

EC Directive 79/409 on the Conservation of Wild Birds

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

**LOCH SHIEL, HIGHLAND (UK9001721)**

**Site Description:**

Loch Shiel is a large oligotrophic loch in north-west Scotland in the Lochaber area of Highland. It stretches for 28 km from Glenfinnan in the east to Acharacle in the west, with a mean breadth of only 0.7 km and supports a typical range of animals and plants adapted to oligotrophic conditions. The boundary of the Loch Shiel SPA generally follows a line 25m from the shoreline of Loch Shiel within the Loch Shiel SSSI and Claish Moss SSSI.

**Qualifying Interest:**

Loch Shiel SPA qualifies under Article 4.1 of the EC Wild Birds Directive by supporting an average of 3 pairs of black-throated diver, representing 2% of the British population. Black-throated divers have been recorded breeding on Loch Shiel since 1974.

Loch Shiel is one of only eleven lochs in Britain which support more than one black-throated diver territory and only Loch Maree supports more territories on a single body of water.

Loch Shiel is a very productive site for black-throated divers. From 1986-1996, the average productivity of the three territories was around three times the national average. This high productivity makes Loch Shiel an extremely important contributor to the maintenance of the British population.

Area: 2,291 ha

National grid reference: NM 800720

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2 February 2000

Scottish Natural Heritage