

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat

Name: Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore

Unitary Authority/County: Sefton, Wirral.

Consultation proposal: North Wirral Foreshore Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Mersey Narrows SSSI have been recommended as a proposed Ramsar (pRamsar) site because of their international importance. In particular, as feeding and roosting habitat for wintering wading birds. The pRamsar site boundary is coincident with the boundaries of North Wirral Foreshore SSSI and Mersey Narrows SSSI. For detail of pRamsar site 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. North Wirral Foreshore supports large numbers of feeding waders at low tide and also includes important high tide roost sites.

Size of pRamsar site: 2,078.41 ha.

International importance of pRamsar site: The pRamsar site is a Wetland of International Importance because:

The site qualifies under **Criterion 4** because it regularly supports plant and/or animal species at a critical stage in their life cycles, or provides refuge during adverse conditions:

During 2004/05 - 2008/09 the Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore pRamsar site supported important numbers of passage little gulls and common terns.

The site qualifies under **Criterion 5** because it regularly supports 20,000 or more waterbirds:

During the winters 2004/05 - 2008/09, the Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore pRamsar site supported an average peak of 32,402 individual waterbirds.

The site qualifies under **Criterion 6** because it regularly supports 1% of the individuals in the populations of the following species or subspecies of waterbird in any season:

During the winters 2004/05 - 2008/09, the Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore pRamsar site supported 2.4% of the *islandica* subspecies, W Europe/Waddensea/Britain/Ireland (wintering) population of knot and 2.8% of the *lapponica* subspecies, W Europe/NW Africa (wintering) population of bar-tailed godwits.

Species	Count (period)	% of population	Interest type
Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i>	10,655 individuals - wintering (2004/05 – 2008/09)	2.4% W Europe/ Waddensea/Britain/ Ireland	Criterion 6
Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i>	3,344 individuals – wintering (2004/05- 2008/09)	2.8% W Europe/NW Africa	Criterion 6
Little Gull <i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>	213 individuals – passage (2004/05 – 2008/09)	No national population estimate	Criterion 4
Common Tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i>	1,475 individuals – passage (2004 – 2008)	No national population estimate	Criterion 4

Waterbird assemblage	32,402 individuals (2004/05 – 2008/09)	Criterion 5
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Bird counts from: Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) database, Cheshire and Wirral Bird reports 2004-2009 and the JNCC Seabird Monitoring Programme.

Non-qualifying species of interest: The pRamsar site supports nationally important wintering numbers (five year peak means 2004/05 - 2008/09) of Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*, Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*, Sanderling *Calidris alba*, Dunlin *Calidris alpina alpina* and Redshank *Tringa totanus* as well as >2,000 Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*.