



**Cyfoeth
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**Natural
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Wales

**PROPOSED CHANGES TO
SKOKHOLM AND SKOMER SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA (SPA)**

Advice to the Welsh Government

NATURAL RESOURCES WALES

October 2013

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1. Introduction and background

This document contains Natural Resources Wales' advice to the Welsh Government regarding proposals to amend the basis on which the Skokholm and Skomer Special Protection Area (SPA) is classified under the EC Birds Directive. There are two main elements to this advice, which are based on two separate areas of work being conducted by the UK nature conservation agencies concerning revisions to the UK SPA network:

(i) To give effect to the findings of the '2001 SPA review' (Stroud *et al.* 2001). The 2001 review indicates changes are required to the list of species for which the site is considered to qualify as an SPA. The 2001 review itself does not recommend any boundary changes.

(ii) To amend the boundary of the SPA to include adjacent sea areas that are used by birds from the within the existing SPA for behaviours that are directly linked to their use of the breeding site.

1.1 The legal framework

The EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EEC¹) provides a legislative framework for the protection, management and control of naturally occurring wild birds of EU Member States.

Article 4 of the Birds Directive requires Member States to classify the 'most suitable territories in number and size' as special protection areas for the conservation of species listed in Annex I to the Directive, and to take similar measures for 'regularly occurring migratory species'. The classification of SPAs is to take into account the species' protection requirements in the geographical sea and land area where the Directive applies. According to case law of the European Court of Justice, the selection of areas as SPAs and the determination of their boundaries should not take account of social or economic considerations, but reflect only ornithological information.

SPAs in Wales are classified by the Welsh Ministers under section 2 of the European Communities Act 1972.² Once classified, SPAs become 'European sites' or 'European marine sites' under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended), and are subject to the provisions of those Regulations and Articles 6(2) to 6(4) of the Habitats and Species Directive.³ According to Welsh Government policy, potential SPAs (that is proposed SPAs that are the subject of consultation prior to a decision on whether to formally classify them) should have the same degree of protection as classified SPAs.

Skokholm and Skomer SPA was classified in 1982 by the then UK Secretary of State for the Environment.

¹ Formerly 79/409/EEC

² This is a general provision empowering ministers to give effect to obligations arising from EU legislation.

³ 92/43/EEC

1.2 The 2001 SPA review

All SPAs in the UK are classified on the basis that they support populations of one or more named species of birds, or an assemblage of birds, that are considered of European importance.

The 2001 SPA review was carried out by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), English Nature (now Natural England), Scottish Natural Heritage and Countryside Council for Wales (now Natural Resources Wales) and published in 2001 (Stroud *et al.* 2001). Its overall aim was to establish a consistent basis for the identification of the UK's suite of terrestrial SPAs, based on data from the mid 1990's. One of the main outputs of the review was a series of 'site accounts' for 243 individual SPAs in the UK, setting out the basis on which each site is considered to qualify as an SPA under the Birds Directive. These site accounts were derived using the best available ornithological data available at the time, generally covering the period 1991/1992 to 1995/1996, unless there were compelling reasons to use earlier or later data. These were the most current data available at the start of the review. The recommendations in the review are based on application of the 1999 SPA selection guidelines, which are published by JNCC on behalf of the UK statutory conservation agencies and relevant government departments. Please see SPA selection guidelines – The Birds Directive report on the JNCC website.

Most of the sites included in the 2001 review were already classified as SPAs. In many cases the site accounts in the 2001 review identify different species as qualifying interests to those listed on extant SPA citations. In these cases, the intended function of the 2001 SPA review is to provide the basis for reclassification of the sites.

Skokholm and Skomer SPA was included in the 2001 review. The basis on which Natural Resources Wales considers the site to qualify as an SPA under the Birds Directive has changed since the SPA was originally classified in 1982, and one of the purposes of this document is to recommend reclassification of the SPA to reflect the 2001 review data.

1.3 Marine extensions to breeding colony SPAs

Although the UK's suite of SPAs currently includes appropriate areas of terrestrial habitat for seabird interests, the requirement now is to identify more fully the most suitable territories, taking into account the species' protection requirements at sea, noting that the UK's obligations to identify SPAs applies equally to the UK's land and sea area.

