

EC Directive 79/409 on the Conservation of Wild Birds

**SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA (SPA) CITATION  
FOR PUBLIC ISSUE**

**RANNOCH LOCHS, HIGHLAND (UK9004021)**

**Site Description:**

Rannoch Lochs Special Protection Area (pSPA) comprises a cluster of eight oligotrophic lochs centred upon Rannoch Moor in the southern Highlands of Scotland. The individual lochs are (west to east): Loch Dochard, Loch Ba, Loch Laidon, Loch na Tota, Loch na Sgeallaig, Loch Ossian, Lochan Loin nan Donnlaich, and Loch Finnart. These eight lochs support a typical oligotrophic fauna and flora. The Rannoch Lochs SPA comprises part of Black Wood of Rannoch SSSI (Loch Finnart), part of Rannoch Moor SSSI (Lochs Ba and Laidon) and the entire Rannoch Lochs proposed SSSI.

**Qualifying Interest:**

Rannoch Lochs SPA supports a population of European importance of black-throated diver *Gavia arctica*, an Annex I species. The site supports seven black-throated diver territories representing 4% of the British population. This cluster of lochs has a high productivity, averaging around one chick fledged every two years per territory during 1986 to 1998 in comparison with a national average of around one chick every three and a half years during the same period. The combination of large population size and high productivity means that the site makes a significant contribution to the production of fledged chicks in Scotland as a whole.

Area: 1171.3 ha

National grid reference: NN 214419, NN 325508, NN 364657, NN 365660, NN 387547, NN 390680, NN 468612, NN 523556.

OS 1:50,000 sheets - 41, 42, 50

November 1999

Scottish Natural Heritage

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**NATURA 2000**
**STANDARD DATA FORM**

FOR SPECIAL PROTECTION AREAS (SPA)  
 FOR SITES ELIGIBLE FOR IDENTIFICATION AS SITES OF COMMUNITY IMPORTANCE (SCI)  
 AND  
 FOR SPECIAL AREAS OF CONSERVATION (SAC)

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**1. Site identification:**

1.1 Type  1.2 Site code

1.3 Compilation date  1.4 Update

## 1.5 Relationship with other Natura 2000 sites

        

1.6 Respondent(s)

1.7 Site name

## 1.8 Site indication and designation classification dates

date site proposed as eligible as SCI	199601
date confirmed as SCI	200412
date site classified as SPA	
date site designated as SAC	200503

**2. Site location:**

## 2.1 Site centre location

longitude	latitude
04 41 36 W	56 37 49 N

2.2 Site area (ha)  2.3 Site length (km)

## 2.5 Administrative region

NUTS code	Region name	% cover
UKA31	Highland	62.03%
UKA22	Strathclyde	13.40%
UKA15	Tayside	24.57%

## 2.6 Biogeographic region

Alpine

Atlantic

Boreal

Continental

Macaronesia

Mediterranean

### 3. Ecological information:

#### 3.1 Annex I habitats

Habitat types present on the site and the site assessment for them:

Annex I habitat	% cover	Representativity	Relative surface	Conservation status	Global assessment
Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the <i>Littorelletea uniflorae</i> and/or of the <i>Isoëto-Nanojuncetea</i>	8	B	C	B	B
Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp.	0.01	D			
Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds	2	A	B	A	A
Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i>	10	C	C	C	C
European dry heaths	5	C	C	C	C
Alpine and Boreal heaths	0.01	D			
Blanket bogs	70	A	C	A	A
Transition mires and quaking bogs	2	A	B	A	A
Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i>	0.01	C	C	C	C
Alpine pioneer formations of the <i>Caricion bicoloris-atrofuscae</i>	0.01	D			
Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation	0.01	D			

#### 3.2 Annex II species

Species name	Population				Site assessment			
	Resident	Migratory			Population	Conservation	Isolation	Global
		Breed	Winter	Stage				
<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>	Present	-	-	-	C	C	C	C
<i>Salmo salar</i>	Present	-	-	-	D			
<i>Lutra lutra</i>	Present	-	-	-	C	C	C	C

### 4. Site description

#### 4.1 General site character

Habitat classes	% cover
Marine areas. Sea inlets	
Tidal rivers. Estuaries. Mud flats. Sand flats. Lagoons (including saltwork basins)	
Salt marshes. Salt pastures. Salt steppes	
Coastal sand dunes. Sand beaches. Machair	
Shingle. Sea cliffs. Islets	
Inland water bodies (standing water, running water)	10.0
Bogs. Marshes. Water fringed vegetation. Fens	72.0
Heath. Scrub. Maquis and garrigue. Phygrana	15.0
Dry grassland. Steppes	0.5
Humid grassland. Mesophile grassland	2.0
Alpine and sub-alpine grassland	
Improved grassland	
Other arable land	
Broad-leaved deciduous woodland	
Coniferous woodland	
Evergreen woodland	
Mixed woodland	
Non-forest areas cultivated with woody plants (including orchards, groves, vineyards, dehesas)	
Inland rocks. Scree. Sands. Permanent snow and ice	0.5
Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites)	

Habitat classes	% cover
Total habitat cover	100%

#### 4.1 Other site characteristics

<p><b>Soil &amp; geology:</b> Acidic, Granite, Igneous, Metamorphic, Nutrient-poor, Peat, Quartzite</p> <p><b>Geomorphology &amp; landscape:</b> Cragg/ledges, Hilly, Upland</p>
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#### 4.2 Quality and importance

