

Citation

Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the conservation of wild birds (this is the codified version of Directive 79/409/EEC as amended)

CITATION FOR SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA (SPA)

SOUND OF GIGHA (UK9020318)

Site Description:

The Sound of Gigha Special Protection Area (SPA) lies off the west coast of the Kintyre peninsula in Argyll and Bute and is centered around the island of Gigha. It extends from Machrihanish Bay in the south to the entrance of Loch Caolisport off Knapdale to the North, including West Loch Tarbert.

The area has a complex bathymetry, and also varies greatly in exposure to prevailing winds and Atlantic waves. There are many rocks and skerries as well as small sheltered bays around Gigha itself, and Gigha Sound is scoured by north-south channels. Offshore, the sediments are a mixture of mud, sand and gravel while the very sheltered waters of West Loch Tarbert overlie soft mud sediment. This complexity in physical conditions provides for a locally diverse range of habitats and associated marine fauna which in turn support notable populations of wintering waterfowl.

Qualifying Interest:

The Sound of Gigha Special Protection Area (SPA) qualifies under **Article 4.1** by regularly supporting a wintering population of European importance of the following **Annex 1** species: **great northern diver** *Gavia immer* (for the years 2004/05 to 2007/08 a mean peak annual wintering population of 505 individuals (20.2% of the Great Britain population)) and **Slavonian grebe** *Podiceps auritus* (for the years 2008/09 to 2012/13 a mean peak annual wintering population of 37 individuals (3.4% of the Great Britain population)).

The site further qualifies under **Article 4.2** by regularly supporting populations of European importance of the following migratory species: **common eider** *Somateria mollissima* (for the years of 2004/05 to 2007/08 a mean peak annual wintering population of 1,295 individuals (2.2% of the Great Britain population)) and **red-breasted merganser** *Mergus serrator* (for the years of 2004/05 to 2007/08a mean peak annual wintering population of 117 individuals (1.4% of the Great Britain population)).

Area: 363.27 km² (36,326.83 ha)

Location: 55° 47.182' N, 005° 40.966' W (coordinates are supplied in WGS 1984)

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