The 2001 review did not consider marine SPAs, other than in relation to coastal and estuarine sites designated on the basis of their breeding seabird and wintering waterbird interests. Accordingly, the JNCC, on behalf of the UK conservation agencies, is considering the requirements of four types of marine SPAs:

1. Marine extensions to existing seabird breeding colonies on the coast
2. Inshore aggregations of non-breeding waterbirds
3. Offshore seabird aggregations
4. Other types of marine SPA

Part of this work has been completed and part is still ongoing. More information about this work can be found on the JNCC website under UK Marine SPAs

Skokholm and Skomer SPA is primarily a breeding colony SPA. The current proposal is therefore in relation to item 1 above only.

2. The extant Skokholm and Skomer SPA

The SPA was classified in 1982 by the then Secretary of State of the Environment to include Skomer Island. The SPA was reclassified in 1991 to additionally include Skokholm. The SPA includes the entire land area above mean low water mark of both islands, along with a number of adjacent rocks and islets.

The species listed as features of the existing SPA are the breeding populations of the following species, which meet Stage 1.1 or Stage 1.2 of the 1999 SPA selection guidelines (area is used regularly by at least 1% of the GB or relevant biogeographic region population):

Storm petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*;
Manx shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*;
Puffin *Fratercula arctica*;
Razorbill *Alca torda*.

The current SPA citation, map and copy of the 'Natura 2000 standard data form'⁴ are given in Appendix 1.

3. Proposed changes arising from the 2001 review

Table 1 below compares the basis of the extant SPA (according to the current citation) with the site account published in the 2001 SPA review. It is proposed that the 2001 SPA review site account be formally adopted as the basis for the SPA classification.

There are no proposed changes to the boundary of the SPA arising from the 2001 SPA review (but see proposed marine extension in section 4 below).

⁴ This is the standard form in which information on Natura 2000 sites (SPAs and SAC) is provided to the European Commission. The data forms for all UK SPAs and SAC are published on the JNCC website

Table 1 Comparison of the extant Skokholm and Skomer SPA with the 2001 SPA review site account

Species	Relevant article of Birds Directive ⁵	Extant SPA (citation)	2001 SPA review site account
Storm petrel <i>Hydrobates pelagicus</i> (breeding)	4.1	About 7000 pairs, representing about 5% of the EC breeding population	3500 pairs, representing at least 4.1% of the GB breeding population (count as at 1995)
Manx shearwater <i>Puffinus puffinus</i> (breeding)	4.2	About 137,000 pairs, representing about 49% of the EC population	150,968 pairs, representing at least 56.9% of the global breeding population (count as at late 1990s)
Puffin <i>Fratercula arctica</i> (breeding)	4.2	About 19,600 individuals about 1% of the population	9500 pairs, representing at least 1.1% of the global breeding population (count as at mid 1980s)
Razorbill <i>Alca torda</i> (breeding)	4.2	About 4300 individuals about 1% of the population	Not listed
Chough <i>Pyrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i> (breeding)	4.1	Not listed	4 pairs, representing at least 1.2% of the GB breeding population
Short eared owl <i>Asio flammeus</i> (breeding)	4.1	Not listed	6 pairs, representing at least 0.6% of the GB breeding population (count as at 1998)
Lesser black backed gull <i>Larus fuscus</i> (breeding)	4.2	Not listed	20,300 pairs, representing at least 16.4% of the breeding biogeographic region population (mean 1993-1997)
Assemblage of over 20,000 seabirds (breeding)	4.2	Not listed	394,260 ⁶ seabirds, including razorbill <i>Alca torda</i> , guillemot <i>Uria aalge</i> , kittiwake <i>Rissa tridactyla</i> , puffin <i>Fratercula arctica</i> , lesser black-backed gull <i>Larus fuscus</i> , Manx shearwater <i>Puffinus puffinus</i> , storm petrel <i>Hydrobates pelagicus</i> ⁷

The proposal is that the qualifying features of the SPA should be as follows, in accordance with the site account in the 2001 SPA review:

- Breeding population of storm petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus* (Stage 1.1 of the UK SPA selection guidelines)
- Breeding population of Manx shearwater *Puffinus puffinus* (Stage 1.2 of the UK SPA selection guidelines)

⁵ Article 4.1: species listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive. Article 4.2: regularly occurring migratory species and waterbird assemblages.

