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## **News**

### **Two new marine SPAs!**

We are very pleased to announce the designation of two new marine SPAs: Liverpool Bay/Bae Lerpwl SPA and Outer Thames SPA. On 20 August 2010, the UK Government submitted the sites to the European Commission to be included within the European 'Natura 2000' network of protected areas. This was an important event for the team, having worked very hard for several years to ensure that the sites were based on sound ornithological criteria and the most robust scientific analysis available.



### **Data collection and analysis for identification of inshore SPAs**

This winter marks the last winter season of fieldwork in support of possible inshore SPA identification, as currently planned. Fieldwork this winter will be limited to shore-based surveys around the south Cornwall coast. For all of our other initial inshore [Areas of Search](#) (AoS) that warranted further data analysis, there are now sufficient data to enable this. Progress with data analyses has made substantial headway, with a first tranche of Scottish AoS (east coast areas, Orkney and Outer Hebrides) being reported on in March 2010. We are now finalising analyses on a second tranche of Scottish AoS (Shetland and west coast areas, including the Solway Firth, a cross border area), as well as Belfast Lough AoS in Northern Ireland. A report on analysis of Cardigan Bay AoS data has been submitted to CCW.



### **Identifying important seabird concentrations at sea**

A workshop involving JNCC, the Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies, and policy officials from Defra and the Devolved Administrations was held in July. There we described the analyses carried out to date and discussed various options on how to further progress this work. It was agreed that it would be helpful to try to understand the potential drivers of the identified seabird hotspot locations, as well as to undertake further analysis to address some of the species and geographic gaps; this is work on which we are currently focussing. In the meantime, we are pleased that after many months of delay (due to formatting issues), the report of the original analyses aimed at identifying important aggregations of seabirds at sea that might be considered as possible SPAs is now [available online](#).

### **Second field season of tern surveys completed**



Summer 2010 saw the second (of a planned three) season of fieldwork in support possible marine SPAs for breeding terns. Surveys were carried out around 12 tern colonies around the UK and comprised visual tracking, boat-based line transects, and shore based counts. These data will be integrated, along with various habitat variables, into models to assess which marine habitat features are important for terns. Models based on the 2009 data have been trialled and we are now looking to refine the modelling approach and incorporate the 2010 data.

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## **Publications**

### **Analysis of the ESAS database**

The JNCC report 431 "An analysis of the numbers and distribution of seabirds within the British Fishery Limit aimed at identifying areas that qualify as possible marine SPAs" by Kober *et al.* is [now available](#) from the JNCC website.

### **Red-throated divers**

Norwegian Nature Information has recently published the report from the Loon and Diver Workshop held in Norway in 2007, attended by Jim Reid and Ben Dean. This includes two papers summarising some of our work to date in support of identifying marine SPAs for both wintering and breeding red-throated divers.

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## **Recent meetings / conferences**

### **The 1<sup>st</sup> World Seabird Conference**

The first [World Seabird Conference](#) was held in September 2010 and included several contributions from JNCC's marine SPA team. Jim Reid co-organised a special symposium on "*Spatial Ecology at-sea: Opportunities and Challenges for Seabird Marine Protected Areas*". This included a talk by Linda Wilson on the [JNCC's work to inform SPA identification for terns](#). Within the 'Marine Protected Areas' session we contributed two talks. Andy Webb described the [analytical techniques](#) that we apply to data on inshore waterbird aggregations, while Linda Wilson (on behalf of Kerstin Kober) described the analysis of the European Seabirds at Sea (ESAS) database for [identifying seabird hotspots](#) at sea. Andy Webb also co-organised two workshops on seabird databases. One of these looked at the practicalities of combining seabird data from transect surveys and tracking work, and included a short talk by Linda Wilson in the context of JNCC's tern work. We are currently preparing two papers and contributing to a third for publication in a special issue of the journal Biological Conservation, to be co-edited by Jim Reid.

### **Seminar on offshore windfarms and red-throated divers**

Sue O'Brien and Sophy Allen attended a seminar on "[Offshore Wind Farms and Conservation of Red Throated Divers: Current knowledge on displacement and population aspects](#)" in Copenhagen, Denmark in November. Sue presented our [methods for estimating numbers and distribution of red-throated divers around Britain and in the Greater Thames Estuary](#).

### **General communication and liaison with stakeholders**

Linda Wilson, Kerstin Kober, Sue O'Brien Jim Reid have been providing regular updates on the marine SPA work within various fora, including the MPA Technical Group, SPA Ramsar Scientific Working Group and the UK Marine Biodiversity Policy Steering Group. Jim Reid met with and presented our inshore methods to the North West and North Wales Sea Fisheries Committee in November, while Kerstin Kober, Linda Wilson and Julie Black met with fisheries experts from the Marine Scotland in November to discuss the feasibility of using fishery data within the context of our marine SPA work.

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**And finally...** The Marine SPA team would like to send [season's greetings](#) to you all and wish you all the best for 2011!

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**Photos:** Red-throated diver (Annette Cutts), great northern diver (Renton Charman), Common tern (Andy Webb)

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