

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

Name: Marazion Marsh

Unitary Authority/County: Cornwall

Consultation proposal: Marazion Marsh SSSI has been recommended as a Special Protection Area because of the site's European ornithological importance, notably for wintering Bitterns *Botaurus stellaris* and Aquatic Warblers *Acrocephalus paludicola* on autumn passage. The SPA boundary contains the majority of Marazion Marsh SSSI, with the exception of land owned by Railtrack plc. which has been excluded.

Site description: Marazion Marsh is located on the south coast of Cornwall to the east of Penzance at the head of Mounts Bay. The marsh is at the mouth of a wide coastal valley, separated from the sea by a shingle bar with fringing sand dunes. The marsh has developed over Mylor Beds of Lower Devonian age, now overlain by alluvial deposits and peat. Streams, pools and dense reedbed grade into dense willow carr, with some unimproved grassland and scrub on the drier margins. Plants include wavy-leaved St John's wort, yellow centaury and pillwort, while there is a strong assemblage of breeding dragonflies. The marsh is important for breeding, passage and wintering birds associated, in particular, with the extensive reedbed.

Size of SPA: The SPA covers an area of 54.58 ha.

Qualifying species:

The site qualifies under **article 4.1** of the Directive (79/409/EEC) as it is used regularly by 1% or more of the Great Britain populations of the following species listed in Annex I, in any season:

Annex I species	Count and Season	Period	% of GB population
Bittern <i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	2 individuals - wintering	5 year peak mean 1994/95 - 1998/99	2.0%
Aquatic Warbler <i>Acrocephalus paludicola</i>	6 individuals - passage	5 year mean 1994 - 1998	9.0%

Bird figures from: RSPB reserve staff

Non-qualifying species of interest: Spotted Crakes *Porzana porzana* occur in small numbers on passage whilst Kingfishers *Alcedo atthis* also use the site in non-qualifying numbers (both are Annex I species).

Status of SPA

Marazion Marsh was classified as a Special Protection Area on 10 August 2001.