⁶ The figure published in the 2001 SPA review is 67,278, but this is an error. In August 2013, JNCC confirmed that the revised figure is 394,260 individuals. Further information is given in Appendix 2.

⁷ The main component species that characterise the assemblage have been identified (following Stroud *et al.* 2001). These are those where EITHER at least 1% of a national population is present within the assemblage, OR the number of the species present exceeds 2,000 individuals.

- Breeding population of puffin *Fratercula arctica* (Stage 1.2 of the UK SPA selection guidelines)
- Breeding population of chough *Pyrhocorax pyrrhocorax* (Stage 1.1 of the UK SPA selection guidelines)
- Breeding population of Short eared owl *Asio flammeus* (Stage 1.4 of the UK SPA selection guidelines⁸)
- Breeding population of Lesser black backed gull *Larus fuscus* (Stage 1.2 of the UK SPA selection guidelines)
- Breeding Assemblage of over 20,000 seabirds (Stage 1.3 of the UK SPA selection guidelines)

4. Proposed marine extension

4.1 Rationale

Seabirds breeding in colonies on land use marine waters immediately adjacent to the colony for a number of essential activities, such as preening, bathing, displaying, and other maintenance behaviours (Tasker & Leaper 1993, Reid & Webb 2005). Targeted surveys (McSorley *et al.* 2003) demonstrate significant use and clear ecological dependence by certain seabird species on these waters. Marine extensions to existing seabird breeding colony SPAs would recognise this essential aspect of the birds' ecological requirements, supporting the seabird colonies and ensuring compliance with the requirement in Article 4 of the Birds Directive to classify as SPAs the 'most suitable territories'.

Given that the essential activities mentioned above are not site specific, JNCC has endorsed generic guidance on how far extensions should be made into the marine environment, depending on which breeding species are present (McSorley *et al.* 2003, Reid & Webb 2005, McSorley *et al.* 2008). The guidance includes the following recommendations:

- colony SPAs for which Atlantic puffin, common guillemot, or razorbill are qualifying features be extended by seaward by 1 km;
- colony SPAs for which Northern gannet or Northern fulmar are qualifying features be extended seaward by 2 km;
- colony SPAs for which Manx shearwater is a qualifying feature be extended by at least 4 km, and further where site specific data supports this;
- marine SPA extensions are not appropriate for the following qualifying features: great cormorant, skuas, gulls, black-throated diver, great crested grebe, Slavonian grebe, common scoter, red-necked phalarope; and
- further work is still ongoing to determine if there is a case for any additional SPA protection for tern species, European shag and red-throated diver.

⁸ Short eared owl is wrongly listed in the 2001 SPA review as qualifying under Stage 1.1 of the UK SPA selection guidelines. The species qualifies for inclusion under Stage 1.4 of the SPA selection guidelines as it meets the following Stage 2 guidelines in any season: Species range; History of occupancy; Multi-species areas

4.2 The proposed marine extension

Of the species for which seaward extensions are recommended, breeding populations of puffin and Manx shearwater are qualifying interests of Skokholm and Skomer SPA. In addition, breeding razorbill and guillemot are component species of the seabird assemblage.

The extension that is being proposed is limited to areas on which the aforementioned species of the SPA are ecologically dependent, in this case for 'active behaviours' such as preening, bathing and displaying. Prior to dusk during the breeding season, adult shearwaters assemble in flocks or 'rafts' on the sea surface between 1 and 10 km from the colony shore. The rafts can consist of several thousand individuals. When darkness falls, these 'rafting' birds fly to their burrows to feed their chicks, regurgitating partly digested fish (Brooke 1990). It is this rafting area that the extension is proposed to cover.

The proposed marine extension area does not necessarily need to include numbers of birds that meet the SPA selection thresholds, as it is an extension from the existing SPA on land, which already hosts qualifying numbers of Manx shearwater and puffin (McSorley *et al.* 2008, McSorley *et al.* 2003).

