

EAST COAST MARINE - SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA (SPA)

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CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

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V1	April 2015	Draft document	IE	CO for proposed SPA

Site relationship

To fully understand the site conservation requirements for this site it may be necessary to also refer to other site Conservation Objectives

The boundary adjoins the following existing Special Protection Areas –

Larne Lough SPA
Belfast Lough SPA
Outer Ards SPA
Copeland Islands SPA
Strangford Lough SPA

It also subsumes the existing Belfast Lough Open Water SPA

The boundary also adjoins the following existing Ramsar sites –

Larne Lough Ramsar
Belfast Lough Ramsar
Outer Ards Ramsar
Strangford Lough Ramsar

See also [Boundary Rationale](#)

1. INTRODUCTION

EU Member States have a clear responsibility under the Habitats and Birds Directives¹ to ensure that all habitats and species of Community Interest are maintained or restored to Favourable Conservation Status (FCS). Natura 2000 sites have a crucial role to play in achieving this overall objective since they are the most important core sites for these species and habitats. Each site must therefore be managed in a way that ensures it contributes as effectively as possible to helping the species and habitats for which it has been designated reach a favourable conservation status within the EU.

To ensure that each Natura 2000 site contributes fully to reaching this overall target of FCS, it is important to set clear conservation objectives for each individual site. These should define the desired state, within that particular site, of each of the species and habitat types for which the site was designated.

Once a site has been included in the Natura 2000 network, Member States are required to implement, on each site, the necessary conservation measures which correspond to the ecological requirements of the protected habitat types and species of Community Interest present, according to Article 6.1 of the Habitats Directive. They must also prevent any damaging activities that could significantly disturb those species and habitats (Article 6.2) and to protect the site from new potentially damaging plans and projects likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site (Article 6.3, 6.4).

Conservation measures can include both site-specific measures (i.e. management actions and/or management restrictions) and horizontal measures that apply to many Natura 2000 sites over a larger area (e.g. measures to reduce nitrate pollution or to regulate hunting or resource use).

In Northern Ireland, terrestrial/inter-tidal Natura 2000 sites are usually underpinned by the designation of an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) under the Environment (NI) Order 2002 (as amended).

2. ROLE OF CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

Conservation Objectives have a role in

- Conservation Planning and Management – guide management of sites, to maintain or restore the habitats and species in favourable condition
- Assessing Plans and Projects, as required under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive - Habitats Regulations Assessments (HRA) are required to assess proposed plans and projects in light of the site's conservation objectives.
- Monitoring and Reporting – Provide the basis for assessing the condition of a feature, the factors that affect it and the actions required.

¹ 92/43/EEC and 2009/147/EC (codified version of Directive 79/409/EEC as amended)

3. DEFINITION OF FAVOURABLE CONSERVATION STATUS

Favourable Conservation Status is defined in Articles 1(e) and 1(i) of the Habitats Directive:

The conservation status of a natural habitat is the sum of the influences acting on it and its typical species that may affect its long-term natural distribution, structure and functions as well as the long term survival of its typical species. The conservation status of a natural habitat will be taken as favourable when:

- Its natural range and areas it covers within that range are stable or increasing, and
- The specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and
- The conservation status of its typical species is favourable as defined in Article 1(i).

For species, favourable conservation status is defined in Article 1(i) as when:

- population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats, and;
- the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and;
- there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its population on a long term basis.

3.1 DEFINITION OF FAVOURABLE CONDITION

Favourable Condition is defined as “**the target condition for an interest feature in terms of the abundance, distribution and/or quality of that feature within the site**”.

The standards for favourable condition (Common Standards) have been developed by JNCC and are applied throughout the UK. Achieving Favourable Condition on individual sites will make an important contribution to achieving Favourable Conservation Status across the Natura 2000 network.

4 GENERAL INFORMATION

Council bodies - marine waters adjoining:

Belfast City Council
Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
Ards and North Down Borough Council
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

County: adjoining County Antrim and County Down

Area: 96668.34 Ha

Geographic co-ordinates:

54.03.00 W
06.07.00 N

The principal interests are as follows – marine area used by -

- Wintering populations of Red-throated Diver and Eider Duck
- Rafting Manx Shearwater originating from an adjoining colony
- Foraging Sandwich, Common and Arctic Tern originating from adjoining tern colonies

5 SUMMARY SITE DESCRIPTION

The East Coast (Northern Ireland) Marine Special Protection Area includes coastal and near shore waters from Ringfad near Carnlough, Co. Antrim in the north, the marine area of Larne Lough, the marine area of Belfast Lough, waters around the Copeland Islands and offshore of the Ards Peninsula to Cloghan Head, near Ardglass in the south.

