

## Directive 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds potential Special Protection Area (pSPA)

**Name:** Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore

**Unitary Authority/County:** Sefton, Wirral.

**Consultation proposal:** Mersey Narrows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and North Wirral Foreshore SSSI have been recommended as a potential Special Protection Area (pSPA) because of their European ornithological importance. It is particularly important as a feeding and roosting habitat for non-breeding wading birds and as a breeding site for terns. The pSPA boundary is coincident with the boundaries of North Wirral Foreshore SSSI and Mersey Narrows SSSI. For detail of pSPA boundary, see map.

**Site description:** Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore is located on the north west coast of England at the mouths of the Mersey and Dee estuaries. The site comprises intertidal habitats at Egremont foreshore, man-made lagoons at Seaforth and the extensive intertidal flats at North Wirral Foreshore. Egremont is most important as a feeding habitat for waders at low tide whilst Seaforth is primarily a high tide roost site, as well as a nesting site for terns. North Wirral Foreshore supports large numbers of feeding waders at low tide and also includes important high tide roost sites.

**Size of pSPA:** 2,078.41 ha.

### Qualifying species:

The site qualifies under **article 4.1** of the Directive (2009/147/EC) as it is used regularly by 1% or more of the Great Britain populations of the following species listed in Annex I in any season:

Species	Count (period)	% of population
Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i>	3,344 individuals – wintering (2004/05 - 2008/09)	5.5% GB
Little Gull <i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>	213 individuals – passage (2004/05 – 2008/09)	No national population estimate
Common Tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i>	177 pairs - breeding (2005 - 2009)  1,475 individuals – passage (2004 – 2008)	1.8% GB  No national population estimate

The site qualifies under **article 4.2** of the Directive (2009/147/EC) as it is used regularly by 1% or more of the biogeographical populations of the following regularly occurring migratory species (other than those listed in Annex I) in any season:

Migratory species	Count (period)	% of population
Knot <i>Calidris canutus islandica</i>	10,655 individuals - wintering (2004/05 - 2008/09)	2.4% W Europe/ Waddensea/Britain/Ireland

**Assemblage qualification:**

The site qualifies under **article 4.2** of the Directive (2009/147/EC) as it is used regularly by over 20,000 waterbirds (waterbirds as defined by the Ramsar Convention) in any season:

In the non-breeding season, the area regularly supports 32,366 individual waterbirds (five year peak mean 2004/05 - 2008/09), including: Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*, Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*, Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*, Sanderling *Calidris alba*, Knot *Calidris canutus*, Dunlin *Calidris alpina alpina*, Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica* and Redshank *Tringa totanus*.

Bird counts from: Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) database, Cheshire and Wirral Bird Reports 2004-2005 and the JNCC Seabird Monitoring Programme.