In the summer of 2003, JNCC and Countryside Council for Wales (now Natural Resources Wales) undertook fieldwork on Skomer to ascertain the rafting area utilised by Manx shearwaters (McSorley *et al.* 2008). The methodology involved tagging individual breeding birds, which were then tracked using radio-telemetry, to determine the location of rafting birds and to assess how regularly rafts were used. This work concluded that application of the minimum generic Manx shearwater radius of 4km would be adequate at this particular site. This would fully encompass a 1 km extension for puffin, guillemot and razorbill.

It is therefore proposed that Skokholm and Skomer SPA be extended by a 4km radius to accommodate Manx shearwater and puffin as individual features, as well as guillemot and razorbill which are part of the seabird assemblage feature and that this extension be measured from the existing SPA seaward boundary (namely mean low water mark).

It is not currently proposed to include any additional land areas within the SPA, other than a small number of very small rock outcrops or islets that lie within a 4 km radius. It would not be practical to exclude these tiny areas from the extended SPA. Where the proposed extension abuts land areas which are not already within the SPA (i.e. the Welsh mainland), the proposed landward boundary is mean low water mark.

Figure 1 shows the extent of the interest feature as defined by a 4km radius. It also shows a proposed boundary for the SPA to encompass that 4km radius. When defining boundaries for marine sites it is usually necessary to strike a balance between following the extent of the interest feature, and keeping the boundary relatively simple (without too many 'turning points'). The proposed seaward boundary in Figure 1 is essentially an octagon which has been determined using previously agreed principles, i.e. that it should be as simple as possible, and be placed along lines of latitude or longitude or as diagonal lines between two points where this provides a more easily identified or more practical boundary (Johnston *et al.* 2004). A

larger scale definitive map will be prepared should the site go forward for consultation.

Table 2 provides the proposed coordinates of the recommended seaward boundary extensions (McSorley *et al.* 2008).

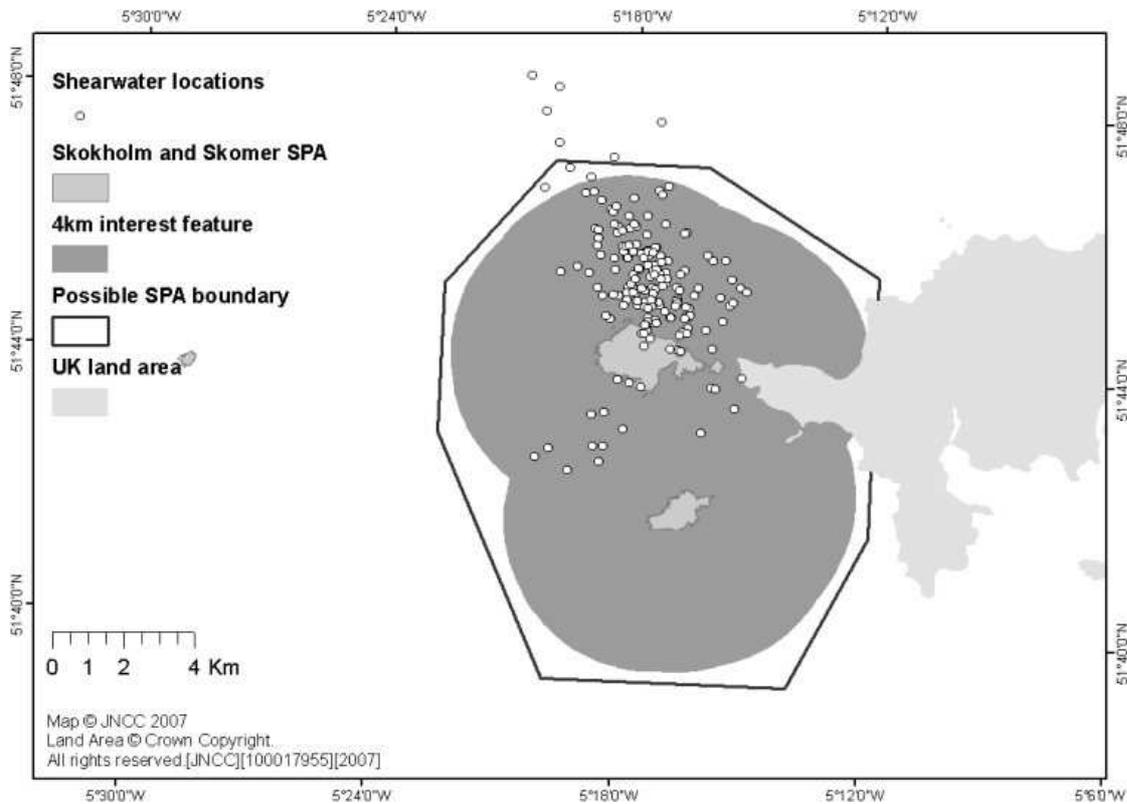


Figure1. Map of the Skokholm and Skomer SPA showing the recommended extent of the marine component of the interest feature, and a possible SPA boundary (McSorley *et al.* 2008)

