

EC Directive 79/409 on the Conservation of Wild Birds

PETTIGOE PLATEAU SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA

The Pettigoe Plateau is situated in Fermanagh in the west of Northern Ireland to the north of Lower Lough Erne. It abuts the International border with the Irish Republic. It is one of the largest expanses of blanket bog in Northern Ireland formed on a relatively low elevation rolling landscape interspersed with hills with mineral soil and depressions with several small lakes. The extensive blanket bog which covers most of the site exhibits the full range of characteristic vegetation and structural features associated with this type of habitat. The area of the Special Protection Area is 1270 ha.


The Special Protection Area boundary is entirely coincident with both that of the Pettigoe Plateau Area of Special Scientific Interest and the Pettigoe Plateau Special Area of Conservation.

The site qualifies under Article 4.1 of EC Directive 79/409 on the Conservation of Wild Birds by regularly supporting nationally important numbers of breeding golden plover *Pluvialis apricaria*, an Annex 1 species. The population is estimated to up to 12 pairs, representing 4% of the Irish population (based on 1987 and 1995 surveys).

The site forms part of an extended cross-border site which occasionally supports nationally important numbers of wintering Greenland white-fronted goose *Anser albifrons flavirostris*, an Annex 1 species. The average peak winter count of the extended site is 133 birds, representing 0.95% of the Irish population (based on the five year peak mean for 1989/90 to 1993/94). The Special Protection Area is used for both feeding and roosting and held a peak of over 60 birds in 1993/94 .

The Pettigoe Plateau also supports an important assemblage of breeding birds including four Annex 1 species, hen harrier *Circus cyaneus*, merlin *Falco columbarius*, dunlin *Calidris alpina*, and common tern *Sterna hirundo*. Other breeding species include lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*, curlew *Numenius arquata* and snipe *Gallinago gallinago*.

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Signed 
on behalf of the Department of the Environment
for Northern Ireland