

# Directive 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds Special Protection Area (SPA)

**Name:** Greater Wash SPA

**Counties/Unitary Authorities:** East Riding of Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Suffolk

## Boundary of the SPA:

The landward boundary of the SPA covers the coastline from Bridlington Bay in the north (at the village of Barmston), to the existing boundary of the Outer Thames Estuary SPA in the south. Along this stretch of coast, the boundary will come to Mean High Water (MHW). Across the mouth of the Humber Estuary, the boundary abuts the boundary of the Humber Estuary SPA, except where neither the little tern foraging zone or the red-throated diver Maximum Curvature Analysis (MCA) density threshold reaches the SPA. The landward boundary abuts the seaward boundary of The Wash SPA except where the former overlaps the latter to encompass the foraging area of Sandwich tern.

The seaward boundary lies approximately 14 nautical miles (nm) from the shore at its furthest extent and is driven by the distribution of red-throated diver along the length of the SPA, with a small length off the north Norfolk Coast driven by the area used by foraging Sandwich tern.

**Size of SPA:** The SPA covers an area of 353,578 ha or 3,536 km<sup>2</sup>.

## Site description:

The Greater Wash SPA is located in the mid-southern North Sea between Bridlington Bay in the north and the Outer Thames Estuary SPA in the south. To the north, off the Holderness coast in Yorkshire, seabed habitats primarily comprise coarse sediments, with occasional areas of sand, mud and mixed sediments. Subtidal sandbanks occur at the mouth of the Humber Estuary, primarily comprising sand and coarse sediments. Offshore, soft sediments dominate, with extensive areas of subtidal sandbanks off The Wash as well as north and east Norfolk coasts. Closer inshore at The Wash and north Norfolk coast, sediments comprise a mosaic of sand, muddy sand, mixed sediments and coarse sediments, as well as occasional Annex I reefs. The area off the Suffolk coast continues the mosaic habitats mostly dominated by soft sediment.

## Qualifying species:

The site qualifies under **Article 4.1** of the Directive 2009/147/EC by regularly supporting populations of national importance of the Annex I species:

Species	Count (period)	% of subspecies or population	SPA selection guideline
Red-throated diver <i>Gavia stellata</i>	1,407 individuals (MoP 2002/03 - 2005/06)	8.3% GB non-breeding population	1.1
Little gull <i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>	1,255 individuals (MoP 2004/05 –2005/06)	No current GB population estimate	1.4
Sandwich tern <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>	3,852 pairs (5 year MoP 2010-14)	35.0% of GB breeding population	1.1
Common tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i>	510 breeding pairs (5 year MoP 2010-2014)	5.1% of GB breeding	1.1
Little tern <i>Sternula albifrons</i>	798 pairs (5 year MoP 2009-2013)	42.0% of GB breeding population	1.1



In addition, the site qualifies under **Article 4.2** of the Directive 2009/147/EC by regularly supporting a population of international importance of the migratory species:

Species	Count (period)	% of subspecies or population	SPA selection guideline
Common scoter <i>Melanitta nigra</i>	3,449 individuals (MoP 2002/03, - 2007/08)	0.6% biogeographic population <sup>1</sup>	1.4

Mean of Peak (MoP) for non-breeding populations<sup>2</sup>, breeding populations taken from various sources and are summed across the relevant site-specific population estimates. GB populations derived from Musgrove *et al.* (2013)<sup>3</sup> unless otherwise stated.

#### Principal bird data sources:

##### Populations on non-breeding waterbirds from:

MoP non-breeding populations for red-throated diver, common scoter and little gull were calculated by Natural England using Area of Search (AoS) data reported by Lawson *et al.* 2015a (Appendix 4).

##### Colony counts for Sandwich and common tern from:

JNCC Seabird Monitoring Programme contributed by colony managers from: National Trust, Natural England (North Norfolk Coast SPA) and RSPB (Breydon Water SPA).

##### Colony counts for little tern from:

RSPB for EU LIFE+ Little Tern Recovery Project contributed by site managers from: Easington Little Tern Protection Scheme (Humber Estuary SPA); Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust (Gibraltar Point SPA); RSPB, National Trust, Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Natural England (North Norfolk Coast SPA); and RSPB (Great Yarmouth North Denes SPA).

#### Status of SPA:

Greater Wash SPA was classified under Directive 2009/147/EC on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2018

This citation relates to a site entered in the Register of European Sites for Great Britain.  
Register reference number: UK9020329  
Date of registration: 28 March 2018

Signed:



On behalf of the Secretary of State for Environment,  
Food and Rural Affairs

<sup>1</sup> Common scoter biogeographic population from Waterbird Population Estimates online database (<http://wpe.wetlands.org/>) accessed 26/01/2016)

<sup>2</sup> MoP (Mean of Peaks) non-breeding populations for red-throated diver, common scoter and little gull were calculated by Natural England using AoS data reported by Lawson *et al.* 2015 (<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-7104>).

<sup>3</sup> Musgrove *et al.* (2013) collates population estimates of birds in Great Britain and the UK, by extrapolation of previous estimates using recognised trend measures, new surveys and novel analytical approaches (<https://www.britishbirds.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/APEP3.pdf>).