Table 2. Coordinates of proposed new boundary for the Skokholm and Skomer SPA (given in degrees, minutes and decimal minutes (2 decimal places) of latitude and longitude

Longitude	Latitude
-5°16.20'	51°47.10'
-5°11.94'	51°45.52'
-5°11.94'	51°41.56'
-5°13.80'	51°39.24'
-5°19.76'	51°39.24'
-5°22.54'	51°42.92'
-5°22.54'	51°45.18'
-5°19.95'	51°47.10'

The seabed, water column and surface are included in the proposed extension.

The area of the existing SPA is 423.04 ha and the area of the proposed marine extension is 13,924.77ha, giving a total area of the extended SPA of approximately

14,347.81ha. This area figure for the existing site is taken from the original, hand drawn, legal map and may change slightly following capture onto an up-to-date digital base map. This does not mean the existing site boundary will have changed on the ground in any way and it will continue to follow the original features, although where it follows a water mark, e.g. Mean Low Water Mark, this is liable to change due to natural coastal processes. The area figure of the proposed extension is calculated by taking the area of the whole new SPA minus the area of the existing SPA. As the area of existing SPA site may change slightly due to reasons outlined above, the area figure of the proposed extension may also change slightly.

All of the proposed marine extension lies within the Pembrokeshire Marine Special Area of Conservation (SAC), designated by the National Assembly for Wales in December 2004 under the 1992 EC Habitats and Species Directive (92/43/EEC). Also, Skomer Marine Nature Reserve lies entirely within the area of proposed extension.

5. References

BROOKE, M. 1990. **The Manx shearwater**. T & AD Poyser, Academic Press Ltd. London.

JOHNSTON, C.M., TURNBULL, C.G., REID, J.B. & WEBB, A. 2004. **Marine Natura 2000: Update on Progress in Marine Natura. Paper to the Joint Committee Meeting**, March 2004.

MCSORLEY, C.A., DEAN, B.J., WEBB, A. & REID, J.B. 2003. **Seabird use of waters adjacent to colonies: Implications for seaward extensions to existing seabird breeding colony SPAs**. JNCC Report, No. 329

MCSORLEY, C.A., WILSON L.J., DUNN, T.E., GRAY, C., DEAN, B.J., WEBB, A. & REID, J. B. 2008. **Manx shearwater *Puffinus puffinus* evening rafting behaviour around colonies on Skomer, Rum and Bardsey: its spatial extent and implications for recommending seaward boundary extensions to existing colony Special Protection Areas in the UK**. JNCC Report No. 406.

REID, J.B. AND WEBB, A. 2005. **Marine Natura 2000 – Recommendations for the extension of existing seabird (colony) Special Protection Areas into the marine environment**. JNCC Committee paper 05 P14B.

STROUD, D.A., CHAMBERS, D., COOK, S., BUXTON, N., FRASER, B., CLEMENT, P., LEWIS, I., MCLEAN, I., BAKER, H. & WHITEHEAD, S. 2001. **The UK SPA network: its scope and content**. JNCC, Peterborough.
Volume 1: Rationale for the selection of sites. 90 pp.
Volume 2: Species accounts. 438 pp.
Volume 3: Site accounts. 392 pp.

TASKER, M.L. & LEAPER, G.M. 1993. **Protecting marine birds in the United Kingdom: A review of the United Kingdom's international commitments, and recommendations for action**. Unpubl. JNCC Report, Peterborough.

Appendix 1: Citation, map and Natura 2000 standard data form for extant Skokholm and Skomer SPA

Citation

EC DIRECTIVE 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds: Special Protection Areas

CITATION FOR SKOMER ISLAND AND SKOKHOLM, DYFED

The islands qualify under Article 4.1 by virtue of supporting about 7,000 pairs of storm petrel Hydrobates pelagicus (about 5% of the EC breeding population) .

