

EC Directive 79/409 on the Conservation of Wild Birds

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

**AUSKERRY, ORKNEY (238A)**

Auskerry is a small low-lying island situated 5 km south of Stronsay in the Orkney group. The shore is a mixture of rocky platforms interspersed with low cliffs and boulder/shingle beaches. The vegetation is mainly composed of sheep-grazed *Calluna* heath and acidic grassland with smaller areas of other semi-natural habitats including neutral grassland, marshy grassland, coastal grassland, bog, mire and standing water. There is an extensive area of peat cuttings in the south of the island, almost all of which are now disused.

The boundary of the SPA follows the boundary of the Auskerry SSSI.

Auskerry qualifies under **Article 4.1** by regularly supporting an internationally important breeding population of the **Annex 1** species **storm petrel** *Hydrobates pelagicus* (3,600 pairs in 1995; 4% of the British and 1% of World population) and a nationally important population of the Annex 1 species **arctic tern** *Sterna paradisaea* (average of 780 pairs between 1992-1995; 2% of the British population).

As well as its importance for the individual species mentioned above, Auskerry is of interest for its diverse overall assemblage of breeding seabirds. A total of fourteen seabird species breed at the site. The additional species include the regularly occurring migratory species fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis* (250 pairs), shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* (21 pairs) great skua *Stercorarius skua* (1 pair), arctic skua *Stercorarius parasiticus* (2 pairs), common gull *Larus canus* (40 pairs), herring gull *Larus argentatus* (25 pairs), great black-backed gull *Larus marinus* (100 pairs), kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla* (100 pairs), guillemot *Uria aalge* (205 individuals), razorbill *Alca torda* (85 individuals), black guillemot *Cepphus grylle* (26 individuals) and puffin *Fratercula arctica* (37 individuals). The figures for fulmar, guillemot, razorbill and puffin are from surveys carried out between 1985 and 1987. The skua counts are for 1992 while shag and black guillemot counts are for 1994. The gull estimates are for 1995.

Area: 103 Ha

National Grid Reference: HY 674163

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