BERWICK BANK WIND FARM
OFFSHORE HABITATS REGULATIONS APPRAISAL

APPENDIX 3A: EUROPEAN SITE SUMMARIES FOR SPECIAL PROTECTION AREAS AND RAMSAR SITES

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Habitats Regulations Appraisal – Appendix 3A

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TABLES

ACRONYMS

Acronym	Description
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
MCZ	Marine Conservation Zone
MPA	Marine Protected Area
N/A	Not Applicable
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SACO	Supplementary Advice on Conservation Objectives
SCM	Site Condition Monitoring
SMP	Seabird Monitoring Programme
SPA	Special Protection Area
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
UK	United Kingdom

Units

Unit	Description
%	Percentage
ha	Hectares
km	Kilometres (distance)
km^2	Square Kilometres
m	Metres (distance)
nm	Nautical mile (distance)

1.1. OUTER FIRTH OF FORTH AND ST ANDREWS BAY COMPLEX SPA

1.1.1. SITE OVERVIEW

1. The Outer Firth of Forth and St Andrews Bay Complex Special Protection Area (SPA) is a large estuarine/marine site off the south-east coast of Scotland. It stretches from Arbroath in the north to St. Abb's Head in the south and encompasses the Firth of Forth, the outer Firth of Tay and St. Andrews Bay, as well as offshore waters to the east of the Isle of May. It covers an area of c. 2,721 km^2, extends offshore beyond 12 nm and complements adjacent SPAs, such as the Firth of Forth SPA, the Forth Islands SPA, the Imperial Lock Dock SPA and the Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary SPA.

1. The firths, inlets and sandy bays are used by seabirds and waterbirds to feed, moult, rest and roost, attracting one of the largest and most diverse marine bird concentrations in Scotland. They lie close to the nesting sites of a large number of birds breeding in the area during the summer season. During this time, the SPA provides feeding grounds for thousands of gannets (*Morus bassanus*), kittiwakes (*Rissa tridactyla*), puffins (*Fratercula arctica*) and the largest concentration of common terns (*Sterna hirundo*) in Scotland.

2. The SPA is also an important refuge for birds which have migrated thousands of miles from their breeding grounds in northern Europe and western Siberia to spend the winter in the area. During this time of the year, the site supports more than 35% of the British wintering populations of eider (*Somateria mollissima*) and over 23% of the British wintering populations of velvet scoter (*Melanitta fusca*), along with the largest Scottish concentrations of red-throated diver (*Gavia stellata*) and little gull (*Larus minutus*).

3. Key literature sources include:

   - Outer Firth of Forth and St Andrews Bay Complex SPA - NatureScot and JNCC Conservation Advice for Marine Protected Areas (NatureScot and JNCC 2022)
   - Outer Firth of Forth and St Andrews Bay Complex SPA - Citation (NatureScot 2020a);
   - Outer Firth of Forth and St Andrews Bay Complex SPA – Conservation Objectives (NatureScot 2021a);
   - Outer Firth of Forth and St Andrews Bay Complex SPA Natura 2000 - Standard Data Form (JNCC 2020a); and
   - Outer Firth of Forth and St Andrews Bay Complex SPA - Site Details (JNCC 2020b).

1.1.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

4. The site is designated for the following features:

   - Red-throated diver (non-breeding)
   - Slavonian grebe (non-breeding) *Podiceps auritus*
   - Eider (non-breeding)
   - Long-tailed duck (non-breeding) *Clangula hyemalis*
   - Common scoter (non-breeding) *Melanitta nigra*
   - Velvet scoter (non-breeding)
   - Goldeneye (non-breeding) *Bucephala clangula*
   - Red-breasted merganser (non-breeding) *Mergus serrator*
   - Arctic tern (breeding) *Sterna paradisaea*
   - Common tern
   - Shag *Gulosus aristotelis*
   - Gannet (breeding)
   - Puffin (breeding)
   - Kittiwake (breeding and non-breeding) *Rissa tridacyla*
   - Manx shearwater (breeding) *Puffinus puffinus*
   - Guillemot (breeding and non-breeding) *Uria aalge*
   - Razorbill (non-breeding) *Alca torda*
   - Herring gull (breeding and non-breeding) *Larus argentatus*
   - Little gull (non-breeding)
   - Black-headed gull (non-breeding) *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*
   - Common gull (non-breeding) *Larus canus*
   - Breeding seabird assemblage
   - Non-breeding seabird assemblage
   - Non-breeding waterfowl assemblage

1.1.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

5. The Firth of Forth, along with the Firth of Tay, is a major geomorphic feature formed at the end of the last glaciation. The mid Firth of Forth holds a belt of mud-rich sediments whilst along the shores sandy gravels and shell material prevail. As the estuary widens towards the outer firth, there are extensive areas of sandy and gravelly muds and fine sediments. In contrast, St. Andrew's Bay contains clean sands and gravel with only small areas of muddy sediments. Further offshore the seabed consists of muddy sand carried out of the estuaries, as well as gravelly sand and clean shell sand.

6. The area supports a wide variety of pelagic and demersal fish, including lesser sandeel (*Ammodytes marinus*), and crustaceans, molluscs and marine worms. The large range of prey species available for seabirds and waterbirds in shallow and sheltered waters is reflected in the diversity of bird species using the area throughout the year.

1.1.4. CONSERVATION ADVICE

7. Advice on the management and operations of Outer Firth of Forth and St Andrews Bay Complex SPA can be found in the Conservation and Management Advice document for the site (NatureScot and JNCC 2022).

8. The conservation objectives for the site are:

   - To ensure that the qualifying features of the Outer Firth of Forth and St Andrews Bay Complex SPA are in favourable condition and make an appropriate contribution to achieving Favourable Conservation Status.
   - To ensure that the integrity of the Outer Firth of Forth and St Andrews Bay Complex SPA is restored in the context of environmental changes by meeting the following objectives for each qualifying feature:
     - The populations of qualifying features are viable components of the site.
     - The distributions of the qualifying features throughout the site are maintained by avoiding significant disturbance of the species.
     - The supporting habitats and processes relevant to the qualifying features and their prey/food resources are maintained, or where appropriate restored, at the Outer Firth of Forth and St Andrews Bay Complex SPA.

1.1.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

9. Table 1.1 is based on information presented in NatureScot and JNCC (2022) and provides a summary of the protected features within the site, their condition within the site (where known) based on the latest NatureScot Site Condition Monitoring (SCM) assessment, and the broader conservation status of the protected features. Current trends for relevant seabird colonies can be found in JNCC (2021) and are

based on trends derived from the Seabird Monitoring Programme (SMP) including, where available, Seabird Counts census data.

10. Feature condition refers to the condition of the protected feature at a site level. Broader conservation status is the overall conservation status of the feature within the UK based on Stanbury *et al*., (2021).

Table 1.1 Outer Firth of Forth and St Andrews Bay Complex SPA Feature Condition Assessment

Qualifying Feature	Feature Condition	Assessment Date	UK Conservation Status
Red-throated diver	Favourable	Not yet assessed	Green
Slavonian grebe	Favourable	Not yet assessed	Red
Eider	Favourable	Not yet assessed	Amber
Long-tailed duck	Favourable	Not yet assessed	Red
Common scoter	Favourable	Not yet assessed	Red
Velvet scoter	Favourable	Not yet assessed	Red
Goldeneye	Favourable	Not yet assessed	Red
Red-breasted merganser	Favourable	Not yet assessed	Amber
Arctic tern	Favourable at breeding colony SPA	2016	Amber
Common tern	Unfavourable at breeding colony SPAs	2017	Amber
Shag	Unfavourable at breeding colony SPAs Favourable (non-breeding)	2016 Not yet assessed	Red
Gannet	Favourable at breeding colony SPA	2014	Amber.
Puffin	Favourable at breeding colony SPA	2017	Red
Kittiwake	Unfavourable at breeding colony SPAs	2016	Red
Manx shearwater	Favourable	Not yet assessed	Amber
Guillemot	Favourable at breeding colony SPA Favourable (non-breeding)	2016 Not yet assessed	Amber
Razorbill	Favourable	Not yet assessed	Amber
Herring gull	Unfavourable at breeding colony SPAs Favourable (non-breeding)	2014 Not yet assessed	Red
Little gull	Favourable	Not yet assessed	Green
Black-headed gull	Favourable	Not yet assessed	Amber
Common gull	Favourable	Not yet assessed	Amber
Breeding seabird assemblage	Not provided	Not provided	N/A
Non-breeding seabird assemblage	Not provided	Not provided	N/A
Non-breeding waterfowl assemblage	Not provided	Not provided	N/A

1.2. ST. ABB'S HEAD TO FAST CASTLE SPA

1.2.1. SITE OVERVIEW

11. St Abb's Head to Fast Castle SPA comprises an area of sea cliffs and coastal strip stretching over 10 km along the Berwickshire Coast north of the village of St. Abbs. The boundary of the SPA overlaps with that of St Abb's Head to Fast Castle Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and the seaward extension extends approximately 1 km into the marine environment to include the seabed, water column and surface.

12. Key literature sources include:

- St. Abb's Head to Fast Castle SPA - Citation (NatureScot, 2009a);
- St. Abb's Head to Fast Castle SPA - Conservation Objectives (NatureScot, 2009b);
- St. Abb's Head to Fast Castle SPA - Features (NatureScot, 2014a); and
- St. Abb's Head to Fast Castle SPA - Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC, 2022a).

1.2.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

13. The site is designated for the following features:

- Breeding seabird assemblage including the following additional named components:
  - Guillemot
  - Razorbill
  - Herring gull
  - Kittiwake
  - Shag

1.2.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

14. The St Abb's Head to Fast Caste SPA covers an area of 1736.75 ha in south-eastern Scotland. Most of the site is characterised by marine areas and sea inlets however there are number of other habitat types which make up the rest of the area. These include grassland, steppes, inland water, other land, inland rocks, sands, woodland, heath, scrub and marsh. The ecological important of the site comes from the fact it supports nationally important bird species populations.

1.2.4. CONSERVATION ADVICE

15. Advice on management and operations for St. Abb's Head to Fast Castle SPA is not available.

16. The conservation objectives for the site are:

- To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and
- To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:
  - Population of the species as a viable component of the site
  - Distribution of the species within site
  - Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
  - Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
  - No significant disturbance of the species

1.2.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

17. Table 1.2 provides a summary of the protected features within the site, their condition within the site (where known) based on the latest NatureScot SCM assessment, and the broader conservation status of the protected features. Current trends for relevant seabird colonies can be found in JNCC (2021) and are based on trends derived from the SMP including, where available, Seabird Counts census data.

18. Feature condition refers to the condition of the protected feature at a site level. Broader conservation status is the overall conservation status of the feature within the UK based on Stanbury *et al*., (2021).

Table 1.2: St. Abb's Head to Fast Castle SPA Feature Condition Assessment

Qualifying Feature	Feature Condition	Assessment Date	UK Conservation Status
Breeding seabird assemblage	Unfavourable declining	2014	N/A
Guillemot*	Favourable maintained	2013	Amber
Razorbill*	Favourable maintained	2013	Amber
Herring gull*	Unfavourable declining	2014	Red
Kittiwake*	Unfavourable declining	2014	Red
Shag	Unfavourable declining	2014	Red

**Named components of the assemblage only.*

1.3. FORTH ISLANDS SPA

1.3.1. SITE OVERVIEW

19. Forth Islands SPA consists of a series of islands supporting the main seabird breeding colonies in the Firth of Forth. The islands of Inchmickery, Isle of May, Fidra, The Lamb, Craigleith and Bass Rock were classified on 25 April 1990. The extension to the site, classified on the 16 February 2004 consists of the island of Long Craig, which, at the time of classification, supported the largest colony of roseate tern in Scotland. The seaward extension extends approximately 2 km into the marine environment to include the seabed, water column and surface.

20. The boundary of the SPA overlaps with the boundaries of the following SSSIs: Long Craig, Inchmickery, Forth Islands, Bass Rock and the Isle of May. A small overlap also occurs with the Firth of Forth SPA.

21. Key literature sources include:

- Forth Islands SPA - Citation (NatureScot 2018a);
- Forth Islands SPA - Conservation Objectives (NatureScot 2018b);
- Forth Islands SPA - Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC 2018a); and
- Forth Islands SPA - Features (NatureScot 2018c).

1.3.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

22. The site is designated for the following features:

- Sandwich tern (breeding) *Thalasseus sandvicensis*
- Roseate tern (breeding) *Sterna dougallii*
- Arctic tern (breeding)
- Common tern (breeding)
- Gannet (breeding)
- Lesser black-backed (breeding) gull *Larus fuscus*
- Puffin (breeding)
- Shag
- Breeding seabird assemblage including the following additional named components:
  - Guillemot
  - Razorbill
  - Kittiwake
  - Herring gull
  - Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

1.3.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

23. The Forth Islands SPA covers an area of 9797.01 ha. It consists of several islands split over four separate areas in the Forth estuary. Most of the site is covered by marine areas and sea inlets, however, other environments such as inland water, shingle sea cliffs, steppes and grassland also are present and make up the remaining area. The ecological importance of the site stems from the fact it supports large populations of bird species of European importance and large populations of migratory species of European importance.

1.3.4. CONSERVATION ADVICE

24. Advice on management and operations for Forth Islands SPA is unavailable.

25. The conservation objectives for the site are:

- To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and
- To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:
  - Population of the species as a viable component of the site
  - Distribution of the species within site
  - Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
  - Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
  - No significant disturbance of the species

1.3.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

26. Table 1.3 provides a summary of the protected features within the site, their condition within the site (where known) based on the latest NatureScot SCM assessment, and the broader conservation status of the protected features. Current trends for relevant seabird colonies can be found in JNCC (2021) and are based on trends derived from the SMP including, where available, Seabird Counts census data.

27. Feature condition refers to the condition of the protected feature at a site level. Broader conservation status is the overall conservation status of the feature within the UK based on Stanbury *et al*., (2021).

Table 1.3: Forth Islands SPA Feature Condition Assessment

Qualifying Feature	Feature Condition	Assessment Date	UK Conservation Status
Breeding seabird assemblage	Favourable declining	2016	N/A
Kittiwake*	Unfavourable declining	2016	Red
Herring gull*	Favourable maintained	2016	Red
Lesser black-backed gull	Favourable maintained	2016	Amber
Sandwich tern	Unfavourable declining	2016	Amber
Roseate tern	Unfavourable declining	2016	Red
Common tern	Unfavourable declining	2017	Amber
Arctic tern	Favourable declining	2016	Amber
Guillemot*	Favourable maintained	2016	Amber
Razorbill*	Favourable maintained	2016	Amber
Puffin	Favourable declining	2017	Red
Gannet	Favourable maintained	2014	Amber
Cormorant*	Unfavourable declining	2016	Green
Shag	Unfavourable declining	2016	Red

**Named components of the assemblage only.*

1.4. FOWLSHEUGH SPA

1.4.1. SITE OVERVIEW

28. Fowlsheugh SPA, located 4 km south of Stonehaven on the east coast of Aberdeenshire in north-east Scotland, is a 10.15 ha stretch of sheer cliffs, between 30 m and 60 m high, cut mostly from basalt and conglomerate rocks of Old Red Sandstone age.

29. The boundary of the SPA overlaps with the boundaries of Fowlsheugh SSSI. The seaward extension extends 2 km into the marine environment and includes the seabed, water column and surface.

30. Key literature sources include:

- Fowlsheugh SPA - Citation (NatureScot 2009c);
- Fowlsheugh SPA - Conservation Objectives (NatureScot 2009c);
- Fowlsheugh SPA - Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC 2022b); and
- Fowlsheugh SPA - Features (NatureScot 2009e).