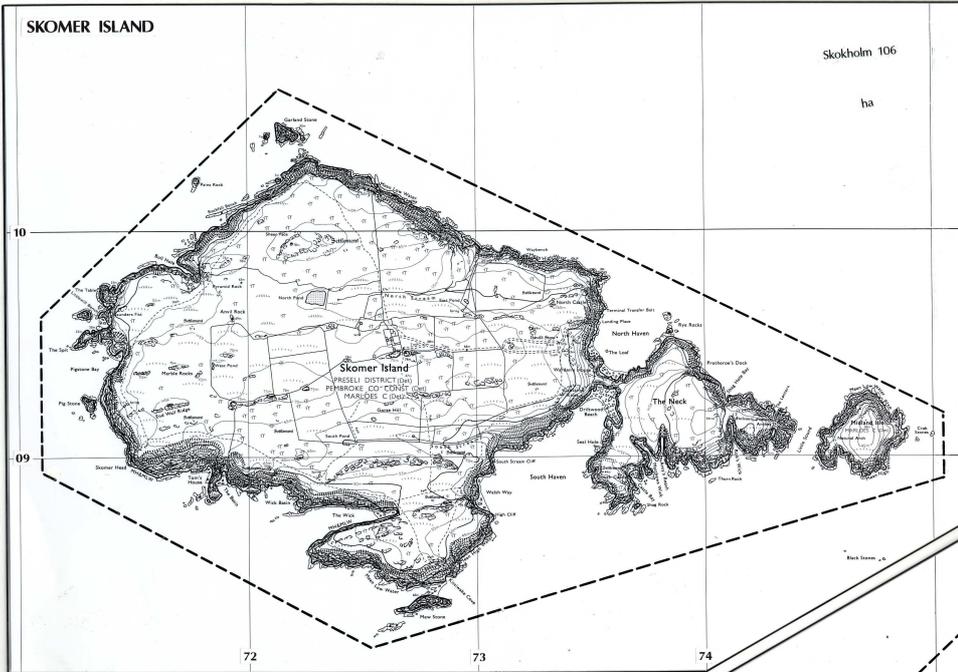
The islands qualify also under Article 4.2 by virtue of supporting about 137,000 pairs of Manx shearwater Puffinus puffinus (about 49% of the EC population), 4,300 individual razorbills Alca torda (1%) and 19,600 individual puffins" Fratercula arctica (1%).

Supplementary Information

The islands contain a range of habitats including cliff, maritime grassland, heathland, acid grassland, bracken and marsh. The vegetation is considerably modified by the manuring and trampling effect of seabirds and in particular the grazing activities of rabbits Oryctolagus cuniculus.

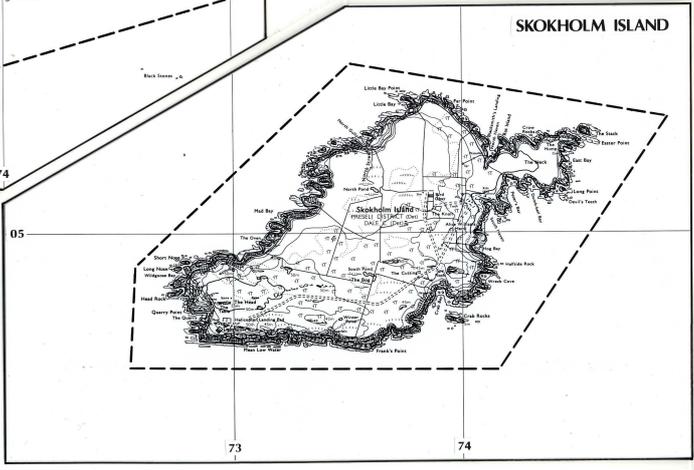
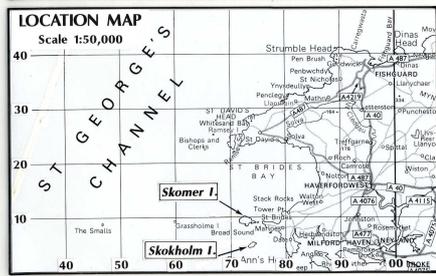
The islands hold the largest concentration of breeding seabirds in England and Wales. In addition to those species mentioned in the above citation, the islands have a range of other breeding seabirds, including herring gull Larus argentatus, kittiwake Rissa tridactyla and guillemot Uria aalge. The islands hold also the largest colony of nesting lesser blackbacked gulls Larus fuscus in Britain. Several Annex 1 species nest, including peregrine falcon Falco peregrinus, short-eared owl Asio flammeus and chough Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax, and barnacle geese Branta leucopsis overwinter.

