Agency Chief Scientists on 2 November, and a draft report on this work has been circulated to the country agencies, devolved administrations, RSPB and several academic peers for review.



## Winter survey work

Our annual winter survey programme of inshore areas continues, with aerial and shore based counts being planned for four areas; East and West Shetland mainland, selected areas of the Outer Hebrides; and part of the South Cornwall coast.

---

## Publications

### [Area of search maps for marine SPAs](#)

We have produced a series of maps which show our current areas of search for the different types of marine SPA. We hope that these will provide useful information to competent authorities such as the Department for Energy and Climate Change and the Crown Estate, as well as other marine stakeholders.



### [Assessment of Mull, Coll and Tiree for qualification as a marine SPA](#) and [Assessment of the Greater Thames for qualification as a marine SPA](#)

These reports describe and analyse data from aerial surveys and shore-based counts to aid the assessment of the areas as possible marine SPAs, as part of our work looking at important [inshore aggregations](#) of wintering seaduck

### [Generic guidelines for seaward extensions to existing fulmar colony SPAs](#)

This publication documents part of our seabird colony SPA marine extension work.

---

## Recent meetings / conferences

### **Forthcoming SNH seabird workshop**

Andy Webb and Kerstin Kober will be giving talks on our marine SPA work at the SNH workshop 'Seabirds - Reserves, Research and Renewables' on 29 January

### **Scottish Government / SNH / RSPB meeting**

Jim Reid attended a meeting with SNH, Scottish Government representatives from Marine Scotland, and RSPB in September and this will be followed up with a further meeting involving most of the Marine SPA team on 25 January to discuss our progress with and forward work plans for the marine SPA work in general.

### **Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC)**

Jim Reid and Linda Wilson, along with John Goold (Marine Director) and Lucy Greenhill & Sophy Allen (both JNCC Marine Advice Team) attended a meeting with DECC on 14 December to discuss the areas of search for the marine SPA work, and in particular those which may overlap with offshore renewable developments.

### **Aberdeen University**

Linda Wilson and Julie Black presented an informal discussion seminar on our tern habitat suitability modelling work at Aberdeen University on 12 November.

### **Chief Scientists Group**

Kerstin Kober and Jim Reid met with the Country Agency Chief Scientists on 2 November to discuss progress in identifying important seabird aggregations at sea.

### **MPA Technical Group and MPA Policy Group**

The first meeting of the MPA technical group (which has evolved from the [Marine Natura Project Group](#)) took place on 10 September 2009, where the Marine SPA team gave a summary of progress to date. The next meeting is scheduled for 18 February 2010. Jim Reid attended the MPA Policy Group meeting on the 7 December.

### **SPA Ramsar Scientific Working Group**

Jim Reid provided an update on the marine SPA work to this group on 20 October and may be attending the forthcoming meeting on 27 January.

---

***And finally...***

The Marine SPA team would like to send [Season's greetings](#) to you all and to wish you the very best for 2010!

**Photos:** Common guillemot (B Dean); Fulmar (N Golding)

**Map:** Gannet distribution during summer (K Kober, JNCC unpublished data)

**To unsubscribe from this e-newsletter, send an email with 'unsubscribe' in the subject heading to [marineSPA@jncc.gov.uk](mailto:marineSPA@jncc.gov.uk).**

The Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) is the statutory adviser to Government on UK and international nature conservation, on behalf of the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside, the Countryside Council for Wales, Natural England and Scottish Natural Heritage. Its work contributes to maintaining and enriching biological diversity, conserving geological features and sustaining natural systems. **For more information visit [www.jncc.gov.uk](http://www.jncc.gov.uk)**