1.4.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

31. The site is designated for the following features:

- Breeding seabird assemblage including the following additional named components:
  - Guillemot
  - Kittiwake
  - Razorbill
  - Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*
  - Herring gull

1.4.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

32. The Fowlsheugh SPA covers an area of 1303.23 ha just south of Stonehaven on the Aberdeenshire coast. The majority of the site is characterised by marine areas and sea inlets however small areas of shingle, sea cliffs and Islets exist. There is also a small amount of humid and mesophile grassland. The ecological importance of the site comes from its large migratory bird populations.

1.4.4. CONSERVATION ADVICE

33. Advice on management and operations of Fowlsheugh SPA is unavailable.

34. The conservation objectives for the site are:

- To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and
- To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:
  - Population of the species as a viable component of the site
  - Distribution of the species within site
  - Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
  - Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
  - No significant disturbance of the species

1.4.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

35. Table 1.4 provides a summary of the protected features within the site, their condition within the site (where known) based on the latest NatureScot SCM assessment, and the broader conservation status of the protected features. Current trends for relevant seabird colonies can be found in JNCC (2021) and are based on trends derived from the SMP including, where available, Seabird Counts census data.

36. Feature condition refers to the condition of the protected feature at a site level. Broader conservation status is the overall conservation status of the feature within the UK based on Stanbury *et al*., (2021).

Table 1.4: Fowlsheugh SPA Feature Condition Assessment

Qualifying Feature	Feature Condition	Assessment Date	UK Conservation Status
Breeding seabird assemblage	Favourable maintained	1999	N/A
Guillemot*	Favourable maintained	1999	Amber
Kittiwake*	Favourable maintained	1999	Red
Razorbill*	Favourable maintained	1999	Amber
Fulmar*	Favourable maintained	1999	Amber
Herring gull*	Unfavourable declining	1999	Red

**Named components of the assemblage only.*

1.5. FARNE ISLANDS SPA

1.5.1. SITE OVERVIEW

37. The Farne Islands SPA was first classified in 1985 for nesting Arctic, common, roseate, and Sandwich terns, as well as breeding guillemot.

38. The SPA designation also includes a breeding seabird assemblage which includes kittiwake, shag, cormorant, puffin and guillemot as named components, plus the terns described above. Eider also nest on Inner Farne although they are not present in significant numbers to constitute as part of the SPA designation. Birds from the islands forage in the surrounding waters, and these are now protected through the Northumberland Marine SPA.

39. The Farne Islands SPA is managed by the National Trust who have permanent rangers stationed on the main island, they monitor bird activity and help manage visitors as these islands are visited regularly by tourists on boat trips. A voluntary code of conduct is in place for recreational boat users using the area with a management plan in order to manage visitors.

40. Key literature sources include:

- Farne Islands SPA - Site Details (Natural England 2017a);
- Farne Islands - Conservation Objectives (Natural England 2019a);
- Farne Islands SPA - Citation (Natural England 2017b);
- Farne Islands SPA - Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC 2018b);
- Farne Islands SPA - Supplementary Advice on Conservation Objectives (SACOs; Natural England 2019b); and
- Farne Islands SPA – Advice on Operations (Natural England 2022).

1.5.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

41. The site is designated for the following features:

- Sandwich tern
- Roseate tern
- Common tern
- Arctic tern
- Guillemot (breeding)
- Breeding seabird assemblage including the following additional named components:
  - Kittiwake
  - Shag
  - Cormorant
  - Puffin

42. In addition, a number of additional named components have been identified by Natural England in their scoping representation of 07 December 2021 which are not currently listed in the Farne Islands SPA citation. These are:

- Fulmar
- Black-headed gull
- Great black-backed gull *Larus marinus*
- Lesser black-backed gull
- Herring gull
- Razorbill.

1.5.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

43. The Farne Islands are a group of rocky Islands stretching from between 2.4 to 7.6 km offshore. The islands are rocky plateaus formed from Whin Sill rock, the total area of all the islands is 101ha consisting of 15 – 20 islands depending on tide, they are split into the Inner Farnes and the Outer Farnes. The botanical interest is limited but the islands are famous as a breeding ground for grey seal and as a seabird nesting colony.

1.5.4. CONSERVATION ADVICE

44. Advice on management and operations is provided on the Natural England Designated Site's View website, specifically in their Advice on Operations document (dated March 2022; Natural England, 2022).

45. The conservation objectives for the site are:

- To ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and
- To ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;
  - The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features
  - The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features
  - The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely
  - The population of each of the qualifying features, and,
  - The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

46. Natural England's SACOs present attributes which are ecological characteristics or requirements of the classified species within a site. The listed attributes are those which best describe the site's ecological integrity and which, if safeguarded, will enable achievement of the conservation objectives. These attributes have a target which is either quantified or qualified depending on the available evidence. The target identifies as far as possible the desired state to be achieved for the attribute.

47. In many cases, the attribute targets show if the current objective is to either 'maintain' or 'restore' the attribute. The targets given for each attribute do not represent thresholds to assess the significance of any given effect. Instead, these targets are used along with the conservation objectives, and any case-specific advice issued by Natural England when assessing a project that may affect site integrity. Any proposals or operations which may affect the site, or its features should be designed so they do not adversely affect any of the attributes in the SACO or achievement of the conservation objectives.

48. The SACO for the Farne Islands SPA (Natural England, 2019) has been considered when assessing potential adverse effects on site integrity.

1.5.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

49. In 2016, Natural England trialled and rolled out a new condition assessment methodology that provides information on the condition of marine features within Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). Area Teams conduct these assessments following a standardised approach that assesses if feature- and site-specific targets have been met. To date, condition assessments have been carried out for marine habitat features of a number of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), and will be carried out for other SACs in the future. However, different processes are currently in place to report on the condition of non-marine habitat features and species features of SACs, and on the condition of features in Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) and SPAs.

50. A condition assessment for the Farne Islands SPA is not currently available.

1.6. COQUET ISLAND SPA

1.6.1. SITE OVERVIEW

51. Coquet Island is a small uninhabited island which lies less than a mile off the coast of Northumberland, near Amble, in the north-east of England. The island is managed by the RSPB and consists of a flat grassy plateau, surrounded by low sandstone cliffs and intertidal boulders and rock. The total area of the island at mean low water is 22 ha.

52. Coquet Island SPA was first classified in 1985 for its breeding seabirds, several of which occur at nationally important numbers. The SPA is classified for the protection of roseate tern, common tern, Sandwich tern, Arctic tern and a breeding seabird assemblage of over 20,000 individuals.

53. The RSPB manage the site to increase the breeding success of these species. The island nature of the site allows the RSPB to manage nest predation by mammalian and avian predators, as well as reducing disturbance by not allowing visitors and tour boats to land on the island. Tern nesting boxes have been installed to help provide terns with suitable breeding habitats.

54. Key literature sources include:

- Coquet Island SPA - Site Details (Natural England 2019c);
- Coquet Island SPA - Conservation Objectives (Natural England 2019d);
- Coquet Island SPA - Citation (Natural England 2017c);
- Coquet Island SPA - Nature 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC 2017a);
- Coquet Island SPA - SACO (Natural England 2019e); and
- Coquet Island SPA – Advice on Operations (Natural England 2022b).

1.6.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

55. This site is designated for the following features:

- Sandwich tern
- Roseate tern
- Common tern
- Arctic tern
- Breeding seabird assemblage including the following additional named components:
  - Kittiwake
  - Black-headed gull
  - Herring gull
  - Lesser black-backed gull
  - Puffin
  - Fulmar

1.6.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

56. Coquet Island is located 1 km off the coast of Northumberland in north-east England. It is a small, flat-topped island with a plateau extent of approximately 7 ha. The island consists of sandy soil and peat over a soft sandstone base. Low cliffs of approx. 2.4-3.7m high result from earlier quarrying. Surrounding the island is a rocky upper shore and intertidal covering 15 ha when fully exposed. There is a sandy beach on the southwest of the island and the southeast corner is shingle and rock. A small, shallow, man-made well lies in the centre of the plateau, which is fed by non-potable surface water. The peaty soil of the plateau supports short fescue grassland (mainly *Festuca rubra* but with some *F. ovira*), with docks (*Rumex spp*.) and ragwort (*Senecio jacobea*). Maritime species such as sea campion (*Silene maritime*) and thrift (*Armeria maritima*) are scarce. Where nutrient input from seabird colonies is greatest, there are dense stands of taller species, including nettles *Urtica spp*. These provide cover for some of the nesting terns.

1.6.4. CONSERVATION ADVICE

57. Advice on management and operations is provided on the Natural England Designated Site's View website, specifically in their Advice on Operations document (dated March 2022; Natural England, 2022).

58. The conservation objectives for the site are:

- To ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and;
- To ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;
  - The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features
  - The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features
  - The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely
  - The population of each of the qualifying features, and,
  - The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

59. Natural England's SACOs present attributes which are ecological characteristics or requirements of the classified species within a site. The listed attributes are those which best describe the site's ecological integrity and which, if safeguarded, will enable achievement of the conservation objectives. These attributes have a target which is either quantified or qualified depending on the available evidence. The target identifies as far as possible the desired state to be achieved for the attribute.

60. In many cases, the attribute targets show if the current objective is to either 'maintain' or 'restore' the attribute. The targets given for each attribute do not represent thresholds to assess the significance of any given effect. Instead, these targets are used along with the conservation objectives, and any case-specific advice issued by Natural England when assessing a project that may affect site integrity. Any proposals or operations which may affect the site, or its features should be designed so they do not adversely affect any of the attributes in the SACO or achievement of the conservation objectives.

61. The SACO for the Coquet Island SPA (Natural England, 2019) has been considered when assessing potential adverse effects on site integrity.

1.6.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

62. In 2016, Natural England trialled and rolled out a new condition assessment methodology that provides information on the condition of marine features within MPAs. Area Teams conduct these assessments following a standardised approach that assesses if feature- and site-specific targets have been met. To date, condition assessments have been carried out for marine habitat features of a number of SACs, and will be carried out for other SACs in the future. However, different processes are currently in place to report on the condition of non-marine habitat features and species features of SACs, and on the condition of features in MCZs and SPAs.

63. A condition assessment for the Coquet Island SPA is not currently available.

1.7. BUCHAN NESS TO COLLIESTON COAST SPA

1.7.1. SITE OVERVIEW

64. Buchan Ness to Collieston Coast SPA is a stretch of south-east facing cliff in Aberdeenshire, Scotland. The 15 km stretch of cliffs, formed of granite, quartzite and other rocks, runs south of Peterhead, broken only by the sandy beach of Cruden Bay. The varied coastal vegetation on the ledges and the cliff tops includes maritime heath, grassland and brackish flushes.

65. The boundary of the SPA follows the boundaries of Bullers of Buchan Coast SSSI and Collieston to Whinnyfold Coast SSSI, and the seaward extension extends approximately 2 km into the marine environment to include the seabed, water column and surface.

66. Key literature sources include:

- Buchan Ness to Collieston Coast SPA - Citation (NatureScot 2009f);
- Buchan Ness to Collieston Coast SPA - Conservation Objectives (NatureScot 2009g);
- Buchan Ness to Collieston Coast SPA - Nature 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC 2015a); and
- Buchan Ness to Collieston Coast SPA - Features (NatureScot 2017a).

1.7.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

67. This site is designated for the following features:

- Breeding seabird assemblage including the following additional named components:
- Kittiwake
- Herring gull
- Guillemot
- Fulmar
- Shag

1.7.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

68. The Buchan Ness to Collieston Coast SPA covers an area of 5400.76 ha beginning south of Peterhead and moves down the Aberdeenshire coastline. Most of the area is covered by marine areas and sea inlets, however, there are also grasslands and sea cliffs present. The ecological importance of the site comes from the fact it supports large populations of nationally important seabird populations.

1.7.4. CONSERVATION ADVICE

69. Advice on operations and management of Buchan Ness to Collieston Coast SPA is unavailable.

70. The conservation objectives for the site are:

- To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and
- To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:
  - Population of the species as a viable component of the site
  - Distribution of the species within site
  - Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
  - Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
  - No significant disturbance of the species

1.7.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

71. Table 1.5 provides a summary of the protected features within the site, their condition within the site (where known) based on the latest NatureScot SCM assessment, and the broader conservation status of the protected features. Current trends for relevant seabird colonies can be found in JNCC (2021) and are based on trends derived from the SMP including, where available, Seabird Counts census data.

72. Feature condition refers to the condition of the protected feature at a site level. Broader conservation status is the overall conservation status of the feature within the UK based on Stanbury *et al*., (2021).

Table 1.5: Buchan Ness to Collieston Coast SPA Feature Condition Assessment

Qualifying Feature	Feature Condition	Assessment Date	UK Conservation Status
Breeding seabird assemblage	Favourable recovered	2017	N/A
Kittiwake*	Unfavourable no change	2017	Red
Herring gull*	Unfavourable no change	2017	Red
Guillemot*	Favourable maintained	2017	Amber
Fulmar*	Unfavourable declining	2017	Amber
Shag*	Unfavourable no change	2017	Red

**Named components of the assemblage only.*

1.8. TROUP, PENNAN AND LION'S HEADS SPA

1.8.1. SITE OVERVIEW

73. The Troup, Pennan and Lion's Heads SPA is a 9 km stretch of sea cliffs along the Aberdeenshire coast. The cliffs support large colonies of breeding seabirds.

74. The boundary of the SPA overlaps with the boundary of Gamrie and Pennan coast SSSI and the seaward extension extends approximately 2 km into the marine environment to include the seabed, water column and surface.

75. Key literature sources include:

- Troup, Pennan and Lion's Heads - SPA Citation (NatureScot 2009h);
- Troup, Pennan and Lion's Heads - SPA Conservation Objectives (NatureScot 2009i);
- Troup, Pennan and Lion's Heads - SPA Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC 2019a); and
- Troup, Pennan and Lion's Heads - SPA Features (NatureScot 2017b).

1.8.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

76. This site is designated for the following features:

- Kittiwake (breeding)
- Guillemot (breeding)
- Breeding seabird assemblage including the following additional named components:
  - Herring gull
  - Razorbill
  - Fulmar

1.8.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

77. The Troup, Pennan and Lion's Heads SPA is located on the northern Aberdeenshire coast and has an area of 3365.2 ha. Most of this area is marine habitat however cliffs and grassland are also present. The ecological importance of the area is due the presence of both internationally and nationally important populations of seabirds.

1.8.4. CONSERVATION ADVICE

78. Advice on operations for Troup, Pennan and Lion's Heads SPA is not available.

79. The conservation objectives for the site are:

- To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and
- To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:
  - Population of the species as a viable component of the site
  - Distribution of the species within site
  - Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
  - Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
  - No significant disturbance of the species

1.8.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

80. Table 1.6 provides a summary of the protected features within the site, their condition within the site (where known) based on the latest NatureScot SCM assessment, and the broader conservation status of the protected features. Current trends for relevant seabird colonies can be found in JNCC (2021) and are based on trends derived from the SMP including, where available, Seabird Counts census data.

81. Feature condition refers to the condition of the protected feature at a site level. Broader conservation status is the overall conservation status of the feature within the UK based on Stanbury *et al*., (2021).

Table 1.6: Troup, Pennan and Lion's Heads SPA Feature Condition Assessment

Qualifying Feature	Feature Condition	Assessment Date	UK Conservation Status
Breeding seabird assemblage	Favourable recovered	2017	N/A
Kittiwake	Unfavourable no change	2017	Red
Guillemot	Favourable maintained	2017	Amber
Herring gull*	Unfavourable no change	2017	Red
Razorbill*	Unfavourable declining	2017	Amber
Fulmar*	Unfavourable no change	2017	Amber

**Named components of the assemblage only.*

1.9. EAST CAITHNESS CLIFFS SPA

1.9.1. SITE OVERVIEW

82. East Caithness Cliffs SPA is of special nature conservation and scientific importance within Britain and the European Community for supporting very large populations of breeding seabirds. It includes most of the sea-cliff areas between Wick and Helmsdale on the north-east coast of the Scottish mainland.

