



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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## **WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT**

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**TITLE**      **Approval of boundary extensions and updated listing of species for three Special Protection Areas for breeding seabirds.**

**DATE**      **7 October 2014.**

**BY**         **Carl Sargeant AM, Minister for Natural Resources**

Today I am pleased to announce the completion of the first phase of work to strengthen the protection for seabirds within Welsh waters. The result is extensions to the boundaries of 3 important seabird breeding areas to include the areas which are vitally important for feeding, preening and other behaviours during the birds' breeding season. This means that the sea adjacent to the nesting areas will enjoy the same level of protection as the nesting sites themselves. These sites attract thousands of visitors to Wales, drawn by the spectacular scenery and the rich wildlife that the areas support.

The sites where the changes are taking place are Grassholm, Skokholm and Skomer Islands in Pembrokeshire, and Bardsey Island and the Aberdaron Coast in Gwynedd. Where appropriate we are also updating the list of species which qualify for protection. In summary, the changes are:

- A marine boundary extension of 2km around Grassholm
- A marine boundary extension of 4km around Skomer and Skokholm
- A marine boundary extension of 9km around Bardsey

The scientific rationale was the subject of a Natural Resources Wales consultation earlier this year. Detailed information about the changes at each site, the scientific rationale behind them and the continuing arrangements to ensure their sustainable use and management is available from the Natural Resources Wales website

<http://www.naturalresourceswales.gov.uk/conservation-biodiversity-and-wildlife/reclassification-of-three-spas/?lang=en>.

These extensions, on top of our existing suite of sites, are a step forward in completing our contribution to a coherent network of marine protected areas. However I know we need to do more to fulfil the needs of seabirds and waterfowl in Welsh waters. I have asked my officials to work with Natural Resources Wales and in collaboration with marine users to

consider additional areas that are important for birds.

It's important that local communities and stakeholders are able to engage early in this process. Natural Resources Wales will be starting this process in the coming months.