

EC Directive 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds

Special Protection Area (SPA)

Name: *Liverpool Bay / Bae Lerpwl Special Protection Area*

Counties/Unitary Authorities:

The SPA lies almost entirely in UK territorial waters adjacent to the following counties / unitary authorities: Lancashire, Blackpool, Merseyside, Sir y Fflint / Flintshire, Conwy, Gwynedd, Ynys Môn / Isle of Anglesey and a small portion sits within Sir Ddinbych / Denbighshire unitary authority.

Boundary of the SPA:

The SPA extends out from Morecambe Bay beyond 12 nautical miles at the northwest point and offshore of the mouth of the Dee Estuary. The western boundary of the SPA extends into Welsh waters to Point Lynas on Anglesey.

The landward boundary of the SPA generally follows the mean low water mark or the boundaries of existing SPAs, whichever is the furthest seaward apart from at Prestatyn and in the river Mersey where it follows mean high water or the boundaries of existing SPAs.

Size of SPA: The SPA covers an area of 252,757.73 ha.

Site description:

Liverpool Bay is located in the south-eastern region of the northern part of the Irish Sea, bordering north-west England and north Wales. The SPA is a broad arc from approximately Morecambe Bay to the east coast of Anglesey. The seabed of the SPA consists of a wide range of mobile sediments. Large areas of muddy sand stretch from Rossall Point to the Ribble Estuary, and sand predominates in the remaining areas, with a concentrated area of gravelly sand off the Mersey Estuary and a number of prominent sandbanks off the English and Welsh coasts. The tidal currents throughout the SPA are generally weak, which combined with a relatively large tidal range facilitates the deposition of sediments.

Qualifying species:

The site qualifies under **Article 4.1** of the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) as it is used regularly by 1% or more of the Great Britain populations of the following species listed in Annex I in any season:

Species	Season	Count (Period)	% of population
Red-throated diver <i>Gavia stellata</i>	Non-breeding	1,171 individuals (2004/05 – 2010/11)	6.89% of GB population
Little gull <i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>	Non-breeding	319 individuals (2004/05 – 2010/11)	N/A – selected under stage 1.4 guideline
Little tern <i>Sternula albifrons</i>	Breeding	260 individuals (2010 - 2014)*	6.84% of GB population
Common tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i>	Breeding	360 individuals** (2011 – 2015)	1.80% of GB population

*130 pairs (Apparently Occupied Nests) at Gronant Beach from Seabird Monitoring Programme database. These figures represent the current population at the site (SMP, *pers. comm.*). The 'at classification' population for little tern in The Dee Estuary SPA is 138 individuals (1995-1999).

** 180 pairs (Apparently Occupied Nests) at Seaforth Nature Reserve from Seabird Monitoring Programme database.

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

Species	Season	Count (Period)	% of population
Common scoter <i>Melanitta nigra</i>	Non-breeding	56,679 (2004/05 – 2010/11)	10.31% of biogeographic population

Assemblage qualification:

The site qualifies under SPA selection stage 1.3 as it is used regularly by over 20,000 waterbirds (waterbirds as defined by the Ramsar Convention) in any season:

In the non-breeding season, the site regularly supports at least 69,687 (2004/05 – 2010/11) individual waterbirds.

The main components of the assemblage include all of the non-breeding qualifying features listed above, as well as an additional two species present in numbers exceeding 1% of the GB total: red-breasted merganser *Mergus serrator* and great cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*.

Principal bird data sources:

Lawson, J., Kober, K., Win, I., Allcock, Z., Black, J. Reid, J.B., Way, L. & O'Brien, S.H. 2015. An assessment of the numbers and distribution of wintering waterbirds and seabirds in Liverpool Bay / Bae Lerpwl area of search. JNCC Report No 576. JNCC, Peterborough.

Tern colony count data from the national Seabird Monitoring Programme database.

This citation relates to a site entered in the Register of European Sites for Great Britain.
Register reference number: UK9020294
Date of registration: 31st October 2017
Signed:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'N. Alder', is centered within a white rectangular box.

On behalf of the Secretary of State for Environment,
Food and Rural Affairs