83. The boundary of the SPA overlaps either partly or wholly with the following SSSIs: Castle of Old Wick to Craig Hammel SSSI, Craig Hammel to Sgaps Geo SSSI, Dunbeath to Sgaps Geo SSSI, Berriedale Cliffs SSSI, Ousdale Burn SSSI and Helmsdale Coast SSSI. The seaward extension extends approximately 2 km into the marine environment to include the seabed, water column and surface.

84. Key literature sources include:

- East Caithness Cliffs - SPA Citation (NatureScot 2009j);
- East Caithness Cliffs - SPA Conservation Objectives (NatureScot 2009k);
- East Caithness Cliffs - SPA Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC 2018c); and
- East Caithness Cliffs - SPA Features (NatureScot 2015a).

1.9.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

85. This site is designated for the following features:

- Kittiwake (breeding
- Herring gull (breeding)
- Guillemot (breeding)
- Razorbill (breeding)
- Shag (breeding)
- Breeding seabird assemblage including the following additional named components:
  - Great black-backed gull
  - Fulmar
  - Cormorant

1.9.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

86. The East Caithness Cliffs SPA is located in the North of Scotland beginning at Wick and heading in a Southerly direction down the coast. It is 11696.38 ha in size. The large majority of the site is a marine area. Other habitat classes include sea cliffs and grasslands. The site is ecologically important due to the presence of Peregrine and seabirds of European and national importance.

1.9.4. CONSERVATION ADVICE

87. Advice on operations for East Caithness Cliffs SPA is not available.

88. The conservation objectives for the site are:

- To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and
- To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:
  - Population of the species as a viable component of the site
  - Distribution of the species within site
  - Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
  - Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
  - No significant disturbance of the species

1.9.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

89. Table 1.7 provides a summary of the protected features within the site, their condition within the site (where known) based on the latest NatureScot SCM assessment, and the broader conservation status of the protected features. Current trends for relevant seabird colonies can be found in JNCC (2021) and are based on trends derived from the SMP including, where available, Seabird Counts census data.

90. Feature condition refers to the condition of the protected feature at a site level. Broader conservation status is the overall conservation status of the feature within the UK based on Stanbury *et al*., (2021).

Table 1.7: East Caithness Cliffs SPA Feature Condition Assessment

Qualifying Feature	Feature Condition	Assessment Date	UK Conservation Status
Breeding seabird assemblage	Favourable maintained	2015	N/A
Kittiwake	Favourable maintained	2015	Red
Herring gull	Unfavourable no change	2015	Red
Guillemot	Favourable maintained	2015	Amber
Razorbill	Favourable maintained	2015	Amber
Shag	Unfavourable no change	2015	Red
Great black-backed gull*	Unfavourable no change	2015	Amber
Fulmar*	Favourable maintained	2015	Amber
Cormorant*	Unfavourable declining	2015	Green

**Named components of the assemblage only.*

1.10. FLAMBOROUGH AND FILEY COAST SPA

1.10.1. SITE OVERVIEW

91. The Flamborough and Filey Coast SPA straddles the border of East Yorkshire and North Yorkshire at the western coast of the North Sea. It has two sections - Flamborough to the south, and Filey to the north - both encompassing clifftop, sea cliff and intertidal rock habitats and offshore to 2km. It extends inland in the sections running from Cunstone Nab in the north to Carr Naze at the corner of Filey Brigg, then from the south of Filey Bay at Reighton to its southern most point at Sewerby steps. The expanse of Filey Bay divides these two inland sections, but is not included in the designation.

92. The site is highly protected both for its wildlife and unique chalk cliff habitats and the numerous ledges, crevices and caves provide ideal nesting and roosting sites for seabirds, supporting a colony of national and international importance, currently the largest mainland seabird colony in England. The SPA supports the only mainland gannetry in England, the largest kittiwake colony in the UK and the largest guillemot and razorbill colonies in England. The colonies are situated along the cliffs on the southern and northern sides of Filey Bay and the north and south sides of Flamborough Head. They support over 200,000 seabirds during the breeding season, many of which are extremely limited in breeding range throughout the UK. In addition to providing nest sites, the sheer cliffs also act as a deterrent to mammalian predators and provide a focal point for migrating seabirds.

93. The waters adjacent to the colonies are used by large numbers of seabirds for a wide range of activities, including bathing, preening, displaying, loafing and local foraging. The mixing of two distinct North Sea water bodies – the cooler, deeper, stratified waters of the northern North Sea and warmer, shallower, well-mixed waters of the southern North Sea - gives rise to the offshore frontal system known as the 'Flamborough Front'. The resulting nutrient-rich waters and the presence of the Flamborough Front contribute to the diverse and unusual range of marine species found in the area and the increased productivity provides rich feeding ground for birds. Although most feeding occurs offshore, when conditions are favourable and food is abundant, large numbers of seabirds move into Filey Bay to feed.

94. Key literature sources include:

- Flamborough and Filey Coast SPA - Citation (Natural England 2018a);
- Flamborough and Filey Coast SPA - Conservation Objectives (Natural England 2019f);
- Flamborough and Filey Coast SPA - SACO (Natural England 2020a);
- Flamborough and Filey Coast SPA – Advice on Operations (Natural England 2022c);
- Flamborough and Filey Coast SPA - Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC 2019b); and
- Flamborough and Filey Coast SPA - Site Details (Natural England 2020b).

1.10.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

95. The site is designated for the following features:

- Gannet (breeding)
- Kittiwake (breeding)
- Guillemot (breeding)
- Razorbill (breeding)
- Breeding seabird assemblage including the following additional named components:
  - Herring gull
  - Puffin
  - Fulmar
  - Cormorant
  - Shag

1.10.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

96. Flamborough and Filey Coast SPA is located on the Yorkshire coast between Bridlington and Scarborough. It includes the RSPB reserve at Bempton Cliffs, the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust Flamborough Cliffs nature reserve, and the East Riding of Yorkshire Council Flamborough Head Local Nature Reserve. The cliffs of Flamborough Head rise to 135 m and are composed of chalk and other sedimentary rocks. These soft cliffs have been eroded into a series of bays, arches, pinnacles and gullies with an extensive system of caves at sea-level. The cliffs from Filey Brigg to Cunstone Nab comprise a range of sedimentary rocks including shales and sandstones. The cliff top vegetation comprises maritime grassland vegetation growing alongside species more typical of chalk grassland. The intertidal area below the cliffs is predominantly rocky and part of a series of reefs that extend into the subtidal area. The adjacent sea out to 2 km off Flamborough Head as well as Filey Brigg to Cunstone Nab is characterised by reefs supporting kelp forest communities in the shallow subtidal and faunal turf communities below 2 m water depths. The southern side of Filey Brigg shelves off gently from the rocks to the sandy bottom of Filey Bay.

1.10.4. CONSERVATION ADVICE

97. Advice on management and operations is provided on the Natural England Designated Site's View website, specifically in their Advice on Operations document (dated March 2022; Natural England, 2022).

98. The conservation objectives for this site are:

- To ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate; and
- To ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;
  - The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features
  - The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features
  - The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely
  - The population of each of the qualifying features, and,
  - The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

99. Natural England's SACOs present attributes which are ecological characteristics or requirements of the classified species within a site. The listed attributes are those which best describe the site's ecological integrity and which, if safeguarded, will enable achievement of the conservation objectives. These attributes have a target which is either quantified or qualified depending on the available evidence. The target identifies as far as possible the desired state to be achieved for the attribute.

100. In many cases, the attribute targets show if the current objective is to either 'maintain' or 'restore' the attribute. The targets given for each attribute do not represent thresholds to assess the significance of any given effect. Instead, these targets are used along with the conservation objectives, and any case-specific advice issued by Natural England when assessing a project that may affect site integrity. Any proposals or operations which may affect the site, or its features should be designed so they do not adversely affect any of the attributes in the SACO or achievement of the conservation objectives.

101. The SACO for the Flamborough and Filey Coast SPA (Natural England, 2020) has been considered when assessing potential adverse effects on site integrity.

1.10.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

102. In 2016, Natural England trialled and rolled out a new condition assessment methodology that provides information on the condition of marine features within MPAs. Area Teams conduct these assessments following a standardised approach that assesses if feature- and site-specific targets have been met. To date, condition assessments have been carried out for marine habitat features of a number of SACs, and will be carried out for other SACs in the future. However, different processes are currently in place to report on the condition of non-marine habitat features and species features of SACs, and on the condition of features in MCZs and SPAs.

103. A condition assessment for the Flamborough and Filey Coast SPA is not currently available.

1.11. NORTH CAITHNESS CLIFFS SPA

1.11.1. SITE OVERVIEW

104. North Caithness Cliffs SPA is of special nature conservation and scientific importance within Britain and the European Community for supporting very large populations of breeding seabirds.

105. The site overlaps either partly or wholly with Duncansby Head SSSI, Stroma SSSI, Dunnet Head SSSI, Holborn Head SSSI, and Red Point Coast SSSI. The seaward extension extends approximately 2 km into the marine environment to include the seabed, water column and surface.

106. Key literature sources include:

- North Caithness Cliffs SPA - Citation (NatureScot 2018d);
- North Caithness Cliffs SPA - Conservation Objectives (NatureScot 2018e);
- North Caithness Cliffs SPA - Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC 2018d); and
- North Caithness Cliffs SPA - Features (NatureScot 2016a).

1.11.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

107. The site is designated for the following features:

- Guillemot (breeding)
- Breeding seabird assemblage (breeding) including the following additional named components:
-
    - Kittiwake
    - Razorbill
    - Puffin
    - Fulmar

1.11.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

108. The Northern Caithness Cliffs SPA lies at the very northern tip of the Scottish mainland and is split over five main areas off the coast. The site has an area of 14628.79 ha. The habitat is mainly marine but does include some sea cliff, heath/shrub and grassland habitat. The site has ecological importance from the presence of peregrine, guillemot and various other seabirds within a seabird assemblage.

1.11.4. CONSERVATION ADVICE

109. Advice on management and operations of North Caithness Cliffs SPA is unavailable.

110. The conservation objectives for the site are:

- To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and
- To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:
    - Population of the species as a viable component of the site
    - Distribution of the species within site
    - Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
    - Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
    - No significant disturbance of the species

1.11.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

111. Table 1.8 provides a summary of the protected features within the site, their condition within the site (where known) based on the latest NatureScot SCM assessment, and the broader conservation status of the protected features. Current trends for relevant seabird colonies can be found in JNCC (2021) and are based on trends derived from the SMP including, where available, Seabird Counts census data.

112. Feature condition refers to the condition of the protected feature at a site level. Broader conservation status is the overall conservation status of the feature within the UK based on Stanbury *et al.*, (2021).

Table 1.8: North Caithness Cliffs SPA Feature Condition Assessment

Qualifying Feature	Feature Condition	Assessment Date	UK Conservation Status
Seabird assemblage	Favourable maintained	2016	N/A
Kittiwake*	Unfavourable declining	2016	Red
Guillemot	Favourable maintained	2016	Amber
Razorbill*	Favourable recovered	2016	Amber
Puffin*	Favourable maintained	2016	Red
Fulmar*	Favourable maintained	2016	Amber

**Named components of the assemblage only.*

1.12. HOY SPA

1.12.1. SITE OVERVIEW

113. Hoy is a mountainous island at the south-western end of the Orkney archipelago. Hoy SPA covers the northern and western two-thirds of Hoy Island, which is formed of Old Red Sandstone and contains Orkney's highest hills, and adjacent coastal waters. The SPA supports an extremely diverse mixture of mire, heath and alpine vegetation and Britain's most northerly native woodland. These upland areas and the high sea cliffs at the coast support an important assemblage of moorland breeding birds and breeding seabirds.

114. The boundary of Hoy SPA overlaps with that of Hoy SSSI, and the seaward extension extends approximately 2 km into the marine environment to include the seabed, water column and surface.

115. Key literature sources include:

- Hoy SPA - Citation (NatureScot 2009l)
- Hoy SPA - Conservation Objectives 2009m)
- Hoy SPA - Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC 2015b)
- Hoy SPA - Features (NatureScot 2019a)

1.12.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

116. The site is designated for the following features:

- Great skua (breeding)
- Red-throated diver
- Breeding seabird assemblage including the following additional named components:
  - Kittiwake
  - Great black-backed gull
  - Arctic skua
  - Guillemot
  - Puffin
  - Fulmar

1.12.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

117. Hoy SPA covers most of the Hoy Island and much of the surrounding waters and has a total area of 18123.91 ha. Hoy Island is located in the south of the Orkney Islands which themselves lie north of the Scottish mainland across from the northern coast of Caithness. Hoy SPA covers a significant marine area, but this habitat does represent less than half of the total SPA. Heath/scrubland make up a large part of the onshore habitat alongside bogs/marshland. Other habitats include cliffs, inland water and woodland. The ecological importance of the site as an SPA comes from the presence of peregrine and seabirds of European and national importance.

1.12.4. CONSERVATION ADVICE

118. Advice on management and operations of Hoy SPA is unavailable.

119. The conservation objectives for the site are:

- To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and
- To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:
  - Population of the species as a viable component of the site
  - Distribution of the species within site
  - Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
  - Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
  - No significant disturbance of the species

1.12.5. CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

120. Table 1.9 provides a summary of the protected features within the site, their condition within the site (where known) based on the latest NatureScot SCM assessment, and the broader conservation status of the protected features. Current trends for relevant seabird colonies can be found in JNCC (2021) and are based on trends derived from the SMP including, where available, Seabird Counts census data.

121. Feature condition refers to the condition of the protected feature at a site level. Broader conservation status is the overall conservation status of the feature within the UK based on Stanbury *et al*., (2021).

Table 1.9: Hoy SPA Feature Condition Assessment

Qualifying Feature	Feature Condition	Assessment Date	UK Conservation Status
Seabird assemblage	Unfavourable declining	2019	N/A
Kittiwake*	Unfavourable declining	2017	Red
Great black-backed gull*	Unfavourable declining	2019	Amber
Great skua	Unfavourable declining	2019	Amber
Arctic skua*	Unfavourable declining	2019	Red
Guillemot*	Unfavourable no change	2017	Amber
Puffin*	Unfavourable declining	2004	Red
Red-throated diver	Favourable maintained	2007	Green
Fulmar*	Unfavourable no change	2017	Amber

**Named components of the assemblage only.*

1.13. COPINSAY SPA

1.13.1. SITE OVERVIEW

122. The Copinsay SPA comprises a group of islands 4 km off the east coast of Orkney Mainland. The islands have a cliffed rocky coastline and maritime vegetation that support large colonies of breeding seabirds.

123. The boundary of the SPA encompasses Copinsay SSSI, and the seaward extension extends approximately 2 km into the marine environment to include the seabed, water column and surface.

124. Key literature sources include:

- Copinsay SPA - Citation (NatureScot 2009n);
- Copinsay SPA - Conservation Objectives (NatureScot 2009o);
- Copinsay SPA - Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC 2022c); and
- Copinsay SPA - Features (NatureScot 2015b).

1.13.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

125. The site is designated for the following features:

- Breeding seabird assemblage including the following additional named components:
  - Kittiwake
  - Great black-backed gull
  - Guillemot
  - Fulmar

1.13.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

126. The Copinsay SPA covers the island of Copinsay and surrounding islands including the Copinsay pass which lies off the eastern edge of the wide Orkney Islands. The site has an area of 3607.7 ha. The habitat is largely marine but, on the islands, includes grassland and cliffs. The ecological importance of the island comes from its role in supporting a seabird assemblage.