Appendix 1: Map



Skokholm 106
ha

CINGOR CEFN GWYLD CYMRU		COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES	
Code	3003953	Store	P
Checked	MR	Date	20/05/94
SITE			
SKOKHOLM AND SKOMER			
TITLE			
Special Protection Area			
Ref.	SM 50	Scale	1:15,000
Drawn by	GB		
KEY			
--- S.P.A. is all land within the pecked line above Mean Low Water Mark and is liable to change			
31/08/82 Date of first designation			
05/08/91 Date of designation of extended site			
Area			
[] Skokholm 106 ha			
Skomer 316 ha			
Total site area 422 ha			
<small>Based upon the Ordnance Survey map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Crown copyright reserved.</small>			



NATURA 2000

STANDARD DATA FORM

FOR SPECIAL PROTECTION AREAS (SPA)
FOR SITES ELIGIBLE FOR IDENTIFICATION AS SITES OF COMMUNITY IMPORTANCE (SCI)
AND
FOR SPECIAL AREAS OF CONSERVATION (SAC)

1. Site identification:

1.1 Type **1.2 Site code**

1.3 Compilation date **1.4 Update**

1.5 Relationship with other Natura 2000 sites

1.6 Respondent(s)

1.7 Site name

1.8 Site indication and designation classification dates

date site proposed as eligible as SCI	
date confirmed as SCI	
date site classified as SPA	198208
date site designated as SAC	

2. Site location:

2.1 Site centre location

longitude	latitude
05 17 27 W	51 44 10 N

2.2 Site area (ha) **2.3 Site length (km)**

2.5 Administrative region

NUTS code	Region name	% cover
UK912	Dyfed	98.57%

2.6 Biogeographic region

Alpine
 Atlantic
 Boreal
 Continental
 Macaronesia
 Mediterranean

3. Ecological information:

3.1 Annex I habitats

Habitat types present on the site and the site assessment for them:

Annex I habitat	% cover	Representativity	Relative surface	Conservation status	Global assessment

3.2 Annex I birds and regularly occurring migratory birds not listed on Annex I

Code	Species name	Population			Site assessment				
		Resident	Migratory			Population	Conservation	Isolation	Global
			Breed	Winter	Stage				
A200	<i>Alca torda</i>		4260	I		B		C	
A204	<i>Fratercula arctica</i>		9500	P		B		C	
A014	<i>Hydrobates pelagicus</i>		>3100	P		B		B	
A013	<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>		150968	P		A		C	

4. Site description:

4.1 General site character

Habitat classes	% cover
Marine areas. Sea inlets	
Tidal rivers. Estuaries. Mud flats. Sand flats. Lagoons (including saltwork basins)	
Salt marshes. Salt pastures. Salt steppes	
Coastal sand dunes. Sand beaches. Machair	
Shingle. Sea cliffs. Islets	100.0
Inland water bodies (standing water, running water)	
Bogs. Marshes. Water fringed vegetation. Fens	
Heath. Scrub. Maquis and garrigue. Phygrana	
Dry grassland. Steppes	
Humid grassland. Mesophile grassland	
Alpine and sub-alpine grassland	
Improved grassland	
Other arable land	
Broad-leaved deciduous woodland	
Coniferous woodland	
Mixed woodland	
Non-forest areas cultivated with woody plants (including orchards, groves, vineyards, dehesas)	
Inland rocks. Scree. Sands. Permanent snow and ice	
Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites)	
Total habitat cover	100%

4.1 Other site characteristics

Soil & geology:

Acidic, Basalt, Basic, Igneous, Nutrient-poor, Nutrient-rich, Sandstone, Sedimentary, Shingle

Geomorphology & landscape:

