



**Marine consultation summary document for
the extension of the
Outer Thames Estuary
Special Protection Area (SPA)**

January 2016

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1. Purpose of this document

This document provides guidance to stakeholders on the formal consultation on the proposed extension areas to the existing boundary of the Outer Thames Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA).

It explains:

- Natural England's proposal
- the background information which is helpful in understanding Natural England's proposal
- how to respond

2. Site maps

Available to view on the [consultation page](#).

3. Natural England's proposal for extensions to the boundary of the existing Outer Thames Estuary SPA

The Outer Thames Estuary SPA is being considered by Natural England for site extension as the site regularly supports more than 1% of the Great Britain breeding populations of three species listed in Annex 1 of the Birds Directive. The site is currently classified solely for non-breeding red-throated divers. This extension will offer new protection for little and common tern foraging areas enhancing the protection already afforded to their feeding and nesting areas in the adjacent coastal SPAs (Foulness SPA, Breydon Water SPA and Minsmere to Walberswick SPA).

The site summary provides the background information to support the proposal. The departmental brief provides the full scientific rationale for the proposal.

4. Site summary

The surrounding marine environment of the coastal SPAs is an important foraging ground during the breeding season. The seaward and alongshore extent is almost entirely determined by the boundaries of the existing Outer Thames Estuary SPA. The new areas are

- a. The inclusion of the River Blyth to encompass Blythburgh Water, a tidal lagoon directly adjacent to the northern parts of Minsmere-Walberswick SPA in addition to include areas up the coast (to Southwold), and down the coast (to Leiston) to provide continuous coverage for little terns foraging from this SPA;
- b. The inclusion of the River Yare channel to abut the eastern boundary of the existing Breydon Water SPA, and the lower River Bure, to provide continuous SPA coverage for common terns foraging from this SPA;
- c. The inclusion of coastal areas up the coast to Caister-on-Sea to provide coverage for little terns from Great Yarmouth North Denes foraging from this SPA, and common terns foraging from Breydon Water SPA;
- d. The inclusion of coastal areas down the coast to just south of Corton to provide coverage for common terns from Breydon Water foraging from this SPA;
- e. The inclusion of the estuarine areas up to Mean High Water within the Crouch and Roach Estuaries, overlapping the existing Crouch and Roach Estuaries SPA in the intertidal area, to

- provide SPA coverage for common terns foraging from the existing Foulness SPA; and
- f. The inclusion of a small additional marine area along the south Essex coast and overlapping part of the Foulness SPA, to the west of the existing Outer Thames Estuary SPA boundary, to provide coverage for common terns foraging from the existing Foulness SPA.

5. Summary of potential economic impacts

A preliminary assessment of the potential economic impacts of classifying the Outer Thames Estuary pSPA has been completed. This concluded that the additional costs imposed by the site's re-classification were relatively low as:

- The extension of the site covers important foraging areas for breeding common and little tern. As these birds are already associated with existing SPAs they are already afforded a degree of protection.

The potential costs that can be attributed directly to the re-classification of the site are those required for additional site monitoring. Based on experience of monitoring required at this site the additional costs are estimated to be £500 per survey.

6. How to respond

This consultation runs for 13 weeks from January 21st 2016 to April 21st 2016 and is run in accordance with the [government consultation principles](#).

- Read the departmental brief setting out the scientific case for the pSPA on the [consultations page](#)

You may also find it useful to read:

- [Establishing Marine Special Protection Areas:](#)

You may use these documents to help with your response. Please submit your response by completing the survey on the consultation page.

Results from the consultation will be submitted as a report to the Secretary of State for the Environment (SoS). The SoS will decide if this site is suitable for designation as a European Marine Site and make a recommendation to the European Commission.

If you don't have access to the Internet, please contact us for copies of the documents you need.

7. Confidentiality

Using and sharing your consultation response

Natural England will publish a summary of all responses on GOV.UK. It will include a list of names of organisations that responded to the consultation but not the names, addresses or other contact details of individual respondents. See Natural England's [personal information charter](#) on how your information is handled.

If you don't want your response - including your name, contact details and any other personal information - publicly available, explain clearly why you regard the information you have provided as confidential.

Natural England will acknowledge your explanation, but can't give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances, such as a request for release of information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not be regarded as binding on Natural England.

8. Use of maps

Natural England has provided maps which show the complete boundary and additional maps where necessary to support the explanations given for the boundary locations.

Maps which accompany the site summary should ideally be printed on A3 paper. If you don't have this facility:

- print the relevant chapter text
- view the associated map on your computer screen, using the zoom tool to view it at a suitable size