1.13.4. CONSERVATION ADVICE

127. Advice on the management and operations of the Copinsay SPA is unavailable.

128. The conservation objectives for the site are:

- To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and
- To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:
  - Population of the species as a viable component of the site
  - Distribution of the species within site
  - Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
  - Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
  - No significant disturbance of the species

1.13.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

129. Table 1.10 provides a summary of the protected features within the site, their condition within the site (where known) based on the latest NatureScot SCM assessment, and the broader conservation status of the protected features. Current trends for relevant seabird colonies can be found in JNCC (2021) and are based on trends derived from the SMP including, where available, Seabird Counts census data.

130. Feature condition refers to the condition of the protected feature at a site level. Broader conservation status is the overall conservation status of the feature within the UK based on Stanbury *et al*., (2021).

Table 1.10: Copinsay SPA Feature Condition Assessment

Qualifying Feature	Feature Condition	Assessment Date	UK Conservation Status
Seabird assemblage	Unfavourable no change	2015	N/A
Kittiwake*	Unfavourable declining	2015	Red
Great black-backed gull*	Unfavourable declining	2015	Amber
Guillemot*	Unfavourable no change	2015	Amber
Fulmar*	Favourable maintained	2015	Amber

**Named components of the assemblage only.*

1.14. WEST WESTRAY SPA

1.14.1. SITE OVERVIEW

131. West Westray SPA is an 8 km stretch of sea cliffs, together with adjacent grassland and heathland, along the west coast of the island of Westray in Orkney. The cliffs support large colonies of breeding auks and kittiwakes while the grassland and heathland areas support breeding colonies of skuas and terns.

132. The boundary of the SPA overlaps with that of the West Westray SSSI, and the seaward extension extends approximately 2 km into the marine environment to include the seabed, water column and surface.

133. Key literature sources include:

- West Westray SPA - Citation (NatureScot 2009p)
- West Westray SPA - Conservation Objectives (Nature Scot 2009q)
- West Westray SPA - Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC 2022d)
- West Westray SPA - Features (NatureScot 2017c)

1.14.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

134. The site is designated for the following features:

- Arctic tern (breeding)
- Guillemot (breeding)
- Breeding seabird assemblage including the following additional named components:
  - Razorbill
  - Kittiwake
  - Arctic skua
  - Fulmar

1.14.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

135. The West Westray SPA lies on the west coast of the island of Westray which itself sits at the northern edge of the Orkney Islands. The site area is 3780.16 ha. The habitat is mainly marine areas however the cost includes heath/scrub, grasslands, cliffs, inland water and bog/marsh habitats. The ecological importance of the site comes from its support of seabirds of European and national importance.

1.14.4. CONSERVATION ADVICE

136. Advice on the management and operations of the West Westray SPA is unavailable.

137. The conservation objectives for the site are:

- To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and
- To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:
  - Population of the species as a viable component of the site
  - Distribution of the species within site
  - Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
  - Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
  - No significant disturbance of the species

1.14.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

138. Table 1.11 provides a summary of the protected features within the site, their condition within the site (where known) based on the latest NatureScot SCM assessment, and the broader conservation status of the protected features. Current trends for relevant seabird colonies can be found in JNCC (2021) and are based on trends derived from the SMP including, where available, Seabird Counts census data.

139. Feature condition refers to the condition of the protected feature at a site level. Broader conservation status is the overall conservation status of the feature within the UK based on Stanbury *et al*., (2021).

Table 1.11: West Westray SPA Feature Condition Assessment

Qualifying Feature	Feature Condition	Assessment Date	UK Conservation Status
Seabird assemblage	Unfavourable declining	2017	N/A
Arctic tern	Unfavourable no change	2017	Amber
Guillemot	Unfavourable declining	2017	Amber
Razorbill*	Favourable recovered	2017	Amber
Kittiwake*	Unfavourable declining	2017	Red
Arctic skua*	Unfavourable declining	2017	Red
Fulmar*	Favourable recovered	2017	Amber

**Named components of the assemblage only.*

1.15. SULE SKERRY AND SULE STACK SPA

1.15.1. SITE OVERVIEW

140. Sule Skerry and Sule Stack are isolated islets 60 km west of Mainland, Orkney. Sule Skerry is larger, low-lying and vegetated whereas Sule Stack is a higher, bare rock stack with no vascular plants.

141. The boundary of the SPA overlaps with those of Sule Skerry SSSI and Sule Stack SSSI and the seaward extension extends approximately 2 km into the marine environment to include the seabed, water column and surface.

142. Key literature sources include:

- Sule Skerry and Sule Stack SPA - Citation (NatureScot 2009r);
- Sule Skerry and Sule Stack SPA - Conservation Objectives (NatureScot 2009s);
- Sule Skerry and Sule Stack SPA - Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC 2022e); and
- Sule Skerry and Sule Stack SPA - Features (NatureScot 2018f).

1.15.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

143. The site is designated for the following features:

- Puffin (breeding)
- Storm-petrel (breeding)
- Leach's storm petrel (breeding)
- Gannet (breeding)
- Breeding seabird assemblage including the following additional named components:
  - Guillemot
  - Shag

1.15.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

144. Sule Skerry and Sule Stack SPA is located on and around the area of two relatively small islands north of the Scottish mainland and west of the Orkney Islands. The total area of the SPA is 3909.45ha. The area is mainly marine habitat which surround the islands however it also includes sea cliff habitat from the islands. The area is ecologically important because it supports seabirds of European and national importance.

1.15.4. CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

145. Advice on the management and operations of Sule Skerry and Sule Stack SPA is not available.

146. The conservation objectives for the site are:

- To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and
- To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:
  - Population of the species as a viable component of the site
  - Distribution of the species within site
  - Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
  - Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
  - No significant disturbance of the species

1.15.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

147. Table 1.12 provides a summary of the protected features within the site, their condition within the site (where known) based on the latest NatureScot SCM assessment, and the broader conservation status of the protected features. Current trends for relevant seabird colonies can be found in JNCC (2021) and are based on trends derived from the SMP including, where available, Seabird Counts census data.

148. Feature condition refers to the condition of the protected feature at a site level. Broader conservation status is the overall conservation status of the feature within the UK based on Stanbury *et al*., (2021).

Table 1.12: Sule Skerry and Sule Stack SPA Feature Condition Assessment

Qualifying Feature	Feature Condition	Assessment Date	UK Conservation Status
Seabird assemblage	Favourable maintained	2015	N/A
Guillemot*	Favourable maintained	2015	Amber
Puffin	Favourable declining	2015	Red
Storm petrel	Favourable declining	2013	Amber
Leach's storm petrel	Unfavourable declining	2018	Red
Gannet	Favourable maintained	2013	Amber
Shag*	Unfavourable declining	2015	Red

**Named components of the assemblage only.*

1.16. FAIR ISLE SPA

1.16.1. SITE OVERVIEW

149. Fair Isle is an old red sandstone island, the most southerly of the Shetland group, lying halfway between Shetland mainland and Orkney. It has a rocky, cliff coastline with adjacent coastal waters, heather moorland, acidic grassland, maritime grassland and crofting in-bye.

150. The boundary of Fair Isle SPA is coincident with Fair Isle SSSI. The seaward extension extends approximately 2 km into the marine environment to include the seabed, water column and surface.

151. Key literature sources include:

- Fair Isle SPA - Citation (NatureScot 2009t);
- Fair Isle SPA - Conservation Objectives (NatureScot 2009u);
- Fair Isle SPA - Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC 2022f); and
- Fair Isle SPA - Features (NatureScot 2016b).

1.16.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

152. The site is designated for the following features:

- Arctic tern (breeding)
- Guillemot (breeding)
- Breeding seabird assemblage including the following additional named components:
  - Kittiwake
  - Great skua
  - Arctic skua
  - Razorbill
  - Puffin
  - Fulmar
  - Gannet
  - Shag

1.16.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

153. The Fair Isle SPA covers part of the Island and the surrounding marine area. Fair Isle is part of the Shetland Islands grouping but lies roughly halfway between the Shetland and Orkney mainland. The site has an area 6825.1 ha. The surrounding marine habitat covers most of the total area however, there are sea cliffs, inland water, bog/marsh, heath/scrub and grasslands present. The ecological importance of the site comes from the presence of the Fair Isle wren, indigenous to the Island, and a variety of seabirds of European and national importance.

1.16.4. CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

154. Advice on the management and operations of the Fair Isle SPA is not available.

155. The conservation objectives for the site are:

- To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed below) or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and
- To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:
  - Population of the species as a viable component of the site
  - Distribution of the species within site
  - Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
  - Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
  - No significant disturbance of the species

1.16.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

156. Table 1.13 provides a summary of the protected features within the site, their condition within the site (where known) based on the latest NatureScot SCM assessment, and the broader conservation status of the protected features. Current trends for relevant seabird colonies can be found in JNCC (2021) and are based on trends derived from the SMP including, where available, Seabird Counts census data.

157. Feature condition refers to the condition of the protected feature at a site level. Broader conservation status is the overall conservation status of the feature within the UK based on Stanbury *et al*., (2021).

Table 1.13: Fair Isle SPA Feature Condition Assessment

Qualifying Feature	Feature Condition	Assessment Date	UK Conservation Status
Seabird assemblage	Unfavourable no change	2016	N/A
Kittiwake*	Unfavourable declining	2016	Red
Arctic tern	Unfavourable declining	2016	Amber
Great skua*	Favourable maintained	2016	Amber
Arctic skua*	Unfavourable declining	2016	Red
Guillemot	Unfavourable declining	2016	Amber
Razorbill*	Unfavourable declining	2015	Amber
Puffin*	Unfavourable declining	2015	Red
Fulmar*	Favourable maintained	2016	Amber
Gannet*	Favourable maintained	2014	Amber
Shag*	Unfavourable declining	2013	Red

**Named components of the assemblage only.*

1.17. NORTH RONA AND SULA SGEIR SPA

1.17.1. SITE OVERVIEW

158. The uninhabited islands of North Rona and Sula Sgeir, together with several outlying rocky islets and adjacent waters, lie 65 km north of Lewis. The coastlines of both islands consist mainly of cliffs except for two low-lying peninsulas on North Rona. North Rona is well covered by peat or soil and vegetated by sub maritime grassland. Sula Sgeir lies about 15 km west of North Rona. It is much the smaller of the two islands and has little soil or vegetation.

159. The boundary of the Special Protection Area overlaps with the boundary of North Rona & Sula Sgeir SSSI, and the seaward extension extends approximately 2 km into the marine environment to include the seabed, water column and surface.

160. Key literature sources include:

- North Rona and Sula Sgeir SPA - Citation (NatureScot 2009v);
- North Rona and Sula Sgeir SPA - Conservation Objectives (NatureScot 2009w);
- North Rona and Sula Sgeir SPA - Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC 2022g); and
- North Rona and Sula Sgeir SPA - Features (NatureScot 2013a).

1.17.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

161. The site is designated for the following features:

- Guillemot (breeding)
- Storm petrel (breeding)
- Leach's storm petrel (breeding)
- Gannet (breeding)
- Breeding seabird assemblage including the following additional named components:
  - Kittiwake
  - Great black-backed gull
  - Razorbill
  - Puffin
  - Fulmar

1.17.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

162. North Rona and Sula Sgeir SPA covers two small islands, and their surrounding marine area, north of Lewis and the Scottish mainland and east of the Orkney Islands. The SPA covers 6850.58ha. The area is largely marine habitat but also includes salt, sea cliffs, bog/marsh and dry grassland/steppes habitats. The ecological importance of the site comes from the fact is supports European and nationally important species of seabirds.

1.17.4. CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

163. Advice on the management and operations of North Rona and Sula Sgeir SPA is unavailable.

164. The conservation objectives for the site are:

- To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and
- To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:
  - Population of the species as a viable component of the site
  - Distribution of the species within site
  - Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
  - Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
  - No significant disturbance of the species

1.17.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

165. Table 1.14 provides a summary of the protected features within the site, their condition within the site (where known) based on the latest NatureScot SCM assessment, and the broader conservation status of the protected features. Current trends for relevant seabird colonies can be found in JNCC (2021) and are based on trends derived from the SMP including, where available, Seabird Counts census data.

166. Feature condition refers to the condition of the protected feature at a site level. Broader conservation status is the overall conservation status of the feature within the UK based on Stanbury *et al*., (2021).

Table 1.14: North Rona and Sula Sgeir SPA Feature Condition Assessment

Qualifying Feature	Feature Condition	Assessment Date	UK Conservation Status
Seabird assemblage	Favourable maintained	1999	N/A
Kittiwake*	Unfavourable declining	2012	Red
Great black-backed gull*	Unfavourable declining	2012	Amber
Guillemot	Unfavourable declining	2012	Amber
Razorbill*	Unfavourable declining	2012	Amber
Puffin*	Unfavourable no change	2012	Red
Storm petrel	Favourable maintained	2009	Amber
Leach's storm petrel	Unfavourable declining	2012	Red
Fulmar*	Unfavourable declining	2012	Amber
Gannet	Favourable maintained	2013	Amber

**Named components of the assemblage only.*

1.18. FOULA SPA

1.18.1. SITE OVERVIEW

167. Foula is the most westerly of the Shetland Islands which are situated to the north of the Scottish mainland and Orkney. It lies 20 km west of Shetland Mainland. Foula SPA consists of a rocky coastline, large areas of mire, and adjacent coastal waters which support internationally important breeding populations of seabirds.

168. The boundary of the SPA overlaps with the boundary of Foula SSSI and Foula Coast SSSI, and the seaward extension extends approximately 2 km into the marine environment to include the seabed, water column and surface.

169. Key literature sources include:

- Foula SPA - Citation (NatureScot 2009x);
- Foula SPA - Draft Conservation Objectives (NatureScot 2021b);
- Foula SPA - Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC 2022h); and
- Foula SPA - Features (NatureScot 2016c).

1.18.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

170. The site is designated for the following features:

- Arctic tern (breeding)
- Great skua (breeding)
- Guillemot (breeding)
- Red-throated diver (breeding)
- Leach's storm petrel (breeding)
- Shag (breeding)
- Breeding seabird assemblage including the following additional named components:
  - Kittiwake
  - Arctic skua
  - Razorbill
  - Puffin
  - Fulmar

1.18.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

171. Foula SPA sits to the west of the Shetland mainland. It covers Foula Island and the surrounding marine area. The total area of the SPA is 7985.49 ha. The marine area around the island makes up most of the total area however the SPA includes habitats on the Island such as sea cliffs, bogs/marsh, inland water, grasslands and heath/scrubland. The ecological importance of the area comes from the fact it supports various seabird species of both European and national importance.

1.18.4. CONSERVATION ADVICE

172. Advice on the management and operations of Foula SPA is not available.

173. The conservation objectives for the site are:

- To ensure that the qualifying features of Foula SPA and the Seas off Foula SPA are in favourable condition and make an appropriate contribution to achieving Favourable Conservation Status.
- To ensure that the integrity of Foula SPA and the Seas off Foula SPA is restored in the context of environmental changes by meeting the following objectives for each qualifying feature:
  - The populations of the qualifying features are viable components of Foula SPA and Seas off Foula SPA.
  - The distributions of the qualifying features throughout Foula SPA and Seas off Foula SPA are maintained by avoiding significant disturbance of the species.
  - The supporting habitats and processes relevant to qualifying features and their prey/food resources are maintained, or where appropriate restored, at Foula SPA and Seas off Foula SPA.

1.18.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

174. Table 1.15 provides a summary of the protected features within the site, their condition within the site (where known) based on the latest NatureScot SCM assessment, and the broader conservation status of the protected features. Current trends for relevant seabird colonies can be found in JNCC (2021) and are based on trends derived from the SMP including, where available, Seabird Counts census data.