The SPA covers a diverse range of seabed habitats, from extensive coastal fringing reefs of various lithologies to the fine silt of inner Belfast Lough.

To the north of Belfast Lough, fringing reef is notable, with substantial areas of coarse sediments and boulders and cobbles offshore from Islandmagee. Further north, towards Ballygally and Carnlough, the glacial till dominates the seabed but also with important areas harbour maerl, a coralline algae (mostly *Phymatolithon calcareum*), known for its associated high biodiversity and for acting as a scallop nursery ground. Rippled sands and gravels are also notable between the relic drowned drumlins that are present off much of the ‘Glens of Antrim’ coastline. Bedrock outcrops with near vertical sides are found at the Maidens; these reefs and the surrounding sand banks are form part of the designated Maidens SAC.

Within Belfast Lough muds grade into muddy sands toward the outer Lough, with extensive areas of cobbles and shell debris overlying the muddy sand. Part of the muddy sand in the outer Lough is bioturbated by Dublin Bay prawn (*Nephrops norvegicus*), and also harbour the Seapen *Virgularia mirabilis*. Topographically complex reef areas surround the Copeland Islands.

To the south of Belfast Lough, the seabed off the Ards Peninsula is dominated by stony reef and mixed sands and gravels (often with a notable silt content). The gravelly sands support commercially harvestable seed mussel in geographically limited areas (affected by local hydrography), and further offshore support a scallop fishery (*Pecten maximus*). Mobile bedforms, such as extensive sand waves and banks, are found at Rigg Bank and extending south of the bank.

Offshore of Belfast Lough and off the Maidens Islands the seabed within the site reaches a depth of 125m.

5.1 BOUNDARY RATIONALE

The SPA represents a series of merged marine areas defined by a number of studies into use made of the marine area along the East Coast by selected species of waterbird and seabird.

Targeted survey work has identified an important area for non-breeding Red-throated Diver in the Belfast Lough area.

In addition a marine extension to the Copeland Islands SPA has been defined to reflect usage of the marine area by rafting Manx Shearwater originating from the Copeland colony.

Finally, a number of marine areas have been identified as important for a range of foraging tern species originating from adjoining tern colonies designated as part of the following existing Special Protection Areas -

Larne Lough SPA
 Belfast Lough SPA
 Outer Ards SPA
 Copeland Islands SPA
 Strangford Lough SPA

All of the above marine areas overlap to a greater or lesser extent. The SPA boundary subsumes all of these. In addition the SPA boundary subsumes the existing Belfast Lough Open Water SPA.

The landward boundary for this marine area is the **MEAN LOW WATER MARK**.

In addition to the designation map which shows the extent of the East Coast (Northern Ireland) Marine Special Protection Area, maps are also included for information purposes showing the marine areas used by each of the important bird populations.

6 SPA SELECTION FEATURES

Feature Type	Feature	Population	Population at time of designation (ASSI)	Population at time of designation (SPA)	SPA Review population	Common Standards Monitoring baseline
Species	Great Crested Grebe wintering population ^a	1646 individuals (5 year average 1995-2000)	N/A	1677 individuals – wintering		
Species	Red-throated Diver	142 individuals 5 year mean (2006/07 – 2008/08)		142 individuals 5 year mean (2006/07 – 2008/08)		
Species	Sandwich Tern	1656 pairs Breeding 5 year mean (2010 - 2014)		1656 pairs Breeding 5 year mean (2010 - 2014)		
Species	Common Tern	908 pairs Breeding 5 year mean (2010 - 2014)		908 pairs Breeding 5 year mean (2010 - 2014)		
Species	Arctic Tern	1351 pairs Breeding 5 year mean (2010 - 2014)		1351 pairs Breeding 5 year mean (2010 - 2014)		
Species	Manx Shearwater	4800 pairs Breeding 2000–2002				
Species	Eider Duck	3126 individuals				

		Wintering 5 year mean (2010/11 – 2014/15)				
Habitat ¹	Habitat extent					
Roosting /loafing sites ¹	locations of sites					

Table 1. List of SPA selection features.

¹ Habitat and roost sites are not a selection feature but are a factor and more easily treated as if they were a feature.

Notes on SPA features – may not be applicable to all SPAs

The above table lists all relevant qualifying species for this site. As the identification of SPA features has and continues to evolve, species may have different status but all should be considered in the context of any HRA process. Ultimately all SPAs will be renotified to formalise species features.

