

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

CAITHNESS LOCHS, HIGHLAND REGION (UK900171A)

Site Description:

The Caithness Lochs Special Protection Area consists of a suite of six lochs and a mire (Broubster Leans) in Caithness. The lochs cover a range of types from oligotrophic to eutrophic, and support a wide diversity of aquatic and wetland vegetation. The potential SPA comprises the entire area of the Broubster Leans SSSI, Loch of Mey SSSI, Loch Calder SSSI, Loch Heilen SSSI, Loch Scarmclate SSSI, Loch Watten SSSI and Loch of Wester SSSI. Part of the site (Broubster Leans, Loch of Mey) was previously classified on the 2 February 1998 as Caithness Lochs SPA for Greenland white-fronted geese only.

Qualifying Interest:

The site qualifies under Article 4.1 by regularly supporting, in winter, populations of European importance of the Annex 1 species whooper swan *Cygnus cygnus* (1993/94-1997/98 winter peak mean of 240 representing 4% of GB and 1% of Icelandic population) and Greenland white-fronted goose *Anser albifrons flavirostris* (1993/94-97/98 winter peak mean of 440 representing 3% of GB and 1% of Greenlandic population). The site lies at the northern limit of these species' wintering distributions and is important to the maintenance of the species' wintering ranges.

The site qualifies under Article 4.2 by regularly supporting, in winter, a population of European importance of the greylag goose *Anser anser* (1993/94-1997/98 winter peak mean of 7,190 representing 7% of the GB and Icelandic populations). The site lies towards the northern limit of this species' wintering distribution and is important to the maintenance of the species' wintering range.

Area: 1,378 ha

National Grid References:

Broubster Leans	ND 035611
Loch of Mey	ND 271735
Loch Calder	ND 072601
Loch Heilen	ND 255684
Loch Scarmclate	ND189596
Loch Watten	ND 230560
Loch of Wester	ND 325592

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