175. Feature condition refers to the condition of the protected feature at a site level. Broader conservation status is the overall conservation status of the feature within the UK based on Stanbury *et al*., (2021).

Table 1.15: Foula SPA Feature Condition Assessment

Qualifying Feature	Feature Condition	Assessment Date	UK Conservation Status
Seabird assemblage	Unfavourable declining	2016	N/A
Kittiwake*	Unfavourable declining	2015	Red
Arctic tern	Unfavourable declining	2016	Amber
Great skua	Favourable recovered	2015	Amber
Arctic skua*	Unfavourable declining	2015	Red
Guillemot	Unfavourable declining	2015	Amber
Razorbill*	Unfavourable declining	2015	Amber
Puffin*	Unfavourable no change	2016	Red
Red-throated diver	Favourable maintained	2013	Green
Leach's storm petrel	Unfavourable declining	2001	Red
Fulmar*	Unfavourable declining	2015	Amber
Shag	Unfavourable declining	2015	Red

**Named components of the assemblage only.*

1.19. NOSS SPA

1.19.1. SITE OVERVIEW

176. Noss SPA is an offshore island lying 5 km east of Lerwick, Shetland. It supports breeding seabirds on cliffs and also on inland heathlands and grasslands.

177. The boundary of the SPA overlaps that of the Noss SSSI and National Nature Reserve and the seaward extension extends approximately 2 km into the marine environment to include the seabed, water column and surface.

178. Key literature sources include:

- Noss SPA - Citation (NatureScot 2009y);
- Noss SPA - Conservation Objectives (NatureScot 2009z);
- Noss SPA - Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC 2022i); and
- Noss SPA - Features (NatureScot 2017d).

1.19.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

179. The site is designated for the following features:

- Great skua (breeding)
- Guillemot (breeding)
- Gannet (breeding)
- Breeding seabird assemblage including the following additional named components:
  - Kittiwake
  - Puffin
  - Fulmar

1.19.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

180. The Noss SPA is located of the eastern coast of the Shetland Islands. It includes the Island of Noss, surrounding marine habitat and part of the eastern coast of Bressay Island. The site has a total area of 3338.38 ha. The habitats include, alongside the large marine area, sea cliffs, grassland, heath/scrubland, and bogs/marsh. The ecological importance of the site stems from the fact is supports seabird populations of both European and national significance.

1.19.4. CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

181. Advice on the management and operations of Noss SPA is unavailable.

182. The conservation objectives for the site are:

- To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and
- To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:
  - Population of the species as a viable component of the site
  - Distribution of the species within site
  - Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
  - Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
  - No significant disturbance of the species

1.19.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

183. Table 1.16 provides a summary of the protected features within the site, their condition within the site (where known) based on the latest NatureScot SCM assessment, and the broader conservation status of the protected features. Current trends for relevant seabird colonies can be found in JNCC (2021) and are based on trends derived from the SMP including, where available, Seabird Counts census data.

184. Feature condition refers to the condition of the protected feature at a site level. Broader conservation status is the overall conservation status of the feature within the UK based on Stanbury *et al*., (2021).

Table 1.16: Noss SPA Feature Condition Assessment

Qualifying Feature	Feature Condition	Assessment Date	UK Conservation Status
Seabird assemblage	Unfavourable declining	2017	N/A
Kittiwake*	Unfavourable declining	2015	Red
Great skua	Favourable maintained	2013	Amber
Guillemot	Unfavourable no change	2015	Amber
Puffin*	Unfavourable declining	2017	Red
Fulmar*	Favourable maintained	2016	Amber
Gannet	Favourable maintained	2014	Amber

**Named components of the assemblage only.*

1.20. FETLAR SPA

1.20.1. SITE OVERVIEW

185. Fetlar is an island in the Shetland group, lying to the east and south respectively of the larger islands of Yell and Unst. The species-rich heath, bog and mire communities on the island support an important and characteristic breeding bird community, with the cliffs, rocky shores, and adjacent coastal waters important for breeding seabirds.

186. Fetlar SPA overlaps North Fetlar SSSI, Lamb Hoga SSSI and Trona Mires SSSI. The seaward extension extends approximately 2 km into the marine environment to include the seabed, water column and surface.

187. Key literature sources include:

- Fetlar SPA - Citation (NatureScot 2009aa);
- Fetlar SPA - Conservation Objectives (NatureScot 2009ab);
- Fetlar SPA - Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC 2022j); and
- Fetlar SPA - Features (NatureScot 2017e).

1.20.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

188. The site is designated for the following features:

- Red-necked phalarope (breeding)
- Arctic tern (breeding)
- Breeding seabird assemblage with the following additional named components:
  - Great skua
  - Arctic skua
  - Fulmar

1.20.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

189. The Fetlar SPA covers part of Fetlar Island and the surrounding marine area. It is located east of the Island of Yell and south of the island of Hunsta, in the Shetland Islands area. The total site area is 16964.69 ha. Most of this is marine habitat however, other habitat types include sea cliffs, inland water, health/scrubland, and grasslands. The ecological importance of the site comes from its support of European and nationally important species of birds.

1.20.4. CONSERVATION ADVICE

190. Advice on the management and operations of Fetlar SPA is unavailable.

191. The conservation objectives for the site are:

- To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and
- To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:
  - Population of the species as a viable component of the site
  - Distribution of the species within site
  - Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
  - Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
  - No significant disturbance of the species

1.20.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

192. Table 1.17 provides a summary of the protected features within the site, their condition within the site (where known) based on the latest NatureScot SCM assessment, and the broader conservation status of the protected features. Current trends for relevant seabird colonies can be found in JNCC (2021) and are based on trends derived from the SMP including, where available, Seabird Counts census data.

193. Feature condition refers to the condition of the protected feature at a site level. Broader conservation status is the overall conservation status of the feature within the UK based on Stanbury *et al*., (2021).

Table 1.17: Fetlar SPA Feature Condition Assessment

Qualifying Feature	Feature Condition	Assessment Date	UK Conservation Status
Seabird assemblage	Unfavourable declining	2017	N/A
Red-necked phalarope	Favourable recovered	2014	Red
Arctic tern	Unfavourable declining	2017	Amber
Great skua*	Favourable maintained	2017	Amber
Arctic skua*	Unfavourable declining	2017	Red
Fulmar*	Unfavourable declining	2016	Amber

**Named components of the assemblage only.*

1.21. HERMANESS, SAXA VORD AND VALLA FIELD SPA

1.21.1. SITE OVERVIEW

194. Hermaness, Saxa Vord and Valla Field SPA lies in the north-west corner of the island of Unst, Shetland, at the northernmost tip of Britain. It consists of 100-200 m high sea cliffs and adjoining areas of grassland, heath and blanket bog.

195. The boundary of the SPA is coincident with that of the Hermaness SSSI, Saxa Vord SSSI, and Valla Field SSSI. The seaward extension extends approximately 2 km into the marine environment to include the seabed, water column and surface.

196. Part of the site (Hermaness SSSI and Saxa Vord SSSI) was previously classified as Hermaness and Saxa Vord SPA on 29 March 1994 for fulmar, gannet, great skua, guillemot and puffin.

197. Key literature sources:

- Hermaness, Saxa Vord and Valla Field SPA - Citation (2009ac);
- Hermaness, Saxa Vord and Valla Field SPA - Conservation Objectives (2009ad);
- Hermaness, Saxa Vord and Valla Field SPA - Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC 2015c); and
- Hermaness, Saxa Vord and Valla Field SPA - Features (NatureScot 2017f).

1.21.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

198. The site is designated for the following features:

- Great skua (breeding)
- Puffin (breeding)
- Red-throated diver (breeding)
- Gannet (breeding)
- Breeding seabird assemblage including the following additional named components:
  - Kittiwake
  - Guillemot
  - Fulmar
  - Shag

1.21.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

199. The Hermaness, Saxa Vord and Valla Field SPA lies on the northern tip of Hunsta Island which itself sits on the northern edge of the of the Shetland archipelago. The site has a total area of 6832.36 ha. The area is largely marine habitat but also includes sea cliffs, heath/scrubland, grasslands, inland water and bog/marsh. The ecological importance of the site comes from the fact it supports various seabird populations of European and national importance.

1.21.4. CONSERVATION ADVICE

200. Advice on the management and operations of Hermaness, Saxa Vord and Valla Field SPA is unavailable.

201. The conservation objectives for the site are:

- To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and
- To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:
  - Population of the species as a viable component of the site
  - Distribution of the species within site
  - Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
  - Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
  - No significant disturbance of the species

1.21.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

202. Table 1.18 provides a summary of the protected features within the site, their condition within the site (where known) based on the latest NatureScot SCM assessment, and the broader conservation status of the protected features. Current trends for relevant seabird colonies can be found in JNCC (2021) and are based on trends derived from the SMP including, where available, Seabird Counts census data.

203. Feature condition refers to the condition of the protected feature at a site level. Broader conservation status is the overall conservation status of the feature within the UK based on Stanbury *et al.*, (2021).

Table 1.18: Hermaness, Saxa Vord and Valla Field SPA Feature Condition Assessment

Qualifying Feature	Feature Condition	Assessment Date	UK Conservation Status
Seabird assemblage	Unfavourable declining	2017	N/A
Kittiwake*	Unfavourable declining	2017	Red
Great skua	Favourable maintained	2013	Amber
Guillemot*	Unfavourable declining	2017	Amber
Puffin	Unfavourable declining	2017	Red
Red-throated diver	Unfavourable declining	2013	Green
Fulmar*	Favourable recovered	2016	Amber
Gannet	Favourable maintained	2014	Amber
Shag*	Unfavourable no change	2017	Red

**Named components of the assemblage only.*

1.22. FIRTH OF FORTH SPA AND RAMSAR SITE

1.22.1. SITE OVERVIEW

204. The Firth of Forth SPA is a complex of estuarine and coastal habitats in southeast Scotland stretching from Alloa to the coasts of Fife and East Lothian. The site includes extensive invertebrate-rich intertidal flats and rocky shores, areas of saltmarsh, lagoons, and sand dune.

205. The boundary of the SPA mostly follows that of the Firth of Forth SSSI and slightly overlaps with Forth Islands SPA.

206. Key literature sources include:

- Firth of Forth SPA - Citation (NatureScot 2018g);
- Firth of Forth SPA - Conservation Objectives (NatureScot 2018h);
- Firth of Forth SPA - Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC 2018e);
- Firth of Forth SPA - Features (NatureScot 2015c);
- Firth of Forth Ramsar - Citation (NatureScot 2021c); and
- Firth of Forth Ramsar - Information sheet (NatureScot 2005a).

1.22.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

207. The site is designated for the following features:

- Bar-tailed godwit (non-breeding) *Limosa lapponica*
- Golden plover (non-breeding) *Pluvialis apricaria*
- Knot (non-breeding) *Calidris canutus*
- Pink-footed goose (non-breeding) *Anser brachyrhynchus*
- Red-throated diver (non-breeding)
- Redshank (non-breeding) *Tringa totanus*
- Sandwich tern (passage) *Thalasseus sandvicensis*
- Shelduck (non-breeding) *Tadorna*
- Slavonian grebe (non-breeding)
- Turnstone (non-breeding) *Arenaria interpres*
- Non-breeding waterfowl assemblage including the following additional named components:
  - Scaup *Aythya marila*
  - Great crested grebe *Podiceps cristatus*
  - Cormorant
  - Curlew *Numenius arquata*
  - Eider
  - Long-tailed duck
  - Common scoter
  - Velvet scoter
  - Goldeneye
  - Red-breasted merganser
  - Oystercatcher *Haematopus*
  - Ringed plover *Charadrius hiaticula*
  - Grey plover *Pluvialis squatarola*
  - Dunlin *Calidris alpina*
  - Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*
  - Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*
  - Wigeon *Mareca penelope*

1.22.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

208. The Firth of Forth SPA and Ramsar site is a large coastal area comprising a complex of estuaries, mudflats, rocky shorelines, beaches and saltmarshes, including many fragmentary bits of shoreline considered to act as a single ecological unit. Several large urban areas, including Edinburgh, are adjacent to the site and include areas of heavy industry and well-used maritime shipping lanes. The site provides habitat for large numbers of wintering waders and wildfowl, many in nationally and internationally important numbers, and a number of aesthetic, archaeological, sporting and recreational interests lend added value. Coastal industrial development is seen as a source of pressure but is subject to detailed planning control, and the potential for rising sea levels are foreseen in "planned retreat" coastal realignment schemes. The total site area is 6317.93ha.

1.22.4. CONSERVATION ADVICE

209. Advice on the management and operations of Firth of Forth SPA and Ramsar is unavailable.

210. The conservation objectives of the site are:

- To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and
- To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:
  - Population of the species as a viable component of the site
  - Distribution of the species within site
  - Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
  - Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
  - No significant disturbance of the species

1.22.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

211. Table 1.19 provides a summary of the protected features within the site, their condition within the site (where known) based on the latest NatureScot SCM assessment, and the broader conservation status of the protected features.

212. Feature condition refers to the condition of the protected feature at a site level. Broader conservation status is the overall conservation status of the feature within the UK based on Stanbury *et al*., (2021).

Table 1.19: Firth of Forth SPA Feature Condition Assessment

Qualifying Feature	Feature Condition	Assessment Date	UK Conservation Status
Non-breeding waterfowl assemblage	Favourable maintained	2015	N/A
Bar-tailed godwit	Favourable maintained	2015	Amber
Common scoter*	Unfavourable declining	2015	Red
Curlew*	Favourable maintained	2015	Red
Dunlin*	Favourable declining	2015	Red
Golden plover	Unfavourable declining	2015	Green
Grey plover*	Favourable declining	2015	Green
Long-tailed duck*	Unfavourable declining	2015	Red
Oystercatcher*	Favourable maintained	2015	Amber

Qualifying Feature	Feature Condition	Assessment Date	UK Conservation Status
Pink-footed goose	Favourable maintained	2015	Amber
Redshank	Favourable maintained	2015	Amber
Scaup*	Unfavourable declining	2015	Red
Turnstone	Favourable maintained	2015	Amber
Velvet scoter*	Favourable maintained	2015	Red
Wigeon*	Favourable maintained	2015	Amber
Cormorant*	Favourable maintained	2015	Green
Eider*	Favourable declining	2015	Amber
Goldeneye*	Unfavourable declining	2015	Red
Great crested grebe*	Unfavourable declining	2015	Green
Knot	Unfavourable declining	2015	Amber
Lapwing	Favourable declining	2015	Red
Mallard*	Favourable declining	2015	Amber
Red-breasted merganser*	Unfavourable declining	2015	Amber
Red-throated diver	Favourable maintained	2015	Green
Ringed plover*	Favourable maintained	2015	Red
Sandwich tern	Favourable maintained	2015	Amber
Shelduck	Favourable maintained	2015	Amber
Slavonian grebe	Unfavourable declining	2015	Red

**Named components of the assemblage only.*

1.23. MONTROSE BASIN SPA AND RAMSAR SITE

1.23.1. SITE OVERVIEW

213. Montrose Basin SPA contains the enclosed estuary of the River South Esk on the east coast of Scotland, and Dun's Dish, a small eutrophic loch 4 km northwest of the Basin. It contains areas of mudflat, marsh and agricultural land and supports a diverse assemblage of wintering waterfowl of outstanding nature conservation and scientific importance.

214. The boundaries of Montrose Basin SPA follow those of Montrose Basin SSSI and Dun's Dish SSSI.

215. Key literature sources include:

- Montrose Basin SPA - Citation (NatureScot 2018i);
- Montrose Basin SPA - Conservation Objectives (NatureScot 2018j);
- Montrose Basin SPA - Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC 2019c);
- Montrose Basin SPA - Features (NatureScot 2014b);
- Montrose Basin Ramsar – Citation (NatureScot 2022a); and
- Montrose Basin Ramsar - Information Sheet (NatureScot 2006a).

