

Habitats Directive

Flamborough Head and Bempton Cliffs

What's happening?

Laws have been introduced under the Habitats Directive to safeguard Europe's most endangered plants, animals and habitats.

As part of this, the Environment Agency has to review all the existing consents that we regulate to ensure there are no adverse effects on the nature conservation interests of designated sites such as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA).

We are using a staged approach to do this:

- Stages One and Two – listed all consents and looked at those with the potential to have a significant effect.
- Stage Three – looked in detail at whether they have an adverse affect on special sites;
- Stage Four - those consents with no adverse affect will stand, those that do have been examined further to see what can be done about it.

Location



About this site

Flamborough Head SAC and Flamborough Head and Bempton Cliffs SPA are on the north east coast of Yorkshire between Filey and Bridlington.

Flamborough Head and Bempton Cliffs are one of the most spectacular areas of chalk cliffs in Britain, standing over 130 metres high. As well as the distinctive white cliffs, there are numerous sea caves, sea stacks and reefs along the coastline. The site is designated as a SAC due to the presence of these important features.

The cliffs are home to large numbers of breeding seabirds including kittiwake, guillemot, razorbill, puffin, herring gull and gannet for which the site is designated as an SPA.



Review of consents

We looked at a number of water quality discharges near to the site that had the potential to have an adverse effect on either the sea birds or the chalk cliffs, caves and chalk reefs. The discharges looked at were of treated sewage from nearby towns and treated effluent from local industry.

Even if all the consents were discharging the maximum amount of effluent allowable under the terms of their consent at the same time they, would not have an adverse effect on the features of the site.

Kittiwake



Paul Clendell/Natural England

A medium-sized gull with a small yellow bill and a dark eye. It can be found in large breeding colonies on the chalk cliffs during the spring and summer. After breeding, birds move out into the Atlantic for the winter, which they spend out at sea.

The Bempton-Flamborough cliffs hold the largest colony of Kittiwake in the United Kingdom.

Other influences

A number of other activities take place in the vicinity. Tourism is important to the area, mainly centred on the local seaside resorts of Bridlington and Filey, although the cliffs themselves receive many visitors each year.

Commercial and recreational fishing also takes place both in and near to the SAC. North Eastern Sea Fisheries Committee has looked at the effect of trawl fishing on the site. This assessment has proposed a number of management measures that will improve the sites protection.

Material dredged from Bridlington Harbour is deposited within the SAC and this activity was licensed by Defra who assessed the disposal as having no effect on the site. The disposal was due for re-assessment under the Habitats Directive in 2006.

Conclusions

The site's nature conservation objectives have been taken into account, including information supplied by Natural England. An assessment was carried out on ten discharge consents and one waste management licence regulated by the Environment Agency. It was concluded that these will have no adverse affect on the site or the animals, plants and birds that use it.

Further information can be found on our website
www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Guidance can be requested from enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk