

**EC Directive 79/409 on the Conservation of Wild Birds:  
Special Protection Areas**

**Benacre to Easton Bavents (Suffolk)**

Benacre to Easton Bavents potential Special Protection Area (pSPA) site is situated on the east coast of Suffolk and extends southwards from Kessingland to Southwold. The site comprises the majority of the 526.3 hectare Benacre to Easton Bavents SSSI (notified in 1989 under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981) of which Benacre Broad NNR is a part. The pSPA site includes Benacre, Covehithe and Easton broads and excludes the cliffs at Covehithe and Easton Bavents. The variety of habitats present, include semi-natural broadleaved woodland, tall fen vegetation, shingle, dunes and grassland, saltmarsh and coastal lagoons. These habitats are important for breeding, wintering and passage birds.

The potential SPA qualifies under Article 4.1 of the EC Birds Directive by regularly supporting bittern *Botaurus stellaris*, marsh harrier *Circus aeruginosus* and little tern *Sterna albifrons*. Booming male bittern are heard most frequently at Easton. The five year mean number of booming males, 1991-95, is two, representing 10% of the British 'population'. Marsh harrier breed at Benacre and Easton Broad, the five year mean number of pairs 1990- 94 is 6, representing more than 6% of the British population. Little tern have nested most recently at Easton Broad and Covehithe Broad. The five year mean number of pairs, 1991-95, is 39, representing 1.6% of the British population. Other Annex 1 species are present on the site. Two or three pairs of Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* and a few pairs of common tern *Sterna hirundo* occasionally nest. Red-throated diver *Gavia stellata*, black-throated diver *G. arctica*, great northern diver *G. immer*, Slavonian grebe *Podiceps auritus* and Hen harrier *Circus cyaneus* sometimes winter within the SSSI.

The site also supports an important assemblage of breeding birds, in addition to the species mentioned above. These include, little grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* (also winter), shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* (also winter), wigeon *Anas penelope* (also winter), gadwall *Anas strepera*, pochard *Aythya ferina* (also winter), tufted duck *A. fuligula* (also winter), Hobby *Falco subbuteo*, water rail *Rallus aquaticus* (also winter), ringed plover *Charadrius hiaticula*, turtle dove *Streptopelia turtur*, barn owl *Tyto alba* (also winter); little owl *Athene noctua*, kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*, lesser spotted woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor*, nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*, wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*, grasshopper warbler *Locustella naevia*, bearded tit *Panurus biarmicus* and tree sparrow *Passer montanus*.

The site also supports a notable assemblage of other wintering birds, in addition to those mentioned above, including cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*, whooper swan *Cygnus cygnus*, pink-footed goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*, white-fronted goose *A. albifrons*, greylag goose *A. anser*, Canada goose *Branta canadensis*, gadwall *Anas strepera*, teal *A. crecca*, pintail *A. acuta*, garganey *A. querquedula*, shoveler *A. clypeata*, scaup *Aythya marila*, eider *Somateria mollissima*, long-tailed duck *Clangula hyemalis*, common scoter *Melanitta nigra*, velvet scoter *M. fusca*, goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*, smew *Mergus albellus*, red-breasted merganser *M. serrator*, gooseander *M. merganser*, buzzard *Buteo buteo*, lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*, dunlin *Calidris alpina*, redshank *Tringa totanus*, little gull *Larus minutus*, great black-backed gull *L. marinus*, guillemot *Uria aalge*, shore lark *Eremophila alpestris*, rock pipit *A. petrosus*, fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*, siskin *Carduelis spinus*, twite *C. flavirostris*, snow bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis* and reed bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*.

This citation / map relates to a site entered in:  
the Register of European sites for Great Britain  
Register reference number UK9009291  
Date of registration 15 FEB 1996  
Signed [Signature]  
on behalf of the Secretary of State for the Environment

SPA Citation  
January 1996