1.23.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

216. The site is designated for the following features:

- Greylag goose (non-breeding) *Anser anser*
- Pink-footed goose (non-breeding)
- Redshank (non-breeding)
- Non-breeding waterfowl assemblage including the following additional named components:
  - Oystercatcher
  - Eider
  - Wigeon
  - Knot
  - Dunlin
  - Shelduck

1.23.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

217. Montrose Basin SPA and Ramsar site is located on the east coast of Scotland north of Dundee. It has a total area of 981.19ha. The site, relatively unimpacted by development, consists of an enclosed estuary, mudflats, marsh, and a small nutrient-rich loch. Due to its unusual hydrology, there is a high species diversity in the intertidal zone. Internationally important numbers of pink-footed geese, greylag geese, and redshank winter at the site. Human activities include recreation, agriculture, and livestock grazing.

1.23.4. CONSERVATION ADVICE

218. Advice on the management and operations of Montrose Basin SPA and Ramsar is unavailable.

219. The conservation objectives for the site are:

- To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and
- To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:
  - Population of the species as a viable component of the site
  - Distribution of the species within site
  - Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
  - Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
  - No significant disturbance of the species

1.23.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

220. Table 1.20 provides a summary of the protected features within the site, their condition within the site (where known) based on the latest NatureScot SCM assessment, and the broader conservation status of the protected features.

221. Feature condition refers to the condition of the protected feature at a site level. Broader conservation status is the overall conservation status of the feature within the UK based on Stanbury *et al*., (2021).

Table 1.20: Montrose Basin SPA Feature Condition Assessment

Qualifying Feature	Feature Condition	Assessment Date	UK Conservation Status
Non-breeding waterfowl assemblage	Favourable maintained	2014	N/A
Greylag goose	Unfavourable no change	2008	Amber
Pink-footed goose	Favourable maintained	2014	Amber
Redshank	Favourable maintained	2014	Amber
Oystercatcher	Favourable maintained	2008	Amber
Eider	Favourable declining	2008	Amber
Wigeon	Favourable maintained	2008	Amber
Knot	Unfavourable declining	2014	Amber
Dunlin *	Not yet assessed	Not yet assessed	Red
Shelduck	Not yet assessed	Not yet assessed	Amber

1.24. NORTHUMBRIA COAST SPA AND RAMSAR SITE

1.24.1. SITE OVERVIEW

222. The Northumbria Coast SPA was classified in 2000, qualifying under Article 4.1 of the EC Birds Directive because it supported 1.7% of the GB population of breeding little tern *Sternula albifrons* listed in Annex I of the Directive and under Article 4.2 of the Directive because it supported two regularly occurring migratory species: 2.6% of the biogeographic population of turnstone and 1.6% biogeographic population of purple sandpiper.

223. The Northumbria Coast SPA is located in north-east England and includes much of the coastline between the Tees and Tweed Estuaries. The site consists of mainly discrete sections of rocky shore with associated boulder and cobble beaches. The SPA also includes parts of three artificial pier structures and a small section of sandy beach. In summer, the site supports an internationally important population of breeding little tern and Arctic tern, and two species of wintering waders occur in internationally important numbers, turnstone and purple sandpiper *Calidris maritima*.

224. The inter-tidal rock platform and strandline of sandy beaches form an important resource for wintering purple sandpiper and turnstone, as these areas support high densities of invertebrates which are important food for waders. Purple sandpiper are almost entirely restricted to the rocky shore where they feed on a variety of marine invertebrates but their main food preference is mussels, winkles and dog whelks. Turnstone feed on seaweed covered rocks congregating at high tide to roost on the mainland shore or continue to feed on the washed up seaweed on the strandline. Discrete areas of estuarine intertidal mudflats and sand flats are also included within Northumbria Coast SPA. Man-made structures such as the south pier at the mouth of the River Tyne and Seaham Harbour are used as high tide roosts. The tops of the piers and the sides are used by birds throughout the tidal cycle.

225. Arctic and little terns in the Northumbria Coast SPA nest at Newton Links/Long Nanny. The Long Nanny tern site is situated at the mouth of the Long Nanny burn, in Beadnell Bay and compromises of a long section of sandy beach ending in small, low-lying sand spit at the mouth of the river, bordered by an accreting sand dune system to the west. The site has been a National Trust reserve since 1977. The beaches of fine sand, vegetated banks of sea rocket and dunes of marram and lyme grass provide good conditions for nesting. Terns forage in Beadnell Bay and the surrounding coastal waters within Northumberland Marine SPA, which support large numbers of lesser sandeel.

226. Key literature sources:

- Northumbria Coast SPA - Citation (Natural England 2018b);
- Northumbria Coast SPA - Conservation Objectives (Natural England 2019g);
- Northumbria Coast SPA - Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC 2018f);
- Northumbria Coast SPA – Supplementary Advice on Conservation Objectives (Natural England 2019h);
- Northumbria Coast SPA – Advice on Operations (Natural England 2022d); and
- Northumbria Coast SPA - Ramsar Information sheet (Natural England 2004a).

1.24.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

The site is designated for the following features:

- Purple sandpiper (non-breeding) *Calidris maritima*
- Turnstone (non-breeding)

1.24.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

227. Comprises several discrete sections of rocky foreshore between Spittal, in the north of Northumberland, and an area just south of Blackhall Rocks in County Durham. These stretches of coast regularly support internationally important numbers of purple sandpiper and turnstone (1,739 individuals, 2.6 % of the Eastern Atlantic Flyway population). The Ramsar site also includes an area of sandy beach which supports a nationally important breeding colony of little tern and parts of three artificial piers which form important roost sites for purple sandpiper. The 96% of the site composed of Wetland Type D (rocky marine shore) includes cliffs, crags/ledges, intertidal rock, open coast (including bay), and pools and assists in shoreline stabilization, dissipation of erosive forces, and sediment trapping. Little terns are vulnerable to disturbance by tourists in the summer causing reduced breeding success, and the National Trust employs wardens in summer to protect the little tern colony. A range of recreational activities takes place along the coast, including walking, camping, sea angling, birdwatching, and water sports (water skiing, sailing, windsurfing and canoeing). Birdwatching is particularly popular at Druridge Bay. In addition to many day trippers who come to the site, a sizeable population of summer visitors stay in caravan parks and other accommodation along the coast.

1.24.4. CONSERVATION ADVICE

228. Advice on management and operations is provided on the Natural England Designated Site's View website, specifically in their Advice on Operations document (dated March 2022; Natural England, 2022).

229. The conservation objectives for the site are to ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features
- The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features
- The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely
- The population of each of the qualifying features, and
- The distribution of the qualifying features within the site

230. Natural England's SACOs present attributes which are ecological characteristics or requirements of the classified species within a site. The listed attributes are those which best describe the site's ecological integrity and which, if safeguarded, will enable achievement of the conservation objectives. These attributes have a target which is either quantified or qualified depending on the available evidence. The target identifies as far as possible the desired state to be achieved for the attribute.

231. In many cases, the attribute targets show if the current objective is to either 'maintain' or 'restore' the attribute. The targets given for each attribute do not represent thresholds to assess the significance of any given effect. Instead, these targets are used along with the conservation objectives, and any case-specific advice issued by Natural England when assessing a project that may affect site integrity. Any proposals or operations which may affect the site, or its features should be designed so they do not adversely affect any of the attributes in the SACO or achievement of the conservation objectives.

232. The SACO for the Northumbria Coast SPA (Natural England, 2019) has been taken into account when considering potential adverse effects on site integrity.

1.24.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

233. In 2016, Natural England trialled and rolled out a new condition assessment methodology that provides information on the condition of marine features within MPAs. Area Teams conduct these assessments

following a standardised approach that assesses if feature- and site-specific targets have been met. To date, condition assessments have been carried out for marine habitat features of a number of SACs, and will be carried out for other SACs in the future. However, different processes are currently in place to report on the condition of non-marine habitat features and species features of SACs, and on the condition of features in MCZs and SPAs.

234. A condition assessment for the Northumbria Coast SPA is not currently available.

1.25. FIRTH OF TAY AND EDEN ESTUARY SPA AND RAMSAR SITE

1.25.1. SITE OVERVIEW

235. The Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary SPA is a complex of estuarine and coastal habitats in eastern Scotland from the mouth of the River Earn in the inner Firth of Tay, east to Barry Sands on the Angus coast and St Andrews on the Fife coast. For much of its length the main channel of the estuary lies close to the southern shore and the most extensive intertidal flats are on the north side, west of Dundee. In Monifieth Bay, to the east of Dundee, the substrate becomes sandier and there are also mussel beds. The south shore consists of fairly steeply shelving mud and shingle. The Inner Tay Estuary is particularly noted for the continuous dense stands of common reed along its northern shore. These reedbeds, inundated during high tides, are amongst the largest in Britain. Eastwards, as conditions become more saline, there are areas of saltmarsh, a relatively scarce habitat in eastern Scotland.

236. The boundary of the SPA is contained within the following Sites of Special Scientific Interest: Inner Tay Estuary, Monifieth Bay, Barry Links, Tayport -Tentsmuir Coast and Eden Estuary.

237. Key literature sources include:

- Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary SPA - Citation (NatureScot 2018k);
- Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary SPA - Conservation Objectives (NatureScot 2018l);
- Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary SPA - Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC 2018g);
- Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary SPA - Features (NatureScot 2017g);
- Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary Ramsar - Citation (NatureScot 2021d); and
- Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary Ramsar - Information Sheet (NatureScot 2005b).

1.25.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

238. The site is designated for the following features:

- Little tern (breeding)
- Bar-tailed godwit (non-breeding)
- Greylag goose (non-breeding)
- Pink-footed goose (non-breeding)
- Redshank (non-breeding)
- Non-breeding waterfowl assemblage including the following additional named components:
  - Cormorant
  - Velvet scoter
  - Shelduck
  - Eider
  - Common scoter
  - Icelandic black-tailed godwit *Limosa limosa*
  - Goldeneye
  - Red-breasted merganser
  - Goosander *Mergus merganser*
  - Oystercatcher
  - Grey plover
  - Sanderling *Calidris alba*
  - Dunlin
  - Long-tailed duck

1.25.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

239. The Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary SPA has a total area of 6947.62 ha. It is a complex of estuarine and coastal habitats in eastern Scotland adjacent to the city of Dundee. The site includes extensive invertebrate-rich intertidal mudflats and sandflats created by the massive sediment load deposited by the River Tay, as well as large areas of reedbed and sand dune and a small amount of saltmarsh. At least four species of wintering waterfowl are present above the 1% threshold of international importance, and on average some 48,000 waterfowl are supported there in winter, including 14 species in nationally important numbers. Some disturbance is caused in some parts of the site by large numbers of walkers and illegal use of all-terrain bicycles, but these and other potential threats are considered manageable. Students from many nearby universities conduct research on the site.

1.25.4. CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

240. Advice on the management and operations of the Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary SPA and Ramsar is unavailable.

241. The conservation objectives for the site are:

- To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and
- To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:
  - Population of the species as a viable component of the site
  - Distribution of the species within site
  - Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
  - Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
  - No significant disturbance of the species

1.25.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

242. Table 1.21 provides a summary of the protected features within the site, their condition within the site (where known) based on the latest NatureScot SCM assessment, and the broader conservation status of the protected features.

243. Feature condition refers to the condition of the protected feature at a site level. Broader conservation status is the overall conservation status of the feature within the UK based on Stanbury *et al*., (2021).

Table 1.21: Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary SPA Feature Condition Assessment

Qualifying Feature	Feature Condition	Assessment Date	UK Conservation Status
Non-breeding waterfowl assemblage	Favourable, maintained	2015	N/A
Little tern	Unfavourable no change	2015	Amber
Cormorant	Favourable maintained	2015	Green
Bar-tailed godwit	Favourable declining	2015	Amber
Greylag goose	Unfavourable declining	2015	Amber
Pink-footed goose	Favourable maintained	2015	Amber
Redshank	Favourable declining	2015	Amber
Velvet scoter	Unfavourable declining	2015	Red
Shelduck	Unfavourable declining	2015	Amber
Eider	Favourable recovered	2015	Amber
Common scoter	Unfavourable declining	2015	Red

Qualifying Feature	Feature Condition	Assessment Date	UK Conservation Status
Icelandic black tailed godwit	Favourable maintained	2015	Red
Goldeneye	Unfavourable declining	2015	Red
Red-breasted merganser	Unfavourable declining	2015	Amber
Goosander	Favourable maintained	2015	Green
Oystercatcher	Favourable maintained	2015	Amber
Grey plover	Favourable maintained	2015	Amber
Sanderling	Favourable maintained	2015	Amber
Dunlin	Favourable declining	2015	Red
Long-tailed duck	Unfavourable declining	2015	Red

1.26. LINDISFARNE SPA AND RAMSAR SITE

1.26.1. SITE OVERVIEW

244. Lindisfarne, or Holy Island, is a large island off the north-east coast of Northumberland. The SPA, designated in 1990, is also a Ramsar site and a National Nature Reserve, managed by Natural England (Natural England 1990). Lindisfarne National Nature Reserve depends upon funding to maintain conservation efforts. Considerable funding and resources are required to sustain and improve conservation efforts, such as the Shorebird Project Protection Scheme for the breeding tern species (Natural England 2017).

245. Lindisfarne has a road connecting the island to the mainland, which is only accessible at low tide. There are a wide range of coastal habitats within the SPA, which support a large assemblage of birds. Large intertidal mud and sandflats provide an important food source for wading birds, such as the grey plover, bar-tailed godwit, redshank and dunlin. The mudflats host an important number of invertebrate prey, including polychaete worms and bivalves. The light-bellied brent geese and wigeon also feed upon the *Zostera* spp. And *Ulva* spp. which grow upon the mudflats, and are some of the largest areas in the north-east of England. This provides a food source for some of the geese and the wigeon, as well as a refuge for roosting birds when the tide is high. Rafts of sea ducks overwinter in the shallow waters surrounding the island, including long-tailed duck, eider and common scoter. These waters also provide an important foraging area for tern species during the breeding season. The island also has other habitats which support the bird population, including large sand dune habitats and a rocky shore.

246. Lindisfarne SPA also supports an internationally important assemblage of non-breeding waterbirds.

247. Key literature sources include:

- Lindisfarne SPA - Citation (Natural England 2014c);
- Lindisfarne SPA - Conservation Objectives (Natural England 2019i);
- Lindisfarne SPA - Nature 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC 2015d);
- Lindisfarne SPA - Site Details (Natural England 2014d); and
- Lindisfarne Ramsar - Information Sheet (Natural England 1999a).

1.26.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

The site is designated for the following features:

- Bar-tailed godwit (non-breeding)
- Common scoter (non-breeding)
- Dunlin (non-breeding)
- Eider (non-breeding)
- Golden plover (non-breeding)
- Grey plover (non-breeding)
- Greylag goose (non-breeding)
- Light-bellied brent goose (non-breeding) *Branta bernicla hrota*
- Long-tailed duck (non-breeding)
- Red-breasted merganser (non-breeding)
- Redshank (non-breeding)
- Ringed plover (non-breeding)
- Sanderling (non-breeding)
- Shelduck (non-breeding)
- Whooper swan (non-breeding) *Cygnus cygnus*
- Wigeon (non-breeding)
- Non-breeding waterbird assemblage

1.26.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

248. Extensive intertidal flats, with a large area of saltmarsh, a major sand dune system with well-developed dune slacks supporting beds of Zostera. The slacks provide food for an internationally important flock of wintering light-bellied brent geese (2,428), of the Spitzbergen breeding population. Various species of ducks and geese winter in internationally important numbers regularly exceeding 20,000 individuals. The site is of national importance for breeding terns. The dune systems support a rich flora and diverse invertebrate fauna. Tourism attracts up to 750,000 visitors annually.