^a – species cited in current SPA citation and listed on current N2K dataform

^b – species selected post SPA designation through UK SPA Review 2001

^c – species highlighted as additional qualifying features through the UK SPA Review 2015 or the UK marine SPA programmes.

6.1. ADDITIONAL ASSI SELECTION FEATURES

Note that as the site is entirely below the low water mark, none falls within the adjoining ASSI designations. As such there are no additional ASSI features but see section 9.1.

7. CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

The Conservation Objectives for this site are:

To maintain each feature in favourable condition.

For each feature there are a number of component objectives which are outlined in the tables below. For each feature there are a series of attributes and measures which form the basis of *Condition Assessment*. The results of this will determine whether a feature is in favourable condition, or not. The feature attributes and measures are found in the attached annexes.

8. EAST COAST (NORTHERN IRELAND) MARINE SPA CONDITION ASSESSMENT 2014

Refer to the individual adjoining SPA Condition Assessments for further information – these are contained in the most recent conservation objectives for each of the sites.

Relevant sites are

- Larne Lough SPA
- Belfast Lough SPA
- Belfast Lough Open Water SPA
- Outer Ards SPA
- Copeland Islands SPA
- Strangford Lough SPA

9 SPA SELECTION FEATURE OBJECTIVES

To maintain or enhance the population of the qualifying species

To maintain or enhance the range of habitats utilised by the qualifying species

To ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained;

To ensure there is no significant disturbance of the species and

To ensure that the following are maintained in the long term:

- Population of the species as a viable component of the site
- Distribution of the species within site
- Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
- Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species

SPA SELECTION FEATURE OBJECTIVES

Feature	Component Objective
Great Crested Grebe wintering population	As above
Red-throated Diver wintering population	As above
Sandwich Tern breeding season	As above
Common Tern breeding season	As above
Arctic Tern breeding season	As above
Manx Shearwater breeding season	As above
Eider Duck wintering population	As above
Habitat extent	Maintain the extent of main habitat components subject to natural processes
Roosting/loafing sites	Maintain all locations of sites.

Table 4. SPA Component objectives

9.1 ADDITIONAL ASSI SELECTION FEATURE OBJECTIVES

See Conservation Objectives for adjoining SPAs for selection feature objectives. These may be relevant to the present site. Relevant sites are -

Larne Lough SPA

Belfast Lough SPA

Outer Ards SPA

Copeland Islands SPA

Strangford Lough SPA

10. MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Owner/Occupier's – (to be used to identify any key management considerations arising from ownership e.g. owners/organisations having an obvious bearing on conservation matters or from management agreements).

Key landowners, leasees and other users within the SPA, relevant to the site management, include Crown Estate Commissioners, local Councils (Belfast City Council, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, Ards and North Down District Council, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council), Belfast Harbour Commissioners, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Fisheries Division and shellfish operators, together with commercial shipping operators. There may be conflicts of interest between the requirements of individual/organisations, both within and adjacent to the SPA, and the site management needs.

Consideration must also be given to all land and sea based activities which have a bearing on site quality. This includes activities influencing water quality, ecological communities and disturbance.

There are a large number of significant commercial operations adjoining the marine area which may impact upon the SPA. Many of these are regulated through planning, relevant discharge and marine licensing arrangements. There is no evidence at present that any of these activities are having an adverse impact on the site features.

An assessment of the site boundary against commercial fisheries activity suggests that activity within the site tends to be inshore at Islandmagee, around the Copeland Islands, along the Outer Ards and towards the southern section of the site. Given that these sites are already important and of sufficient quality to support the birds, it may be reasonable to assume that current fishing in many of these areas is largely compatible with the birds' interest. However in cases where a type and level of fishing activity might impact upon the birds, a review may be needed so that authorities can establish the extent to which the fishing activities do influence the birds' interests. A fuller assessment of the distribution of fishing activities and the relationship between commercial stocks and site feature prey requirements will be undertaken.

11. MAIN THREATS, PRESSURES, ACTIVITIES WITH IMPACTS ON THE SITE OR SITE FEATURES

The list below is not exhaustive, but deals with the most likely factors that are either affecting the East Coast (Northern Ireland) Marine SPA, or could affect it in the future. Factors affecting the features within the adjoining ASSI are also considered.

