

OUTER FIRTH OF FORTH AND ST ANDREWS BAY COMPLEX SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA (SPA) DRAFT CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

The box below provides the draft high-level Conservation Objective statements for the Outer Firth of Forth and St Andrews Bay Complex SPA.

NatureScot is currently preparing Conservation and Management Advice for all inshore marine protected areas. The Conservation and Management Advice documents will include the full Conservation Objectives, which incorporates site-specific supplementary advice and information to assist in the interpretation of the high-level Conservation Objectives. Whilst the site-specific advice and information is developed, the high-level Conservation Objectives will remain as draft but are unlikely to change. **These draft high-level Conservation Objectives should be used for Habitats Regulations Appraisals of plans or projects.**

The Conservation and Management Advice documents will also include our initial advice to support management at these marine protected areas.

For the Outer Firth of Forth and St Andrews Bay Complex SPA our Conservation and Management Advice is being developed in partnership with the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC).

The * denotes a qualifying feature that is an assemblage feature only.

Outer Firth of Forth and St Andrews Bay Complex SPA	
<p>Qualifying features:</p> <p><i>Seabirds:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arctic tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) • Atlantic puffin (<i>Fratercula arctica</i>)* • Common guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>)* • Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>)* • Common tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) • European shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>) • Black-legged kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>)* • Herring gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>)* • Black-headed gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>)* • Common gull (<i>Larus canus</i>)* • Little gull (<i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>) • Manx shearwater (<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>)* • Northern gannet (<i>Morus bassanus</i>) • Seabird assemblage (breeding and non-breeding) 	<p><i>Waterfowl:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common eider (<i>Somateria mollissima mollissima</i>) • Common goldeneye (<i>Bucephala clangula</i>)* • Common scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) • Long-tailed duck (<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>)* • Red-breasted merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>)* • Red-throated diver (<i>Gavia stellate</i>) • Slavonian grebe (<i>Podiceps auritus</i>) • Velvet scoter (<i>Melanitta fusca</i>)* • Waterbird assemblage

Draft Conservation Objectives:

1. 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.
2. 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 objectives 2a, 2b and 2c for each qualifying feature:
 - 2a. The populations of qualifying features are viable components of the site.
 - 2b. The distributions of the qualifying features throughout the site are maintained by avoiding significant disturbance of the species.
 - 2c. 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.

European shag, black-legged kittiwake, common tern and herring gull are considered to be in an unfavourable condition at the Outer Firth of Forth and St Andrews Bay Complex SPA and therefore an overarching 'restore' objective is set for the site.

For the Outer Firth of Forth and St Andrew Bay Complex SPA, when carrying out appraisals of plans or projects, the focus of the appraisal should be to understand the impact of the plan or project on site integrity. For qualifying features that are in favourable condition this means maintaining that condition. For European shag, black-legged kittiwake, common tern and herring gull that are in unfavourable condition, it means ensuring that the plan or project does not prevent or reduce the potential for recovery. The expectation is not for the plan or project to restore site integrity. Should the plan or project compromise the ability of the unfavourable qualifying features to recover (e.g. result in a further decline or accelerate the rate of decline, or prevent a recovery from occurring), then the Outer Firth of Forth and St Andrews Bay Complex SPA will not make an appropriate contribution to achieving FCS across the Atlantic Biogeographic Region.