

[Press release: Blue Belt extended to protect rare seabirds](#)

Nearly 150,000 rare seabirds – including the iconic little tern and black-throated diver – will be better protected as the UK's 'Blue Belt' of marine protected areas extends by over 650 square miles, Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey announced today.

A newly classified marine [Special Protection Area \(SPA\)](#) will come into force along a 24 mile stretch of coast from Falmouth Bay to St Austell Bay in Cornwall. The area – equivalent to almost 55,000 football pitches – is the UK's most important site for the wintering black throated diver. This new protection will help to minimise disturbance to the feeding areas and marine habitats the birds rely on, providing a safe haven where they can spend the winter.

A further marine SPA has been announced in the Irish Sea between the Isle of Man and Anglesey – home to over 12,000 Manx shearwaters – while four other sites have been extended around the UK, ranging from Liverpool Bay in the north-west of England, Poole Harbour on the south coast, and the Outer Thames Estuary near London.

Marine SPAs are sites given special status to protect populations of rare, vulnerable and migratory birds. These latest designations will help to safeguard the feeding grounds of over one quarter of the UK's breeding population of little terns and bring the UK's total number of marine SPAs to 106.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

Like the millions of others watching Blue Planet II, I am only too aware of the importance of protecting our precious marine environment, and the wildlife that relies on healthy and productive seas.

The UK is already a world leader in marine conservation, with over 23 per cent of our waters protected, and these new sites will help to strengthen our Blue Belt and give rare seabirds like the little tern a brighter future.

Natural England's Chairman Andrew Sells said:

Extending the Blue Belt gives vital new protection to some of our most precious coastal wildlife. Terns and Manx shearwaters, with their dramatic aerial displays, are a magnificent sight above our seas.

These Special Protection Areas will provide havens for nearly 150,000 birds that breed on our shores in summer or flock there in autumn and winter, helping them to thrive into the future.

The SPAs will afford protection to a range of species, including three species of breeding tern: little tern, Sandwich tern and common tern – all of which are “amber listed” because of factors such as declines in the size or range of their breeding populations. The sites also include the first SPA in the UK for wintering black-throated diver, great northern diver and Eurasian spoonbill, and the first offshore SPA to protect the feeding grounds of Manx shearwater.

The sites form part of the government’s ongoing commitment to create a ‘Blue Belt’ of protected areas around the UK’s coast – with over 23 per cent of UK waters already protected and with more than 300 sites across the UK.

Press release: Berkshire boater prosecuted for keeping unregistered vessel on Thames

This is contrary to the requirements of Article 4(1)(a) of the Environment Agency (Inland Waterways) Order 2010.

The defendant pleaded guilty at Reading Magistrates Court on Friday 17 November 2017, and was ordered to pay £797.65 to the Environment Agency in respect of unpaid registration fees and a victim surcharge of £20. Mr Gardener-Collins was given a conditional discharge for a period of 12 months and warned by the magistrates that if he offended again during the 12 month period, he could be re-sentenced for this offence.

A compensation order was made in the sum of £597.65 and the defendant agreed to pay £200 directly to the Environment Agency and provide the necessary documentation to enable the vessel to be registered for the remainder of 2017.

Mr Gardener-Collins’ vessel UBIQUE II (also known as UBIQUE) was spotted by an Environment Agency Waterways Officer without a valid registration on Tuesday 21 February 2017 downstream from Cleeve Lock on the River Thames. The boat was served with a registration enforcement notice and the defendant was made fully aware, both verbally and in writing, that he was legally required to register his boat and failing to do so would risk prosecution.

Despite ample advice and guidance from waterways officers and acknowledgement from Mr Gardener-Collins of receipt of the Environment Agency’s boat

registration direct-debit forms, the defendant had still not applied by June 2017 and therefore his boat remained unregistered for 2017.

The Inland Waterways Order 2010 requires all vessels 'kept' or 'used' on the River Thames, to be registered with the Environment Agency and display a valid annual boat registration plate (similar to a vehicle tax disc).

The Environment Agency carries out checks along all 135 miles of the navigable non-tidal River Thames to ensure that all boats kept or used on it have a valid registration plate. It takes enforcement action against all those that don't.

It also takes enforcement action against a wide range of other offences relating to boating, often working as part of a multi-agency approach with the police and local councils.

Nick McKie-Smith, Environment Agency Waterways Operations Manager for compliance, said:

All boats must have valid registration, boat safety certificate and minimum third party insurance at all times. Boaters must renew their annual registrations each year for the Environment Agency waterway they want to keep or use their boat on. If they need to renew their registration for 2018 then they must do so before 1 January. For genuine visiting boats it is also possible to buy a visitor registration for shorter periods.

The income we raise from boat registration is vital. It helps fund every aspect of the service our specialist River Thames Waterways Operations team provides to enable safe boating on all 135 miles of the non-tidal Thames. This includes maintaining and repairing 45 sets of locks and weirs – many of which are important heritage features – as well as providing a range of facilities to help enhance boaters' experience while out on the river. By not complying, we lose vital revenue, which hinders our ability to maintain the high standards of service we set ourselves, and which our customers expect.

Owners of boats not displaying valid registration plates could face prosecution, so it is important that they are aware of and adhere to this requirement. Ignorance is not an excuse.

[Further information on how to register a boat.](#)

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Notice: EX20 3HT, Dawn Meats (UK): environmental permit application advertisement

The Environment Agency consults the public on certain applications for waste operations, mining waste operations, installations, water discharge and groundwater activities. The arrangements are explained in its [Public Participation Statement](#)

These notices explain:

- what the application is about
- how you can view the application documents
- when you need to comment by

The Environment Agency will decide:

- whether to grant or refuse the application
- what conditions to include in the permit (if granted)

News story: Nuclear decommissioning chief addresses oil and gas delegates

Mr Peattie was guest of honour at one of the oil and gas industry's most highly anticipated events at the Fairmont Hotel, in St Andrews, where he spoke to a 500-strong gathering about the challenges faced in the nuclear decommissioning and oil and gas sectors.

The Offshore Decommissioning Conference, which ran from November 27 to 29, saw some of the industry's leading figures listen to Mr Peattie's keynote speech on the similarities between the 2 sectors.

He addressed delegates on the parallels of decommissioning in nuclear and oil and gas, and spoke of collaboration, skills, standardising solutions and achieving the mission.

Mr Peattie, who took over as CEO at the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority in March, has extensive experience of the oil and gas industry with a 35-year career spanning the sector.

He started out as a young engineering graduate at BP in 1979.

The event, hosted by industry bodies Decom North Sea and Oil & Gas UK, highlighted the continued importance of cross-sector learning via the nuclear and marine salvage sectors.

Mr Peattie shared his knowledge on the opportunities that arise from the synergies between the 2 industries.

He said:

As CEO of the NDA, I'm thrilled now to be able to have the opportunity to transfer learning and experience from my oil and gas years to nuclear. And maybe even facilitate some flowing back the other way too.

Being keynote speaker at such a prestigious event is an honour. Energy has been in my blood from a very young age and is still a passion of mine.