Coastal, Island, Islands

4.2 Quality and importance

ARTICLE 4.1 QUALIFICATION (79/409/EEC)

During the breeding season the area regularly supports:

<i>Hydrobates pelagicus</i> (World)	at least 3.6% of the GB breeding population Count, as at 1995
--	--

ARTICLE 4.2 QUALIFICATION (79/409/EEC)

During the breeding season the area regularly supports:

<i>Alca torda</i>	0.5% of the breeding population Count, as at 1997
<i>Fratercula arctica</i>	0.5% of the breeding population Count, as at mid-1980s
<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>	51.3% of the breeding population Count, as at late 1990s

4.3 Vulnerability

The bird populations on these islands are vulnerable to pollution at sea, either directly by contact or indirectly via food sources. Certain changes in fishing methods will also affect the birds' food source and cause direct mortality. Skomer Island is subject to intensive seasonal recreational pressures. Management of the islands visitors by the Dyfed Wildlife Trust has prevented any significant disturbance, and the Marine Nature Reserve minimises disturbance from the sea around Skomer through a code of conduct and by having a wardening presence. There is avian predation (especially by great black-backed gulls), particularly of the burrow-nesting storm petrels, puffins and Manx shearwaters. Colonisation of the islands by mammalian predators such as mink and rats are of special concern. Management plans are in place to control the threats if they increase or arise.

5. Site protection status and relation with CORINE biotopes:

5.1 Designation types at national and regional level

Code	% cover
UK01 (NNR)	74.0
UK04 (SSSI/ASSI)	98.6

Appendix 2: Supplementary information

1. AREA FIGURES ON MAPS

For the reasons outlined below, the area figure on the public consultation maps produced by Natural Resources Wales showing the proposed marine extension to the SPA, will show a slightly different area figure for the existing site compared to the existing SPA hand drawn map.

(i) In the mid 1980's, the original SPA maps were hand drawn on small scale base maps and were captured digitally at a later date when GIS technology was adopted by the UK conservation agencies. The data have subsequently undergone a Positional Accuracy Improvement Update by Ordnance Survey (OS), a programme carried out across the UK, in addition to being transposed from OS Landline, the largest available mapping scale available at the time, to OS Master Map. This series of changes has introduced slight changes to the area figure.

(ii) In line with standard practice, the maps of potential site extensions in proposals submitted to Welsh Government are provided at a small scale and area figures quoted are approximate only. Following approval to proceed to public consultation phase, Natural Resources Wales prepares definitive maps, captured at the largest scale of mapping available. The minor difference in site area figures is due to the more accurate area figure calculation produced by mapping at a larger scale.

2. CORRECTION TO SIZE OF THE SEABIRD ASSEMBLAGE

The original assemblage number given in the 2001 SPA Review was 67,278 (Stroud et al, 2001). This was obviously incorrect as the assemblage included Manx shearwaters as a species but these were omitted, as on their own they add up to 301,936 individuals. To produce an assemblage that included the Manx shearwater the original assemblage population of 67,278 was added to the 301,936 Manx shearwaters to give a figure of 369,214. However this figure did not stand up to closer scrutiny so a new analysis of the data was completed (See Table below). This shows that the assemblage figure should actually be 394,260. JNCC have agreed with this figure and with the way that it has been calculated.

Skokholm & Skomer SPA Assemblage Bird Counts

	Natura 2000 form (existing, legal form with EC)	2001 Review	Assemblage numbers in 2001 (individuals)
Razorbill (individuals)	4,260	no longer separate feature	5,990
Puffin (pairs)	9,500	9,500	19,000
European storm petrel(pairs)	>3100	3,500	7,000
Manx shearwater (pairs)	150,968	150,968	301,936
Lesser Black-backed gull (pairs)	not a feature	20,300	40,600
Short-eared owl (pairs)	not a feature	6	
Chough (pairs)	not a feature	4	
Guillemot			15,262
Kittiwake			4,472
Seabird Assemblage	not a feature	67,278	394,260

Reference:

Stroud, DA, Chambers, D, Cook, S, Buxton, N, Fraser, B, Clement, P, Lewis, P, McLean, I, Baker, H & Whitehead, S (eds). 2001. *The UK SPA network: its scope and content*. JNCC, Peterborough.