

Marine Bird SPAs
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Marine Bird Special Protection Areas consultation (additional proposals)

The Scottish Wildlife Trust welcomes the opportunity to comment on the additional five proposed SPAs for Scottish and English waters. In line with our 25-year vision for a *'network of healthy, resilient ecosystems supporting expanding communities of native species across large areas of Scotland's land, water and seas'*, the Trust considers the implementation of the five pSPAs will provide a valuable contribution to the coherence of Europe's Natura 2000 network of protected areas and also to Scotland's MPA network. Therefore, **the Trust strongly supports the proposal.**

The Trust welcomes the continued commitment of the Scottish Government to identifying and protecting ecologically important sites in Scotland's marine environment and safeguarding marine biodiversity through the implementation of EU legislation. Scotland's coastal habitats support a wide-ranging suite of internationally important seabird populations that are currently facing significant declines and the Trust considers the additional pSPAs will provide a valuable and important contribution to the already established network of SPAs in Scotland in aiding the recovery of these populations. The protection of these sites through the EU Birds Directive will assist with identifying and mitigating potentially damaging activities and provide the foundations for improving the ecological status of Scotland's coastal waters.

The Trust is pleased to see the swift advancement of these additional pSPAs, as they signify an important step towards protecting the offshore foraging sites in Scotland's waters. The inclusion of the Solway Firth pSPA also highlights the importance of protecting sites that cross jurisdictional boundaries and signifies a productive collaboration between the UK and Scottish governments towards ensuring these important sites are protected.

Please could you keep the Trust informed of how this consultation progresses.

Yours sincerely,

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