Generic site/feature issues

No	Issue	Threat/comments	Local considerations	Action
2	Aquaculture	Disturbance is a minor consideration unless carried out deliberately to minimise losses to shell-feeding waterfowl. Alteration of natural sub-littoral communities through seeding, maintenance, harvesting,	Licensed aquaculture areas in Larne Lough and Belfast Lough especially.	Liaise with DARD Fisheries Division. Assess all license applications individually. Current extent of licences may significantly alter seabed

		dredging/control of pest species. Naturalisation of introduced species – both the shellfish themselves and associated species e.g. algae and disease vectors.		conditions. Consider the collective impact.
6	Boating- shipping activity – commercial	Disturbance and potential for impact from high-speed shipping.	Major port facility at Larne and shipping channel at Larne Lough and Belfast Lough. These are long-established activities. Significant commercial fisheries activity at Portavogie. Smaller commercial harbours at Carnlough, Glenarm, Ballylumford, Carrickfergus, Bangor, Donaghadee and Ballywalter.	Formal consultation likely relating to new schemes. Consider the collective impact.
7	Boating activity – recreational	Disturbance and potential for impact especially from jet skis. Generally relevant to particularly sensitive areas within site.	Sailing clubs and/or facilities at Carnlough, Glenarm, Larne, Magheramourne Carrickfergus, Holywood, Cultra, Donaghadee, Ballywalter. Additional slipways and quays.	Liaise with appropriate authority with codes of good practice, zoning and use of by-laws as necessary. Consider the collective impact.
12	Dredging	Generally only an issue in relation to commercial shipping channels. Issues include disturbance to birds, disturbance to seabed, remobilisation of contaminated sediment and spoil dumping zones.	Ongoing capital dredging programme maintains shipping channel. Established ongoing maintenance programme.	Liaise with port authority and licensing bodies as required with regard to water quality issues and pollution incidents.
14	Fishing – commercial or recreational	Minimal disturbance consideration but may represent ‘competition’ for piscivorous birds. Represents a net loss to the system in terms of biomass.	Most commercial activity related to aquaculture. Current position unclear but there is little or no overlap between commercial stock and tern prey species. Recreational fishing not deemed to be a problem.	Liaise with DARD and fishing authority as required. Liaise with angling clubs as required.
16	Habitat extent – open water	Loss likely to be limited but expansion of commercial port facilities can impact on key localities.	Ongoing and further planned harbour developments will reduce open water area. Probably insignificant.	Assess planning and marine licensing applications. Consider the collective impact.
18	Habitat quality – open water	Alteration of habitat quality through diminution of water quality or invasive species.	Historically impacted by industrial and sewerage effluent. Vulnerable to pollution incidents from both industry and shipping.	Assess planning and marine licensing applications. Deal with invasive alien species by preventing their spread or reducing their impact. Liaise with Environmental Protection as required with regard to water quality issues and pollution incidents. Consider the collective impact.
21	Introduced species	Range of threats from loss of habitat, feeding competition, disease, hosting species presenting a threat outside of the site.	Not evident but given nature of the site, could be an issue through commercial shipping and aquaculture.	Liaise with appropriate authority. Consider feasibility of elimination. Participate in national/international initiatives.
	Marine	Potential for disturbance and direct	No site related proposals at time	Assess planning and

	renewable energy developments	impact to terns in flight and actively feeding (diving)	of writing. Potential for impact from schemes elsewhere	marine licensing applications. To be addressed through HRA process.
24	Recreational activities.	Disturbance is the main consideration	Open water has been heavily used for recreational activities over long timescale. Cumulative disturbance impacts (e.g. boating, wildfowlers etc) may be a significant factor for wintering bird populations	Liaise with local authorities and other managing parties.
25	Research activities.	To date targeted work has been land-based e.g. population census. A range of marine based activities are ongoing in relation to water quality, commercial shellfish and benthic communities.		All research activities to be undertaken by competent individuals, appropriately trained. If not directed at waterfowl, the latter must be considered. Liaise with relevant research bodies
	Sand dredging - commercial	Not actively pursued in the NI marine environment but pressures to seek alternative sources to terrestrial/freshwater sites may make this potentially viable.	Potential to impact seabed habitat of importance to seabird prey species.	Liaise with commercial operators, planning and other regulatory authorities.
28	System dynamics	Cuts across many other issues. Dynamic systems, especially coastal, can be affected by many factors especially engineered structures and significant changes in dominant wind direction or storm frequency. Many systems may indeed still be undergoing responses to historical developments e.g. partial reclamation, seawall construction. Changes may include alteration in sediment grade, shifts in patterns of erosion and deposition etc. Consequences for habitat and species utilisation of the site can be profound.	Main considerations are historical reclamation together with widespread coastal engineering works and ongoing developments. Sediment responses may be expected. Changes in water quality have led to changes e.g. an expansion of mussel beds in Belfast Lough, in turn altering system behaviour. Expanding aquaculture represents an alteration to substrate.	Human induced change should be minimised. Assess planning applications and liaise with other relevant authorities. Ad hoc dumping and removal of natural materials should be managed. Major natural shifts in system behaviour may be identified through analysis of aerial photographs and site monitoring. Major and consistent changes to patterns of habitat distribution and bird utilisation of the site should be noted.

