

Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA)

## The Wash and North Norfolk Coast

The Wash and North Norfolk Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC) covers an area of 1078 km<sup>2</sup>, which include three Special Protection Areas (SPAs). This unique biosphere is both nationally and internationally important in terms of hosting significant populations of coastal bird species with total numbers reaching up to 450,000 at any one time. The area also encompasses a number of valuable habitats, such as Atlantic salt meadows and coastal lagoons

Qualifying Features:

“SPAs are classified in accordance with European Council Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds, known as the Birds Directive. SPAs protect rare and vulnerable birds (as listed on Annex I of the Birds Directive), and regularly occurring migratory species.” (Source Joint Nature Conservation Committee, JNCC)

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are established under the European Union Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). Article 1 of the Habitats Directive defines a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) as: “a site designated according to the Habitats Directive. Special Area of Conservation (SAC) means a Site of Community Importance (SCI) designated by the Member States through a statutory, administrative and/or contractual act where the necessary conservation measures are applied for the maintenance or restoration, at a favourable conservation status, of the natural habitats and/or the populations of the species for which the site is designated.” (European Union)

“Under Article 4(4) of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) the Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site include: Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time; Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide; Large shallow inlets and bays; Reefs; Salicornia and other annuals colonizing mud and sand; Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima*); Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic halophilous scrubs (*Sarcocornetea fruticosi*). Coastal lagoons form a Priority feature within this SAC. Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site is the Harbour seal (*Phoca vitulina*) with the Otter (*Lutra lutra*) present but not as a primary reason for site selection.” (UK Government)

(Sources UK Government:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/844585/The\\_Wash\\_and\\_North\\_Norfolk\\_Coast\\_SAC\\_factsheet.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/844585/The_Wash_and_North_Norfolk_Coast_SAC_factsheet.pdf)

JNCC: <https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/special-protection-areas-overview/>

European Union: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:01992L0043-20070101&from=EN>)