

EC Directive 79/409 on the Conservation of Wild Birds

CITATION FOR SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA (SPA)

**ST KILDA
(UK9001031)**

INCLUDING MARINE EXTENSION

Site Description:

St Kilda is a group of remote Scottish islands lying in the North Atlantic about 70 km west of North Uist in the Outer Hebrides. The islands are steep, with precipitous cliffs reaching 430 m on Hirta and 380 m on Soay and Boreray. The vegetation is strongly influenced by sea spray and the presence of seabirds and livestock. Inland on Hirta, species-poor acidic grassland and sub-maritime heaths occupy extensive areas. The islands provide a strategic nesting locality for seabirds that feed in the rich waters to the west of Scotland. The total population of seabirds exceeds 600,000 individuals, making this one of the largest concentrations in the North Atlantic and the largest in the UK.

The boundary of the SPA overlaps with the boundary of St. Kilda SSSI, and the seaward extension extends approximately 4 km into the marine environment to include the seabed, water column and surface.

Qualifying Interest:

St Kilda SPA qualifies under **Article 4.1** by regularly supporting populations of European importance of the **Annex 1** species: **Leach's storm-petrel** *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* (5,000 pairs, 9.1% of the GB population); and **European storm-petrel** *Hydrobates pelagicus* (850 pairs, 1.0% of the GB population).

St Kilda SPA also qualifies under **Article 4.2** by regularly supporting populations of European importance of the **migratory** species: **Northern gannet** *Morus bassanus* (50,050 pairs, 19.0% of the world biogeographic population); **great skua** *Stercorarius skua* (270 pairs, 1.9% of the world biogeographic population); and **Atlantic puffin** *Fratercula arctica* (155,000 pairs, 17.2% of the *F.a.grabae* biogeographic population).

St Kilda SPA also qualifies under **Article 4.2** by regularly supporting **in excess of 20,000 individual seabirds**. It regularly supports 600,000 seabirds including nationally important populations of the following species: **razorbill** *Alca torda* (3,810 individuals, 3% of the GB population); **common guillemot** *Uria aalge* (22,700 individuals, 2% of the GB population); **black-legged kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla* (7,830 pairs, 2% of the GB population); **Manx shearwater** *Puffinus puffinus* (up to 5,000 pairs, about 1% of the GB population); **Northern fulmar** *Fulmarus glacialis* (62,800 pairs, 12% of the GB population); **Atlantic puffin** (155,000 pairs, 35% of the GB population); **great skua** (270 pairs, 3.2% of the GB population); **Northern gannet** (50,050 pairs, 32% of the GB population); **Leach's storm-petrel** (5,000

pairs, 9.1% of the GB population) and **European storm-petrel** (850 pairs, 1.0% of the GB population).

Area: 29,014.62ha

National Grid Reference: NA 100 000

OS 1:50,000 sheet: 18

Classified on 31st August 1992, with marine extension classified on 25th September 2009

Scottish Natural Heritage
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