1.26.4. CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

249. Advice on management and operations is provided on the Natural England Designated Site's View website, specifically in their Advice on Operations document (dated March 2022; Natural England, 2022).

250. The conservation objectives for the site are to

251. Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features
- The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features
- The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely
- The population of each of the qualifying features, and,
- The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

252. Natural England's SACOs present attributes which are ecological characteristics or requirements of the classified species within a site. The listed attributes are those which best describe the site's ecological integrity and which, if safeguarded, will enable achievement of the conservation objectives. These attributes have a target which is either quantified or qualified depending on the available evidence. The target identifies as far as possible the desired state to be achieved for the attribute.

253. In many cases, the attribute targets show if the current objective is to either 'maintain' or 'restore' the attribute. The targets given for each attribute do not represent thresholds to assess the significance of any given effect. Instead, these targets are used along with the conservation objectives, and any case-specific advice issued by Natural England when assessing a project that may affect site integrity. Any proposals or operations which may affect the site, or its features should be designed so they do not adversely affect any of the attributes in the SACO or achievement of the conservation objectives.

254. The SACO for the Lindisfarne SPA (Natural England, 2019) has been taken into account when considering potential adverse effects on site integrity.

1.26.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

255. In 2016, Natural England trialled and rolled out a new condition assessment methodology that provides information on the condition of marine features within MPAs. Area Teams conduct these assessments following a standardised approach that assesses if feature- and site-specific targets have been met. To date, condition assessments have been carried out for marine habitat features of a number of SACs, and will be carried out for other SACs in the future. However, different processes are currently in place to report

on the condition of non-marine habitat features and species features of SACs, and on the condition of features in MCZs and SPAs.

256. A condition assessment for the Lindisfarne SPA is not currently available.

1.27. YTHAN ESTUARY, SANDS OF FORVIE AND MEIKLE LOCH SPA, YTHAN ESTUARY AND MEIKLE LOCH RAMSAR SITE

1.27.1. SITE OVERVIEW

257. Ythan Estuary, Sands of Forvie and Meikle Loch SPA covers a complex area in the northeast of Scotland that contains the long, narrow estuary of the River Ythan, the Sands of Forvie on the east bank of the estuary; the eutrophic Meikle Loch and a marine component covering the area between Aberdeen and Cruden Bay to the north.

258. The boundaries of the SPA follow those of Sands of Forvie and Ythan Estuary SSSI and the shore of Meikle Loch and Little Loch within Meikle Loch and Kippet Hills SSSI.

259. Key literature sources include:

- Ythan Estuary, Sands of Forvie and Meikle Loch SPA - Citation (NatureScot 2020b);
- Ythan Estuary, Sands of Forvie and Meikle Loch SPA - Conservation Objectives (NatureScot 2021e);
- Ythan Estuary, Sands of Forvie and Meikle Loch SPA - Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC 2020c);
- Ythan Estuary, Sands of Forvie and Meikle Loch SPA - Features (NatureScot 2012a);
- Ythan Estuary and Meikle Loch Ramsar - Citation (NatureScot 2005c); and
- Ythan Estuary and Meikle Loch Ramsar - Information Sheet (NatureScot 1999a).

1.27.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

260. The site is designated for the following features:

- Pink-footed goose (non-breeding
- Non-breeding waterfowl assemblage including the following additional named components:
  - Eider
  - Lapwing
  - Redshank

1.27.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

261. Ythan Estuary, Sands of Forvie and Meikle Loch SPA has a total area of 7062.03 ha. The site is a combination of inland wetlands and marine and coastal wetlands. The area is a waterfowl wintering ground and supports well over 20,000 waterfowl. The main activities in the area include nature conservation, recreation, fishing, rough or shifting grazing.

1.27.4. CONSERVATION ADVICE

262. Advice on the management and operations for Ythan Estuary, Sands of Forvie and Meikle Loch SPA is unavailable.

263. The conservation objectives for the site are:

- To ensure that the qualifying features of Ythan Estuary, Sands of Forvie and Meikle Loch SPA are in favourable condition and make an appropriate contribution to achieving Favourable Conservation Status.
- To ensure that the integrity of Ythan Estuary, Sands of Forvie and Meikle Loch SPA is restored in the context of environmental changes by meeting the following objectives for each qualifying feature:
  - The populations of the qualifying features are viable components of the site.
  - The distributions of the qualifying features throughout the site are maintained by avoiding significant disturbance of the species.
  - The supporting habitats and processes relevant to the qualifying features and their prey/food resources are maintained, or where appropriate, restored.

1.27.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

264. Table 1.22 provides a summary of the protected features within the site, their condition within the site (where known) based on the latest NatureScot SCM assessment, and the broader conservation status of the protected features.

265. Feature condition refers to the condition of the protected feature at a site level. Broader conservation status is the overall conservation status of the feature within the UK based on Stanbury *et al*., (2021).

Table 1.22: Ythan Estuary, Sands of Forvie and Meikle Loch SPA Feature Condition Assessment

Qualifying Feature	Feature Condition	Assessment Date	UK Conservation Status
Non-breeding waterfowl assemblage	Favourable maintained	2012	N/A
Common tern	Unfavourable no change	2012	Amber
Little tern	Favourable maintained	2012	Amber
Sandwich tern	Favourable maintained	2012	Amber
Pink footed goose	Favourable maintained	2012	Amber
Eider	Favourable declining	2012	Amber
Lapwing	Favourable maintained	2012	Red
Redshank	Favourable maintained	2012	Amber

1.28. CAMERON RESERVOIR SPA AND RAMSAR SITE

1.28.1. SITE OVERVIEW

266. Cameron Reservoir SPA is a mesotrophic reservoir with a grassland and willow *Salix carr* fringe, covering 64.4 ha in Fife, Scotland. The site is of international importance for its wintering pink-footed geese.

267. The boundary of the Special Protection Area is coincident with that of Cameron Reservoir SSSI.

268. Key literature sources include:

- Cameron Reservoir SPA - Citation (NatureScot 2009ae);
- Cameron Reservoir SPA - Conservation Objectives (NatureScot 2009af);
- Cameron Reservoir SPA - Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC 2022k);
- Cameron Reservoir SPA - Features (NatureScot 2009ag);
- Cameron Reservoir Ramsar - Citation (NatureScot 2005d); and
- Cameron Reservoir Ramsar - Information Sheet (NatureScot 2005e).

1.28.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

269. The site is designated for the following features:

- Pink-footed goose (non-breeding)

1.28.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

270. Cameron Reservoir SPA and Ramsar site has a total area of 68.71 ha. It contains an artificial loch with beds of aquatic and marginal vegetation. The open water is used as a roost by an internationally important wintering population of pink-footed geese, that feed on the surrounding farmland. The site serves as a domestic water supply. Human activities include recreation hunting and fishing.

1.28.4. CONSERVATION ADVICE

271. Advice on the management and operations of Cameron Reservoir SPA and Ramsar site is unavailable.

- The conservation objectives for the site are:
- To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed below) or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and
- To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:
  - Population of the species as a viable component of the site
  - Distribution of the species within site
  - Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
  - Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
  - No significant disturbance of the species

1.28.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

272. Table 1.23 provides a summary of the protected features within the site, their condition within the site (where known) based on the latest NatureScot SCM assessment, and the broader conservation status of the protected features.

273. Feature condition refers to the condition of the protected feature at a site level. Broader conservation status is the overall conservation status of the feature within the UK based on Stanbury *et al*., (2021).

Table 1.23: Cameron Reservoir SPA Feature Condition Assessment

Qualifying Feature	Feature Condition	Assessment Date	UK Conservation Status
Pink footed goose	Favourable declining	2009	Amber

1.29. HOLBURN LAKE AND MOSS SPA AND RAMSAR SITE

1.29.1. SITE OVERVIEW

274. Holburn Lake and Moss is located about 5 km inland from the coast of Northumberland in north-east England. The site comprises part of a lowland raised mire and parts of the adjacent slopes that form its catchment area. The south-western outflow to the mire was dammed in 1934 to create Holburn Lake. Raised mires are rare in Britain and few now remain intact. Holborn Moss is at the dry end of the range of variation in mires. The vegetation reflects this, being dominated by heather, with cotton-grasses and associated mosses. The core of the site comprises some 10 ha of largely heather-dominated vegetation, punctuated by wetter hollows that retain a Sphagnum-rich flora. There is a small area of poor fen at the eastern end of the lake. Pool margins support species such as cranberry, sundew and bog asphodel. The large heath butterfly, which is nationally uncommon, has also been recorded.

275. The site is of ornithological importance as a roost for the Icelandic population of greylag goose. These birds feed in surrounding agricultural areas outside the SPA, sometimes beyond the immediate surroundings.

276. Key literature source include:

- Holburn Lake and Moss SPA - Citation (Natural England 2014d);
- Holburn Lake and Moss - Conservation Objectives (Natural England 2019j);
- Holburn Lake and Moss - Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC 2015e); and
- Holburn Lake and Moss Ramsar - Site Details (Natural England 2014e).

1.29.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

277. The site is designated for the following features:

- Greylag goose (non-breeding)

1.29.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

278. Holburn Lake and Moss SPA and Ramsar site has a total area of 27.96 ha. It contains an artificial lake and island supporting reedbeds and adjacent mire areas supporting various species of typical mire vegetation. The lake is a roosting site for internationally important numbers of geese. Access to the site is strictly limited.

1.29.4. CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

279. Advice on management and operations of Holburn Lake and Moss SPA and Ramsar site is unavailable.

280. The conservation objectives for the site are to ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features
- The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features
- The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely
- The population of each of the qualifying features, and,
- The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

281. Natural England's SACOs present attributes which are ecological characteristics or requirements of the classified species within a site. The listed attributes are those which best describe the site's ecological integrity and which, if safeguarded, will enable achievement of the conservation objectives. These attributes have a target which is either quantified or qualified depending on the available evidence. The target identifies as far as possible the desired state to be achieved for the attribute.

282. In many cases, the attribute targets show if the current objective is to either 'maintain' or 'restore' the attribute. The targets given for each attribute do not represent thresholds to assess the significance of any given effect. Instead, these targets are used along with the conservation objectives, and any case-specific advice issued by Natural England when assessing a project that may affect site integrity. Any proposals or operations which may affect the site, or its features should be designed so they do not adversely affect any of the attributes in the SACO or achievement of the conservation objectives.

283. The SACO for the Holburn Lake SPA (Natural England, 2019) has been taken into account when considering potential adverse effects on site integrity.

1.29.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

284. In 2016, Natural England trialled and rolled out a new condition assessment methodology that provides information on the condition of marine features within MPAs. Area Teams conduct these assessments following a standardised approach that assesses if feature- and site-specific targets have been met. To date, condition assessments have been carried out for marine habitat features of a number of SACs, and will be carried out for other SACs in the future. However, different processes are currently in place to report on the condition of non-marine habitat features and species features of SACs, and on the condition of features in MCZs and SPAs.

285. A condition assessment for the Holburn Lake SPA is not currently available.

1.30. GREENLAW MOOR SPA AND RAMSAR SITE

1.30.1. SITE OVERVIEW

286. The Greenlaw Moor SPA is located in the southern Lammermuir Hills. The site includes two pools surrounded by an area of moorland. It is an important roosting area for geese in winter.

287. The Special Protection Area lies within the Greenlaw Moor SSSI.

288. Key literature sources include:

- Greenlaw Moor SPA - Citation (NatureScot 1994a);
- Greenlaw Moor SPA - Conservation Objectives (NatureScot 1994b);
- Greenlaw Moor SPA - Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC 2022l);
- Greenlaw Moor SPA - Features (NatureScot 2007a); and
- Greenlaw Moor Ramsar - Citation (NatureScot 2021f).

1.30.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

289. The site is designated for the following features:

- Pink-footed goose (non-breeding)

1.30.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CITE

290. Greenlaw Moor SPA and Ramsar site has a total area of 245.81 ha. The site consists of an important heather moorland and includes raised mire and two pools. The area of raised moss is well developed and supports a typical flora, including regionally uncommon mosses. Internationally important numbers of pink-footed geese winter at the site. Human activities include livestock grazing, cutting of vegetation, recreation, and hunting.

1.30.4. CONSERVATION BBJECTIVES

291. Advice on management and operations of Greenlaw Moor SPA and Ramsar are unavailable.

292. The conservation objectives for the site are:

- To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and
- To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:
  - Population of the species as a viable component of the site
  - Distribution of the species within site
  - Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
  - Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
  - No significant disturbance of the species

1.30.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

293. Table 1.24 provides a summary of the protected features within the site, their condition within the site (where known) based on the latest NatureScot SCM assessment, and the broader conservation status of the protected features.

294. Feature condition refers to the condition of the protected feature at a site level. Broader conservation status is the overall conservation status of the feature within the UK based on Stanbury *et al*., (2021).

Table 1.24: Greenlaw Moor SPA Feature Condition Assessment

Qualifying Feature	Feature Condition	Assessment Date	UK Conservation Status
Pink footed goose	Favourable maintained	2007	Amber

1.31. LOCH OF KINNORDY SPA AND RAMSAR SITE

1.31.1. SITE OVERVIEW

295. Loch of Kinnordy SPA is a eutrophic loch with associated wet meadows and marshes in Angus, Scotland. The site is of international importance for its wintering and breeding birds.

296. The boundary of the SPA is coincident with that of the Loch of Kinnordy Site of Special Scientific Interest.

297. Key literature sources include:

- Loch of Kinnordy SPA - Citation (NatureScot 2018m);
- Loch of Kinnordy SPA - Conservation Objectives (NatureScot 2018n);
- Loch of Kinnordy SPA - Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC 2018h);
- Loch of Kinnordy SPA - Features (NatureScot 2014c); and
- Loch of Kinnordy Ramsar - Citation (NatureScot 2022b).

1.31.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

298. The site is designated for the following features:

- Greylag goose (non-breeding)
- Pink-footed goose (non-breeding)

1.31.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

299. Loch of Kinnordy SPA and Ramsar site has a total area of 86 ha. It contains a nutrient-rich loch and associated wetland communities consisting of basin mire, swamp, and fen. The loch was formerly much larger in extent, but a series of drainage attempts were made, initially to facilitate marl removal. However, it has been increasing in extent in recent years due to the silting of the loch's current outflow stream. Vegetation includes various types of grasslands, willow, alder and birch woodlands, fen communities supporting reedbeds, and various scarce plant species. Internationally important numbers of geese winter at the site. Human activities include recreation, hunting, and fishing.

1.31.4. CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

300. Advice on the management and operations of Loch of Kinnordy SPA and Ramsar site is unavailable.

301. The conservation objectives of the site are:

- To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and
- To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:
  - Population of the species as a viable component of the site
  - Distribution of the species within site
  - Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
  - Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
  - No significant disturbance of the species

1.31.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

302. Table 1.25 provides a summary of the protected features within the site, their condition within the site (where known) based on the latest NatureScot SCM assessment, and the broader conservation status of the protected features.

303. Feature condition refers to the condition of the protected feature at a site level. Broader conservation status is the overall conservation status of the feature within the UK based on Stanbury *et al*., (2021).

Table 1.25: Loch of Kinnordy SPA Feature Condition Assessment

Qualifying Feature	Feature Condition	Assessment Date	UK Conservation Status
Greylag goose	Unfavourable no change	2008	Amber
Pink footed goose	Unfavourable no change	2014	Amber

1.32. DIN MOSS - HOSELAW LOCH SPA AND RAMSAR SITE

1.32.1. SITE OVERVIEW

304. Din Moss – Hoselaw Loch SPA and Ramsar site is located on the northern slopes of the Cheviot Hills in southern Scotland. Hoselaw Loch is a mid-attitude loch that is surrounded by Din Moss, an area of raised bog with associated lagg fens. It is one of the most complete examples of raised mire in this area of Scotland.

