

EC Directive 79/409 on the Conservation of Wild Birds Special Protection Area

Portsmouth Harbour, Hampshire

Portsmouth Harbour is a large industrialised estuary and includes one of the four largest expanses of mudflats and tidal creeks on the south coast of Britain. The Wallington River flows into the north-west of the estuary and gives rise to Fareham Creek, the most notable channel. Together with the adjacent Langstone and Chichester Harbours, Portsmouth Harbour forms an unusual intertidal ecosystem receiving comparatively little fresh water and possessing a characteristic hydrology arising from only narrow connections to the sea via the Solent.

Portsmouth Harbour is adjacent to the existing Chichester and Langstone Harbours Special Protection Area. The boundary of Portsmouth Harbour proposed Special Protection Area follows the seaward side of Burrow Island, Foxbury Point, Portchester, Horsea Island and Whale Island ending to the south of the latter. The seaward boundary is the Mean Low Water Mark. It also incorporates several inlets including Gosport and Paulsgrove.

Portsmouth Harbour qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Birds Directive by supporting internationally or nationally important wintering populations of the following species of migratory waterfowl (average peak counts for the five year period 1986/87 to 1990/91): 2,290 dark-bellied brent geese *Branta bernicla bernicla* (1.3% of the north-west European population and 2.5% of the British wintering population), 100 red-breasted merganser *Mergus serrator* (1% of British), 70 black-tailed godwit *Limosa limosa* (over 1% of British) and 8,010 dunlin *Calidris alpina* (over 1% of British).

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