<p>Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the <i>Littorelletea uniflorae</i> and/or of the <i>Isoëto-Nanojuncetea</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.</li> </ul> <p>Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.</li> </ul> <p>Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.</li> </ul> <p>European dry heaths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.</li> </ul> <p>Blanket bogs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.</li> </ul> <p>Transition mires and quaking bogs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.</li> </ul> <p>Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.</li> </ul> <p><i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.</li> </ul> <p><i>Lutra lutra</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.</li> </ul>
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#### 4.3 Vulnerability

<p>A small part of the site is a National Nature Reserve managed in accordance with the management plan. Elsewhere, parts of the site are subject to minor localised damage such as peat erosion, accidental fires and grazing by deer. These issues will be addressed through future site management.</p>
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### 5. Site protection status and relation with CORINE biotopes:

#### 5.1 Designation types at national and regional level

Code	% cover
UK01 (NNR)	15.0
UK04 (SSSI/ASSI)	100.0

**RANNOCH MOOR**  
**SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST**

**Strathclyde Region, Tayside Region, Highland Region**

Midas Reference: 1331

PLANNING AUTHORITY: Argyll & Bute District, Lochaber District & Perth & Kinross District.

DATE NOTIFIED UNDER 1981 ACT: 19 April 1985

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: NN 350520

OS: 1:50,000 SHEET NO: 41, 42, 50, 51

1:25,000 SHEET NO: NN 24/34, NN 25/35, NN 44/54, NN 45/55

AREA: 10,232 ha.

**DESCRIPTION:**

Botanical

Rannoch Moor is of international nature conservation importance. It contains the most extensive complex of western blanket and soliginous/valley mire in Britain and is of particular importance on account of its range of northern mire types. Rannoch Moor is the only remaining British locality for a nationally rare vascular plant species and contains several other nationally and locally rare plants.

Ornithological

There is an excellent range of open water and moorland breeding birds, including several uncommon species.

Limnological

Loch Laidon is a large unpolluted oligo/dystrophic loch; the smaller lochans are dystrophic with high humic acid concentrations. These are relatively uncommon types of open water in Tayside Region.

Entomological

The associated fauna includes a particularly large number of rare beetles, flies and moth.

**PREVIOUS NOTIFICATIONS:** Previously notified as Loch Ba and Lochan na-h'Achlaise SSSI 1957, 1962, Rannoch Moor SSSI 1955, 1972, 1975.

**REMARKS**

Boundary amended with a net reduction of 850 ha.  
Nature Conservation Review Site, Grade 1.

Part declared under Section 19 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 as a National Nature Reserve on 15 April 1958 and 22 April 1960.

Area of site within Perth & Kinross District – 2,476.5 ha.

Area of site within Lochaber District – 856.5 ha.

Area of site within Argyll & Bute District – 6,899 ha.

## **NSA Description:**

### **BEN NEVIS AND GLEN COE**

#### **EXTENT OF AREA**

This western Grampian Mountains area extends from Glen Spean in the north to Glen Kinglass in the south, and from Rannoch Station in the east to the mouth of Loch Leven in the west.

#### **DESCRIPTION**

There is a great variety of landform and scenery within this area, attributable in the main to the intricacy of its geological structure. Granite outcrops form the dominant features around Ben Nevis, Glen Etive and Rannoch Moor, while Glencoe is of volcanic origin. The variety of scenery throughout the area is witnessed in hills that may be smooth or jagged, rounded or precipitous, grass or heather covered. The glens may contain moorland, meadow, arable or forest, and swift streams or calm lochs. The sea shore may be wooded and bayed as in outer Loch Leven, or fjord-like as in the inner loch and Loch Etive.

Many people would consider that Glen Nevis ranks with Glen Affric and Glen Lyon as one of the most beautiful glens in Scotland. No other part of the country has greater relative relief. But it is not scale alone which makes Glen Nevis memorable. The lower reaches are pastoral, with an alder threaded river and woodlands clothing the glen sides. The middle section exhibits a 'Himalayan' character, while the upper glen is a place of peaceful meadows, Alpine in feeling, enhanced by the presence of the graceful Steall waterfall. On the north side of Ben Nevis is Coire Leis, '.... the most splendid of all Scottish corries' (Murray).

South of the Mamore Forest lies the fjord-like trench of Loch Leven. The soaring mountain walls rising from the deciduous wooded shores of the deep and narrow waters of the inner loch give it a character not replicated elsewhere in Scotland. Its beauty is further enhanced by the islands at the mouth of Glen Coe, and by the swift tidal race which flows through the narrows at Ballachulish below the sharp cones of Beinn a'Bheithir.

Glen Coe itself '.... must rank high among the most spectacular scenic experiences in Scotland' (Whittow). Lying between the 6 mile-long notched ridge of Aonach Eagach and the truncated spurs of Bidean nam Bian, the highest mountain in Argyll (1141m), the glen is an ice worn valley mantled with screes and debris from the mountains. The place called The Study offers impressive vistas of the Three Sisters. Here the River Coe flows westwards over foaming cascades and through clear pools to the calm waters of Loch Achtriochtan. The peaty flats of the lower glen are in sharp contrast to the towering precipices and waterfalls around them.

Glen Etive is not of the same awe-inspiring grandeur, but nevertheless it is a deep cleft through towering peaks, notably the portal peaks of the Buachailles and the great slabs of Ben Starav. The River Etive with its numerous waterfalls is an important feature of the glen. To the east lies Rannoch Moor, probably the best known moor in Scotland. Its sometimes endless-seeming wastes have a beauty derived from the inter-relationship of water and islands with the moor, and the relationship of the moor to its surrounding mountains.

Based on an extract from "Scotland's Scenic Heritage" The Countryside Commission for Scotland 1978