Table 3. List of site/feature management issues

12. MONITORING

Monitoring of our Special Protection Areas takes place at a number of levels, using a variety of methods. Methods for both Site Integrity Monitoring and Condition Assessment can be found in the Monitoring Handbook (To be written).

Maintain the integrity of the site. Undertake Site Integrity Monitoring (SIM) at least annually to ensure compliance with the SPA objectives. The most likely processes of change (e.g. dumping, infilling, gross pollution) will either be picked up by Site Integrity Monitoring, or will be comparatively slow (e.g. change in habitat such as growth of mussel beds). More detailed monitoring of site features should therefore be carried out by Site

Condition Assessment on a less frequent basis (every 6 years initially to pick up long-term or more subtle changes). A baseline survey will be necessary to establish the full extent of the communities present together with the current condition of the features, against which all further condition assessments will be compared.

In addition, detailed quality monitoring or verification monitoring may be carried out from time to time to check whether condition assessment is adequate to detect long-term changes that could affect the site. This type of quality monitoring may involve assessment of aerial photographs to determine site morphological changes. Methodology for this is being developed.

12.1 MONITORING SUMMARY

1. Monitor the integrity of the site (Site Integrity Monitoring or SIM) – Complete boundary survey to ensure integrity of site and that any fencing is still intact. Ensure that no sand extraction or dumping has been carried out within the SAC boundary. This SIM should be carried out once a year.
2. Monitor the condition of the site (Condition Assessment) - Monitor the key attributes for each selection feature (dune, saltmarsh, species). This will detect if the features are in favourable condition or not. See Annexes I and II for SAC and Additional ASSI Features respectively.

The favourable condition table provided in Annex 1 is intended to supplement the conservation objectives only in relation to management of established and ongoing activities and future reporting requirements on monitoring condition of the site and its features. It does not by itself provide a comprehensive basis on which to assess plans and projects, but it does provide a basis to inform the scope and nature of any appropriate assessment that may be needed. It should be noted that appropriate assessments are a separate activity to condition monitoring, requiring consideration of issues specific to individual plans or projects.

12.2. ADDITIONAL MONITORING ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN FOR SITES IN UNFAVOURABLE CONDITION

Monitoring actions set out in section 6 and Annex 1 will use, amongst other attributes, bird population data to determine site condition. In the event of a significant population decline being detected, a series of subsequent actions will be initiated. The following list is not exhaustive, actions will be site dependant, but the order of these points IS hierarchical i.e. consider point 1, then 2, etc.

1. Assess the site population in a wider geographical context – Northern Ireland, Ireland, UK, world. Refer to BTO ALERT limits etc. Liaise with other competent bodies to meaningfully assess wider pattern. No site action if site decline mirrors regional pattern the cause of which is not related to the site. Action may be required at regional or larger scale. If the cause of the regional population decline (e.g. eutrophication) is found at the site then action may be necessary, but this may need to form part of a network of strategic species action. Further research may be required.
2. Assess the site population in a wider geographical context – Northern Ireland, Ireland, UK, Europe, world. Determine if site losses are balanced by gains elsewhere e.g. breeding terns. Review site condition to determine if losses are due to site deterioration. Determine if possible whether population has relocated within SPA series (national, biogeographical, European). Note that the reasons for such locational changes may not be readily identifiable. Further research may be required.
3. For passage/wintering species assess breeding information. No site action if site decline is due to breeding ground failure, unless breeding ground failure is related to poor adult condition resulting from factors affecting wintering / passage birds.
4. Determine whether a major incident has affected the site e.g. toxic impact on prey items, predation event or geographical shift in available prey. Ability to respond to impacts may be limited.
5. Assess condition of principal site habitats e.g. vegetational composition and structure, change in habitat balance e.g. mudflats reduced by encroaching mussel beds.
6. Assess prey availability. Issues to consider are both within site e.g. water quality, broad site management, and without site e.g. climatically driven factors.
7. Assess whether there have been any changes in any other site features or management practices (see Table 3) that may have affected populations of site selection features.
8. Long-term site value must be considered even when it is found to be in unfavourable condition for a number of reporting cycles. This is particularly important for breeding seabird and wader sites where ongoing appropriate management may ultimately encourage re-establishment of a favourable population.

