

**EC Directive 79/409 on the Conservation of Wild Birds
Citation for Potential changes to Special Protection Area (SPA)**

Name: Skokholm and Skomer

Counties/Unitary Authorities: The SPA and potential extension lie within or adjacent to Pembrokeshire Unitary Authority and the landward area sits within Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. The seaward part of the proposed site sits entirely within UK territorial waters.

Boundary of the potential SPA: See potential SPA map. The proposed site extends almost to the 3 nautical mile limit with most of the site lying within the 1 nautical mile limit. Although the entire SPA sits within the Pembrokeshire Marine / Sir Benfro Forol Special Area of Conservation (SAC), only that area of the potential SPA below mean high water mark is co-incident with the SAC, which was designated by the National Assembly for Wales in December 2004 under the 1992 EC Habitats and Species Directive (92/43/EEC).

It is not intended to include any additional land areas within the potential SPA, other than a small number of very small rock outcrops that lie within the 4km radius. It would not be practical to exclude these tiny areas from the proposed extension to the SPA.

The new site includes the existing terrestrial areas designated as Skokholm and Skomer SPA by the Secretary of State for the Environment in August 1982, and as extended in 1991 under the 1979 EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC).

Size of SPA: The existing site and the potential SPA combined cover an area of 14,348ha approximately.

Site description: These islands are located off the extreme south-west tip of Pembrokeshire in south-west Wales and support internationally important numbers of breeding seabirds, particularly petrels, gulls and auks. Especially notable is the high proportion, well over half, of the world population of Manx shearwater that breed here. The coastal habitats of the potential SPA also support important resident populations of chough and short-eared owl. Many of the seabirds use the sea around the islands for a number of essential activities such as preening, bathing and displaying. The nesting seabirds using the site also feed both within and outside the SPA in surrounding marine areas, as well as more distantly.

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 population of the following species listed in Annex I, in any season:

Annex I species	Count and season	Period	% of GB population
Storm petrel <i>Hydrobates pelagicus</i> (breeding)	3500 pairs	count as at 1995	4.1%
Chough <i>Pyrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i> (breeding)	4 pairs	count as at late 1990s	1.2%
Short-eared owl <i>Asio flammeus</i> (breeding)	6 pairs	count as at 1998	0.6%*

*Short-eared owl qualifies as an Annex 1 Species under the JNCC, UK Selection Guidelines for SPAs

The site also qualifies under **article 4.2** of the Directive (79/409/EEC) as it is used regularly by 1% or more of the GB or biogeographical population of the following regularly occurring migratory species (other than those listed in Annex I) in any season:

Migratory species	Count and season	Period	% of subspecies or population
Manx shearwater <i>Puffinus puffinus</i> (breeding)	150,968 pairs	count, as at late 1990s	56.9% of the global breeding population
Puffin <i>Fratercula arctica</i> (breeding)	9500 pairs	count as at mid 1980s	1.1% of the global breeding population
Lesser black-backed gull <i>Larus fuscus</i> (breeding)	20,300 pairs	4 year mean 1993-1997	16.4% of the breeding biogeographic region population

Assemblage qualification: The site qualifies under **article 4.2** of the Directive (79/409/EEC) as it is used regularly by over 20,000 waterbirds in any season.

In the breeding season the site regularly supports at least 394,260 individual seabirds including razorbill *Alca torda*, guillemot *Uria aalge*, kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*, puffin *Fratercula arctica*, lesser black-backed gull *Larus fuscus*, Manx shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*, storm petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*

DATA: The 2001 SPA Review (Stroud *et al.*, 2001) updated the earlier assessment of UK SPAs, published in 1992, in view of new information and possible gaps. The UK Government requested the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) to review the UK SPA network and to recommend a definitive list of sites, identified against explicit selection guidelines. This established a baseline throughout the UK

against which the need for future change can be assessed. The data quoted above are taken from this 2001 review, which was based on the most current and comprehensive data that was available at the commencement of the review. They provide a comparative assessment and a fixed baseline, even though more recent data have since become available.

Principal bird data sources:

BROOKE, M. 1990. **The Manx shearwater**. T & AD Poyser, Academic Press Ltd. London.

JOHNSTON, C.M., TURNBULL, C.G., REID, J.B. & WEBB, A. 2004. **Marine Natura 2000: Update on Progress in Marine Natura**. Paper to the Joint Committee Meeting, March 2004.

MCSORLEY, C.A., DEAN, B.J., WEBB, A. & REID, J.B. 2003. **Seabird use of waters adjacent to colonies: Implications for seaward extensions to existing seabird breeding colony SPAs**. JNCC Report, No. 329

MCSORLEY, C.A., WILSON L.J., DUNN, T.E., GRAY, C., DEAN, B.J., WEBB, A. & REID, J.B. 2008. **Manx shearwater *Puffinus puffinus* evening rafting behaviour around colonies on Skomer, Rum and Bardsey: its spatial extent and implications for recommending seaward boundary extensions to existing colony Special Protection Areas in the UK**. JNCC Report No. 406.

REID, J.B. & WEBB, A. 2005. **Marine Natura 2000 – Recommendations for the extension of existing seabird (colony) Special Protection Areas into the marine environment**. JNCC Committee paper 05 P14B.

STROUD, D.A., CHAMBERS, D., COOK, S., BUXTON, N., FRASER, B., CLEMENT, P., LEWIS, I., MCLEAN, I., BAKER, H. & WHITEHEAD, S. 2001. **The UK SPA network: its scope and content**. JNCC, Peterborough.
Volume 1: Rationale for the selection of sites. 90 pp.
Volume 2: Species accounts. 438 pp.
Volume 3: Site accounts. 392 pp.