



Ceri Davies
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Natural Resources Wales
Cambria House
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15 January 2016

Dear Ceri,

Proposed Marine Special Protection Areas

I am writing further to your letter of 19 June 2015 where Natural Resources Wales (NRW) alongside the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) submitted advice on proposals for marine Special Protection Areas (SPAs). The advice sets out proposals for three SPAs one of which extends into UK offshore waters:

- Anglesey Terns / Morwenoliaid Ynys Môn SPA (an amendment to Ynys Feurig, Cemlyn Bay and The Skerries SPA);
- Northern Cardigan Bay / Gogledd Bae Ceredigion SPA; and
- Skomer, Skokholm and the Seas off Pembrokeshire / Sgomer, Sgogwm a Moroedd Penfro SPA (an amendment to the Skokholm and Skomer SPA).

Your recommendations have been considered and I am writing to give you notice that the Welsh Government is minded to classify the three SPAs in line with the advice to incorporate the important marine areas for birds into our suite of SPAs.

The Welsh Government is minded to amend the basis on which the **Ynys Feurig, Cemlyn Bay and The Skerries SPA** is classified for the following reasons:

- To give effect to the findings of the 2001 SPA Review to change the number of qualifying species of breeding Common tern *Sterna hirundo*, Arctic tern *Sterna paradisea*, Roseate tern *Sterna dougalli* and Sandwich tern *Sterna sandvicensis* (all species listed on Annex 1 of the Birds Directive).

- Site specific data have demonstrated use and ecological dependence by the breeding populations of terns on the adjacent marine area. A seaward extension is proposed to include the marine foraging area used by the terns.
- To reflect the geographical extent of the extended SPA to rename the site to Anglesey Terns / Morwenoliaid Ynys Môn SPA.

The Welsh Government is minded to classify the **Northern Cardigan Bay SPA** for the following reason:

- The site regularly supports more than 1% of the GB population of Red-throated diver *Gavia stellata* (species listed on Annex 1 of the Birds Directive) outside of the breeding season.

The Welsh Government is minded to amend the basis on which the **Skokholm and Skomer SPA** is classified for the following reasons:

- Site specific data have demonstrated use and ecological dependence by the breeding populations of Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus* and Atlantic puffin *Fratercula arctica* (both regularly occurring migratory species) on the waters adjacent to the existing SPA. A seaward extension of the existing boundary is proposed to include the marine foraging area used by the Manx shearwater and Atlantic puffin. This area extends into UK offshore waters. The Welsh Government is proposing to extend the inshore element only. I understand that Defra is writing in the same effect to JNCC regarding the offshore element of this SPA.
- To reflect the geographical extent of the extended SPA to rename the site Skomer, Skokholm and the Seas off Pembrokeshire / Sgomer, Sgogwm a Moroedd Penfro SPA.

This letter requests that NRW, working with JNCC as appropriate, now undertakes a public consultation on the proposals to give anyone who might be affected by the changes, or has relevant scientific information the opportunity to comment. The consultation will also include a draft assessment of the potential social and economic impacts of the possible SPAs. This will assist in identifying any additional information or evidence that would help improve the impact assessment of the proposed sites. While the impact assessment cannot inform or affect the decision to classify it will ensure that the Welsh Government is aware of any social and economic impacts arising from the proposed changes.

The SPA consultation will run in parallel with a similar exercise on the suite of sites that have been identified as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) for harbour porpoise. I am writing to you separately about the SAC proposals as they relate to Wales.

I am copying this letter to Paul Rose, Director Standards and Advice at JNCC.

Yours sincerely



Julian Bray
Head of Marine Nature Conservation & Biodiversity