

Annex 2 Special Protection Area (SPA) Citation

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

Name: Northumbria Coast

Counties/Unitary Authorities: Northumberland County Council, Durham County Council, South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council, North Tyneside Council, and City of Sunderland.

Boundary of the SPA:

The boundary of Northumbria Coast SPA includes the coastline between Berwick-upon-Tweed in the north to the Tyne Estuary in the south. The boundary is defined by the Mean High Water Mark.

Size of SPA: The SPA covers an area of 1,107.98 ha.

Site description:

The Northumbria Coast SPA includes much of the coastline between the Tweed and Tees Estuaries in north-east England. The site consists of mainly discrete sections of rocky shore with associated boulder and cobble beaches. The SPA also includes parts of three artificial pier structures and a small section of sandy beach (Stroud *et al.* 2001).

The rocky shore areas with reefs, have small areas of sand interspersed amongst the main reefs. The man-made structures such as the piers at River Tyne South Pier and Seaham Harbour pier are used as high tide roosts. The tops of the piers and the sides are used by birds throughout the tidal cycle.

The inter-tidal rock platform is an important resource used by wintering purple sandpiper and turnstones although they are commonly found along the strandline of sandy beaches. The rocky shores and the strand line support high densities of invertebrates which are important food for waterfowl. Purple sandpiper are almost entirely restricted to the rocky shore where they feed on a variety of marine invertebrates but their main food preference is for mussels, winkles and dog whelks (Feare 1996). Turnstones feed on seaweed covered rocks congregating at high tide to roost on the mainland shore or continue to feed on the washed up seaweed on the strandline. Discrete areas of estuarine intertidal mudflats and sand flats are also included within the Northumbria Coast SPA.

Arctic and little terns nest at Newton Links/Long Nanny. The Long Nanny tern site is situated at the mouth of the Long Nanny burn, in Beadnell Bay and comprises of a long section of sandy beach ending in a small, low-lying sand spit at the mouth of the river, bordered by an accreting sand dune system to the west (Bridge *et al.* 2014). The beaches of fine sand, vegetated banks of sea rocket and dunes of marram and lyme grass provide good conditions for nesting. Terns forage in Beadnell Bay and the surrounding coastal waters, which support large numbers of lesser sandeel *Ammodytes lancea* (Bridge *et al.* 2014).

Qualifying species:

The site qualifies under **Article 4** of the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) for the following reasons (summarised in Table 1):

- The site regularly supports more than 1% of the GB populations of two species listed in

Annex I of the EC Birds Directive. Therefore, the site qualifies for SPA Classification in accordance with the UK SPA selection guidelines (stage 1.1).

- The site regularly supports more than 1% of the biogeographical population of two regularly occurring migratory species not listed in Annex I of the EC Birds Directive. Therefore, the site qualifies for SPA designation in accordance with the UK SPA selection guidelines (stage 1.2).

Table 1 Summary of qualifying ornithological interest in Northumbria Coast SPA

Feature	Count (period)	% of subspecies or population	Interest type
Arctic tern <i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	1,549 pairs 3,098 individuals (2010-2014) ¹	2.92% of GB population ³	Annex 1
Little tern <i>Sternula albifrons</i>	40 pairs 80 individuals (1993-1997) ²	1.7% of GB population ²	Annex 1
Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>	1,739 individuals (1992/93 - 1996/97) ²	2.6% of biogeographic population ²	Regularly occurring migrant
Purple sandpiper <i>Calidris maritima</i>	787 individuals (1992/93 - 1996/97) ²	1.6% of biogeographic population ²	Regularly occurring migrant

¹ Data from: Seabird Monitoring Programme (SMP) and colony managers (pairs multiplied by 2 to arrive at breeding adults).

² Data from: Northumbria Coast SPA citation (Available from: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6372874327687168?category=4698884316069888>).

³ GB breeding populations derived from Musgrove *et al.* (2013).

Principal bird data sources

Breeding Arctic tern: 2010-2014 colony counts from JNCC Seabird Monitoring Programme contributed by colony managers: National Trust, supplemented by most up to date counts in some instances from those colony managers.

All other qualifying features (breeding little tern and wintering turnstone and purple sandpiper): data from 1992-1997 as presented in 2000 classification citation of Northumbria Coast SPA, available from:

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6372874327687168?category=4698884316069888>