305. Key literature sources include:

- Din Moss – Hoselaw Loch SPA - Citation (NatureScot 1988a);
- Din Moss – Hoselaw Loch SPA - Conservation Objectives (NatureScot 1988b);
- Din Moss – Hoselaw Loch SPA - Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC 2015f);
- Din Moss – Hoselaw Loch SPA - Features (NatureScot 2015d); and
- Din Moss – Hoselaw Loch Ramsar - Citation (NatureScot 2021g).

1.32.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

306. The site is designated for the following features:

- Greylag goose (non-breeding)
- Pink-footed goose (non-breeding)

1.32.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

307. Din Moss – Hoselaw Loch SPA and Ramsar site has a total area of 50.58 ha. It contains a small freshwater lake with associated fen and raised mire that provides a roosting site for internationally important numbers of wintering geese (2,008) from the Icelandic breeding population. Human activities include bird hunting on nearby lands.

1.32.4. CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

308. Advice on the management and operations of Din Moss – Hoselaw Loch SPA and Ramsar site is unavailable.

309. The conservation objectives for the site are:

- To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and
- To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:
  - Population of the species as a viable component of the site
  - Distribution of the species within site
  - Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
  - Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
  - No significant disturbance of the species

1.32.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

310. Table 1.26 provides a summary of the protected features within the site, their condition within the site (where known) based on the latest NatureScot SCM assessment, and the broader conservation status of the protected features.

311. Feature condition refers to the condition of the protected feature at a site level. Broader conservation status is the overall conservation status of the feature within the UK based on Stanbury *et al*., (2021).

Table 1.26: Din Moss – Hoselaw Loch SPA Feature Condition Assessment

Qualifying Feature	Feature Condition	Assessment Date	UK Conservation Status
Greylag goose	Unfavourable unchanged	2008	Amber
Pink footed goose	Unfavourable declining	2016	Amber

1.33. FALA FLOW SPA AND RAMSAR SITE

1.33.1. SITE OVERVIEW

312. Fala Flow SPA and Ramsar site is situated within the Lammermuir Hills in the Scottish Southern Uplands. The Flow is a blanket mire, unusual due to the presence of pools which seldom occur in blanket mires located at such low altitudes.

313. Key literature sources include:

- Fala Flow SPA - Citation (NatureScot 1990a);
- Fala Flow SPA - Conservation Objectives (NatureScot 1990b);
- Fala Flow SPA - Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC 2015g);
- Fala Flow SPA - Features (NatureScot 2009ah); and
- Fala Flow Ramsar – Citation (NatureScot 2021h).

1.33.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

314. The site is designated for the following features:

- Pink-footed goose (non-breeding)

1.33.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

315. Fala Flow SPA and Ramsar site has an area of 317.75 ha. Fala Flow is in the Lammermuir Hills to the south-east of Edinburgh. It is a blanket mire, with some pools, developed at a lower altitude than most blanket mires in Midlothian. The vegetation comprises heather *Calluna vulgaris*/cottongrass *Eriophorum spp*., with other characteristic species including cowberry *Vaccinium vitis-idaea* and *Sphagnum* bog-mosses. Such mires are scarce and declining in Midlothian and this example is relatively undisturbed. The mire and pools support an internationally important goose roost.

1.33.4. CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

316. Advice on the management and operations of Fala Flow SPA and Ramsar site is unavailable.

317. The conservation objectives for the site are:

- To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed below) or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and
- To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:
  - Population of the species as a viable component of the site
  - Distribution of the species within site
  - Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
  - Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
  - No significant disturbance of the species

1.33.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

318. Table 1.27 provides a summary of the protected features within the site, their condition within the site (where known) based on the latest NatureScot SCM assessment, and the broader conservation status of the protected features.

319. Feature condition refers to the condition of the protected feature at a site level. Broader conservation status is the overall conservation status of the feature within the UK based on Stanbury *et al*., (2021).

Table 1.27: Fala Flow SPA Feature Condition Assessment

Qualifying Feature	Feature Condition	Assessment Date	UK Conservation Status
Pink footed goose	Favourable maintained	2009	Amber

1.34. LOCH LEVEN SPA AND RAMSAR SITE

1.34.1. SITE OVERVIEW

320. Loch Leven in central Scotland is the largest natural eutrophic lake in Britain. It is a relatively shallow loch, surrounded by farmland, with a diverse aquatic flora and shoreline vegetation. The boundary of the Loch Leven SPA follows that of the Loch Leven SSSI except for the exclusion of 4 ha of SSSI towards the northern end of the loch.

321. Key literature sources include:

- Loch Leven SPA - Citation (NatureScot 2000a);
- Loch Leven SPA - Conservation Objectives (NatureScot 2000b);
- Loch Leven SPA - Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC 2015h);
- Loch Leven SPA - Features (NatureScot 2007b); and
- Loch Leven Ramsar - Citation (NatureScot 2022c).

1.34.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

322. The site is designated for the following features:

- Whooper swan (non-breeding)
- Pink-footed goose (non-breeding)
- Shoveler (non-breeding) *Spatula clypeata*
- Non-breeding waterfowl assemblage including the following additional named components:
  - Gadwall
  - Teal
  - Pochard
  - Tufted duck *Aythya fuligula*
  - Goldeneye

1.34.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

323. Loch Leven SPA and Ramsar site has a total area of 1611.29 ha. The site, the largest nutrient-rich lake in Britain, is an excellent example of a wetland with multiple uses in balance with its natural heritage interest. Consisting of several islands surrounded by damp pasture, the site is of national entomological importance and includes several nationally rare species of aquatic flora. The loch provides feeding, roosting and wintering sites for internationally important numbers (averaging 18,463 individuals in winter) of swans, geese and ducks. Human activities include intensive trout fishing, bird hunting, and general recreation.

1.34.4. CONSERVATION ADVICE

324. Advice on management and operations of Loch Leven SPA and Ramsar site is unavailable.

325. The conservation objectives for the site are:

- To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed below) or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and
- To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:
  - Population of the species as a viable component of the site
  - Distribution of the species within site
  - Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
  - Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
  - No significant disturbance of the species

1.34.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

326. Table 1.28 provides a summary of the protected features within the site, their condition within the site (where known) based on the latest NatureScot SCM assessment, and the broader conservation status of the protected features.

327. Feature condition refers to the condition of the protected feature at a site level. Broader conservation status is the overall conservation status of the feature within the UK based on Stanbury *et al*., (2021).

Table 1.28: Loch Leven SPA Feature Condition Assessment

Qualifying Feature	Feature Condition	Assessment Date	UK Conservation Status
Non-breeding waterfowl assemblage	Favourable maintained	2007	N/A
Whooper swan	Favourable maintained	2007	Amber
Pink-footed goose	Favourable maintained	2007	Amber
Shoveler	Favourable maintained	2007	Amber
Gadwall	Favourable maintained	2007	Amber
Teal	Favourable maintained	2007	Amber
Pochard	Favourable maintained	2007	Red
Tufted duck	Favourable maintained	2007	Green
Goldeneye	Favourable maintained	2007	Red

1.35. GLADHOUSE RESERVOIR SPA AND RAMSAR SITE

1.35.1. SITE OVERVIEW

328. Gladhouse Reservoir SPA lies in the Moorfoot Hills of the Southern Uplands of Scotland, about 20 km south of Edinburgh. It is a public water-supply reservoir, with limited aquatic and emergent vegetation. The reservoir is the largest freshwater body in the Lothians and is surrounded by both coniferous and mixed woodland and grassland. It has a number of small islands.

329. The boundary of the SPA is coincident with the Gladhouse Reservoir SSSI.

330. Key literature sources include:

- Gladhouse Reservoir SPA - Citation (NatureScot 2018o);
- Gladhouse Reservoir SPA - Conservation Objectives (NatureScot 2018p);
- Gladhouse Reservoir SPA - Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC 2018i);
- Gladhouse Reservoir SPA - Features (NatureScot 2009ai); and
- Gladhouse Reservoir Ramsar - Citation (NatureScot 2021i).

1.35.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

331. The site is designated for the following features:

- Pink-footed goose (non-breeding)

1.35.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

332. Gladhouse Reservoir SPA and Ramsar site has a total area of 186.58 ha. It contains a large freshwater reservoir with several small islands. There is limited development of aquatic vegetation, although there are marginal areas of fen. The reservoir is a roosting site for internationally important numbers (3,440) of wintering geese.

1.35.4. CONSERVATION ADVICE

333. Advice on management and operations of Gladhouse Reservoir SPA and Ramsar is unavailable.

334. The conservation objectives for the site are:

- To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed below) or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and
- To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:
  - Population of the species as a viable component of the site
  - Distribution of the species within site
  - Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
  - Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
  - No significant disturbance of the species

1.35.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

335. Table 1.29 provides a summary of the protected features within the site, their condition within the site (where known) based on the latest NatureScot SCM assessment, and the broader conservation status of the protected features.

336. Feature condition refers to the condition of the protected feature at a site level. Broader conservation status is the overall conservation status of the feature within the UK based on Stanbury *et al*., (2021).

Table 1.29: Gladhouse Reservoir SPA Feature Condition Assessment

Qualifying Feature	Feature Condition	Assessment Date	UK Conservation Status
Pink footed goose	Unfavourable declining	2009	Amber

1.36. SOUTH TAYSIDE GOOSE ROOSTS SPA AND RAMSAR SITE

1.36.1. SITE OVERVIEW

337. South Tayside Goose Roosts SPA and Ramsar site comprises seven lochs, a number of smaller water bodies and other wetland habitats in Strathearn and Strathallan to the west of Perth.

338. The site is overlapped completely by parts of three SSSI: Carsebreck and Rhynd Lochs SSSI, Drummond Lochs SSSI, and Dupplin Lakes SSSI.

339. Key literature sources include:

- South Tayside Goose Roosts SPA - Citation (NatureScot 2018q);
- South Tayside Goose Roosts SPA - Conservation Objectives (NatureScot 2018r);
- South Tayside Goose Roosts SPA - Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC 2018j);
- South Tayside Goose Roosts SPA - Features (NatureScot 2014d); and
- South Tayside Goose Roosts Ramsar - Citation (NatureScot 2021j).

1.36.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

340. The site is designated for the following features:

- Greylag goose (non-breeding)
- Pink-footed goose (non-breeding)
- Wigeon (non-breeding)
- Non-breeding waterfowl assemblage

1.36.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

341. South Tayside Goose Roosts SPA and Ramsar site has a total area of 332.17 ha. The site incorporates three widely separated component sectors consisting of seven permanent, freshwater lakes ("lochs"), numerous smaller water bodies, and various wetland habitats, including one of the largest raised bogs in the region. The lochs provide roost sites for internationally important numbers of wintering geese and for nationally important numbers of nesting ducks.

1.36.4. CONSERVATION ADVICE

342. Advice on management and operations of South Tayside Goose Roosts SPA and Ramsar site is unavailable.

343. The conservation objectives for the site are:

- To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed below) or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and
- To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:
  - Population of the species as a viable component of the site
  - Distribution of the species within site
  - Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
  - Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
  - No significant disturbance of the species

1.36.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

344. Table 1.30 provides a summary of the protected features within the site, their condition within the site (where known) based on the latest NatureScot SCM assessment, and the broader conservation status of the protected features.

345. Feature condition refers to the condition of the protected feature at a site level. Broader conservation status is the overall conservation status of the feature within the UK based on Stanbury *et al*., (2021).

Table 1.30: South Tayside Goose Roosts SPA Feature Condition Assessment

Qualifying Feature	Feature Condition	Assessment Date	UK Conservation Status
Non-breeding waterfowl assemblage	Unfavourable declining	2014	N/A
Greylag goose	Unfavourable declining	2014	Amber
Pink-footed goose	Unfavourable declining	2014	Amber
Wigeon	Not assessed	2008	Amber

1.37. WESTWATER SPA AND RAMSAR SITE

1.37.1. SITE OVERVIEW

346. Westwater SPA and Ramsar site is located 320 m above sea level in the Pentland Hills. It is an artificial reservoir forming part of the Lothian water supply.

347. The boundary of the SPA is coincident with Westwater Reservoir SSSI.

348. Key literature sources include:

- Westwater SPA - Citation (NatureScot 2018s);
- Westwater SPA - Conservation Objectives (NatureScot 2018t);
- Westwater SPA - Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC 2018k);
- Westwater SPA - Features (NatureScot 2016d); and
- Westwater Ramsar - Citation (NatureScot 2021k).

1.37.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

349. The site is designated for the following features:

- Pink-footed goose (non-breeding)
- Non-breeding waterfowl assemblage

1.37.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

350. Westwater SPA and Ramsar site has a total area of 49.8 ha. It contains an artificial reservoir providing part of the region's water supply. The site supports internationally important numbers of wintering pink-footed geese, among various other wintering waterbirds. Human activities include recreation, fishing, and hunting.

1.37.4. CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

351. Advice on management and operations of Westwater SPA and Ramsar site is unavailable.

352. The conservation objectives for the site are:

- To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed below) or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and
- To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:
  - Population of the species as a viable component of the site
  - Distribution of the species within site
  - Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
  - Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
  - No significant disturbance of the species

1.37.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

353. Table 1.31 provides a summary of the protected features within the site, their condition within the site (where known) based on the latest NatureScot SCM assessment, and the broader conservation status of the protected features.

354. Feature condition refers to the condition of the protected feature at a site level. Broader conservation status is the overall conservation status of the feature within the UK based on Stanbury *et al*., (2021).

Table 1.31: Westwater SPA Feature Condition Assessment

Qualifying Feature	Feature Condition	Assessment Date	UK Conservation Status
Non-breeding waterfowl assemblage	Favourable maintained	2016	N/A
Pink-footed goose	Favourable maintained	2016	Amber

1.38. SLAMANNAN PLATEAU SPA

1.38.1. SITE OVERVIEW

355. Slamannan Plateau lies just east of Cumbernauld, in the headwaters of the River Avon. It consists of two small lochs and their surrounding peatlands and associated areas of rough and improved grassland. These habitats support roosting and feeding Taiga bean geese during periods in winter.

356. Key literature sources include:

- Slamannan Plateau SPA - Citation (NatureScot 2008a);
- Slamannan Plateau SPA - Conservation Objectives (NatureScot 2008b);
- Slamannan Plateau SPA - Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (JNCC 2015i); and
- Slamannan Plateau - Features (NatureScot 2016e).

1.38.2. QUALIFYING FEATURES

357. The site is designated for the following features:

- Taiga bean goose (non-breeding) *Anser fabalis*

1.38.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

358. Slamannan Plateau SPA is located in central Scotland. It has a total area of 590.91 ha. The habitat types include bog/marshland, grasslands of various types and inland water. The ecological importance of the site comes from the fact it supports taiga bean goose populations.

1.38.4. CONSERVATION ADVICE

359. Advice on management and operations of Slamannan Plateau SPA is unavailable.

360. The conservation objectives for the site are:

- To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and
- To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:
  - Population of the species as a viable component of the site
  - Distribution of the species within site
  - Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
  - Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
  - No significant disturbance of the species

1.38.5. CURRENT CONDITION STATUS

361. Table 1.32 provides a summary of the protected features within the site, their condition within the site (where known) based on the latest NatureScot SCM assessment, and the broader conservation status of the protected features.

362. Feature condition refers to the condition of the protected feature at a site level. Broader conservation status is the overall conservation status of the feature within the UK based on Stanbury *et al*., (2021).

Table 1.32: Slamannan Plateau SPA Feature Condition Assessment

Qualifying Feature	Feature Condition	Assessment Date	UK Conservation Status
Taiga bean goose	Favourable maintained	2016	Red

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