

A6.88b Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis* (passage)

1. Status in UK

See section A6.88a.

2. Population data

	Population sizes (individuals)	Selection thresholds	Totals in species' SPA suite
GB	42,000	420	4,619 (11% of GB population)
Ireland	13,200	132	No SPAs selected in Northern Ireland
Biogeographic population	396,000	3,960	4,619 (1% of biogeographic population)

GB population source: derived from Lloyd et al. 1991

All-Ireland population source: derived from Gibbons et al. 1993

Biogeographic population source: derived from Hagemeyer & Blair 1997

3. Distribution

See section A6.88a.

4. Population structure and trends

The number of Sandwich Terns occurring on passage in Britain and Ireland in the immediate post-breeding period – late July and August – depends first on breeding success, which shows marked annual variations, and secondly on the degree of movement between Britain and Ireland and other parts of the biogeographic range. Ringing has shown that on leaving the breeding colonies, birds move both south and north within Britain and Ireland and that there is also interchange between British and Dutch colonies (Cramp *et al.* 1990). Migration proper starts in September.

In spring, northward migration occurs through British and Irish waters, although there are fewer data for this period. In March and April, Sandwich Terns are particularly concentrated along the shores of the southern North Sea (Stone *et al.* 1995)

There are no data with which to assess trends in the numbers of passage Sandwich Terns. Counts away from the breeding colonies have only been made since 1994, when the species was included in the WeBS counts, with data available up to 1998 (Pollitt *et al.* 2000). A late summer peak count of *c.* 8,000 was reached in each of the first three seasons, falling to 5,700 in 1997 and rising to 6,900 in 1998.

There are no relevant data from elsewhere in the range.

5. Protection measures for population in UK

SPA suite

In the post-breeding season, the UK's SPA suite for Sandwich Terns supports, on average, 4,619 individuals. This amounts to about 11% of the British post-breeding population, and about 1% of the international population – although estimation of relative proportions in migration periods is always problematic owing to the high degree of turnover at sites (Moser & Carrier 1983; Frederiksen *et al.* 2001). In an all-Ireland context, no sites have been identified for Sandwich Terns during passage periods. The SPA suite contains three sites (Table 6.88b.1) where Sandwich Tern has been listed as a qualifying species.

6. Classification criteria

All of the sites in the UK that are currently known to support more than 1% of the national Sandwich Tern post-breeding population were considered under Stage 1.1, and all (Firth of Forth; Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast; and The Dee Estuary) were selected after consideration of Stage 2 judgements. As noted in section 5.6.5, knowledge of numbers of terns and other waterbirds is generally poor for migration periods and it is possible that additional sites of importance have yet to be identified.

Distribution map for passage Sandwich Tern SPA suite

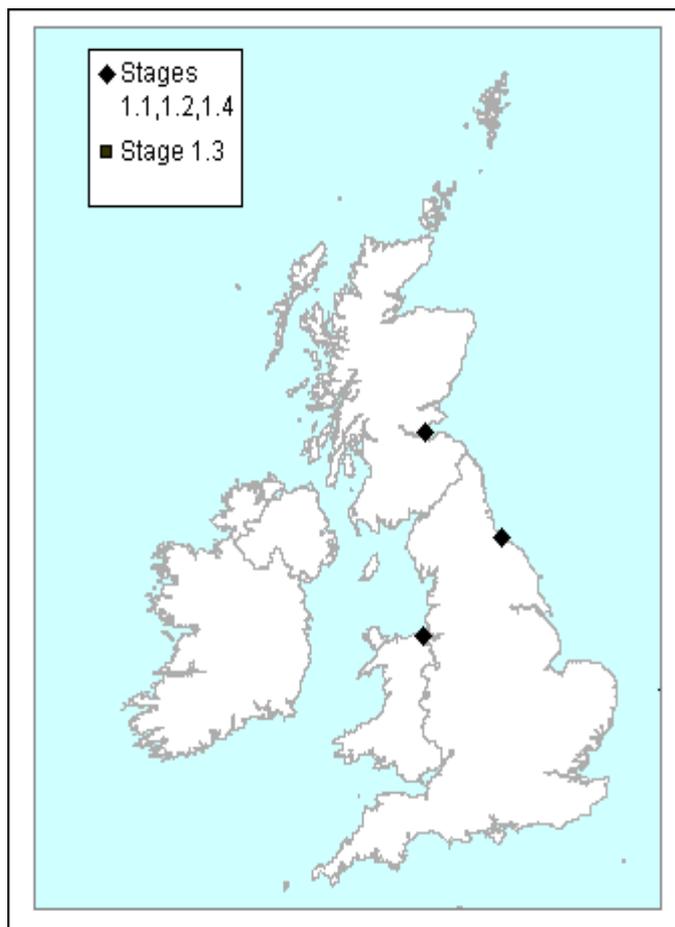


Table 6.88b.1 – SPA suite

Site name	Site total	% of biogeographical population	% of national population	Selection stage
Firth of Forth	1,611	0.4	3.8	1.1
Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast	2,190	0.6	5.2	1.1
The Dee Estuary	818	0.2	1.9	1.1
TOTALS	4,619	1.2%	11.0%	