13. SELECTION FEATURE POPULATION TRENDS

Site trends are reported using running 5 year means of annual maximum count (WeBS data). Long term trends in index values have been used to assess changes in overall wintering populations for Northern Ireland and UK (WeBS data). Caution is always necessary in the interpretation and application of waterbird counts given the limitations of these data. The reduced number of both sites and birds in Northern Ireland, result in a greater degree of fluctuation. Trends for Ireland are based on five years of data 1994-1999 (I-WeBS data). Consequently short-term fluctuations apparent in the data series may reflect changes in between year productivity, or other short term phenomena, rather than being indicative of a real change in a population.

Table to be completed

SPECIES	SITE TREND	NI TREND	ROI TREND	UK TREND	COMMENTS
Great Crested Grebe					
Red-throated Diver wintering population					
Sandwich Tern breeding season					
Common Tern breeding season					
Arctic Tern breeding season					
Manx Shearwater breeding season					
Eider Duck wintering population					

ANNEX I

Feature (SPA) – Wintering waterbirds

* = primary attribute. One failure among primary attribute = unfavourable condition

= Optional factors – these can be in unfavourable condition without the site being in unfavourable condition

Attribute	Measure	Targets	Comments
*Great Crested Grebe wintering population	Bird numbers	No significant decrease in population against national trends	Five year running averages will be used to monitor population trends through WeBs data. Decline to a level below the Common Standards Monitoring baseline over a five year period may indicate unfavourable condition of the site.
*Eider Duck wintering population	Bird numbers	No significant decrease in population against national trends	Five year running averages will be used to monitor population trends through WeBs data. Decline to a level below the Common Standards Monitoring baseline over a five year period may indicate unfavourable condition of the site.
*Red-throated Diver wintering population	Bird numbers	No significant decrease in population against national trends	Five year running averages will be used to monitor population trends. WeBS methodologies have been shown to seriously underestimate Diver numbers. Species specific methodology to be employed. Decline to a level below the Common Standards Monitoring baseline over a five year period may indicate unfavourable condition of the site.

Feature (SPA) – Breeding Seabirds

= primary attribute. One failure among primary attribute = unfavourable condition

= optional factors. These can be in unfavourable condition without the site being in unfavourable condition

Attribute	Measure	Targets	Comments
* Sandwich Tern breeding population	Apparently occupied nests	No significant decrease in breeding population against national trends	Ideally annual data is collected, then apply 5 year mean criteria. Ideally the population will be maintained above 1% of the national population. Decline to a level below the Common Standards Monitoring baseline over a five year period may indicate unfavourable condition of the site.
* Common Tern breeding population	Apparently occupied nests	No significant decrease in breeding population against national trends	Ideally annual data is collected, then apply 5 year mean criteria. Ideally the population will be maintained above 1% of the national population. Decline to a level below the Common Standards Monitoring baseline over a five year period may indicate unfavourable condition of the site.
* Arctic Tern breeding population	Apparently occupied nests	No significant decrease in breeding population against national trends	Ideally annual data is collected, then apply 5 year mean criteria. Ideally the population will be maintained above 1% of the national population. Decline to a level below the Common Standards Monitoring baseline over a five year period may indicate unfavourable condition of the site.
* Manx Shearwater breeding population	Apparently occupied nests	No significant decrease in breeding population against national trends	Survey delivery likely to be tied to national seabird census programme. Ideally the population will be maintained above 1% of the national population. Decline to a level below the Common Standards Monitoring baseline over a five year period may indicate unfavourable condition of the site.

Note that breeding seabird populations will be assessed at the 'source colonies'. Separate validation surveys may be required to assess utilisation of the marine area for foraging (tern species) and rafting (Manx Shearwater) behaviours. Further assessments e.g. of prey availability, water quality, impacts on seabed may also be necessary if inexplicable declines in breeding populations are recorded.

Non-avian factors

Attribute	Measure	Targets	Comments
* Habitat extent	Area of marine habitats	Maintain the area of marine habitats used or potentially usable by notified species, within the SPA, subject to natural processes.	To be addressed as part of wider marine monitoring programmes especially MSFD actions