

EC BIRDS DIRECTIVE: EAST COAST (NORTHERN IRELAND) MARINE SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA

You are invited to respond to a consultation on proposals to classify an area off the East Coast of Northern Ireland as a Marine Special Protection Area (SPA).

The area that has been proposed as the East Coast (NI) Marine SPA begins at Ringfad near Carnlough and extends to Cloghan Head near Ardglass. [A map is provided.](#)

This consultation document is aimed at organisations, groups and people who undertake activities, or have a general interest, in this marine area.

Background

Member States are required to conserve the habitat of certain rare, vulnerable or regularly occurring migratory species of birds, through the designation of SPAs, in accordance with the Council Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC). There are currently 16 sites designated as SPAs in Northern Ireland.

The information to support the designation of this proposed SPA has come from studies undertaken by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

The following documentation is available to assist you in this consultation process:

- [A citation showing the species for which the proposed Marine SPA is considered to be of European importance,](#)
- [A site map showing the waters within the boundary of the Marine SPA,](#)

- [A Special Places leaflet explaining the importance of the site for notable bird species,](#)
- [Conservation Objectives](#)

If required, a limited number of hard copies of the consultation documents are available and the documents may also be available in alternative formats – please contact us to discuss your requirements by phoning 028 9056 9516, by text phone (028 9054 0642) or by writing to the address below.

Equality Impact Assessment

Under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, public authorities have a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity. Preliminary screening exercises have been undertaken, and it is considered that there are no significant implications for equality of opportunity as a result of these proposals.

The Human Rights Act

The Human Rights Act 1998 implements the European Convention on Human Rights. The 1998 Act makes it unlawful for any public authority to act in a way that is incompatible with these rights. The Department considers that the proposals detailed in this consultation package are compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.

Rural Proofing

Rural proofing is a process to ensure that all relevant Government policies are examined carefully and objectively to determine whether or not they have a different impact in rural areas from that elsewhere, given the particular

characteristics of rural areas, and where necessary, what policy adjustments might be made to reflect rural needs to ensure that, as far as possible, public services are accessible on a fair basis to the rural community. The proposals detailed in this consultation package are aimed at affording greater protection to our nationally important habitats and species through the designation of Marine Special Protection Areas. It is important that these unique areas of the marine habitat are managed sustainably and promoted as a valuable social and economic asset.

Responses

The consultation will close on 14 April 2016. You can make a response to this consultation by:

emailing – cdp@doeni.gov.uk

or

writing to:

Conservation Designations and Protection
Department of the Environment
Natural Environment Division
Klondyke Building
Cromac Avenue
Belfast
BT7 2JA

Please also provide:

Your name,

Your contact details,

If you are representing an organisation then please name it, and

The main area of interest with which you identify – for example, nature conservation, fisheries, farming, industry / transport, aquaculture, recreation / tourism, academic and scientific, local government, voluntary / community group, public sector, local partnership or other.

This information will assist with the analysis of the responses received.

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – confidentiality of consultation responses

Following the end of the consultation, we shall publish a paper summarising the responses. Information you provide in your response to this consultation, including personal information, may be published or disclosed in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please tell us why but be aware that, under the FOIA, we cannot guarantee confidentiality.

If you are replying as an individual, the Department will process your personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and this will mean that if you request confidentiality, your personal information will not be disclosed to third parties.

What happens next?

Following the consultation, the Department will analyse and consider the information received and will publish a synopsis on these responses on the website. The decision whether or not to make the final classification will be made by the Minister of the Environment and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and will be informed by consultation responses.

Thank you for your help and participation in this consultation. Should you have any queries, please contact us to discuss further.