



An Agency within the  
Department of the Environment  
for Northern Ireland



ENVIRONMENT  
AND HERITAGE  
SERVICE

## EC DIRECTIVE 79/409 ON THE CONSERVATION OF WILD BIRDS

### UPPER LOUGH ERNE SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA

Area: 5787 hectares

Geographic co-ordinates: 07° 29' 40" W  
54° 12' 00" N

Upper Lough Erne Lough is situated in Co. Fermanagh in the west of Northern Ireland. It is a very large and complex freshwater system. A series of flooded drumlins in the course of the River Erne give rise to a complex of islands, bays and many lakes bordered by damp pastures, fens, reedswamp and alder/willow carr and oak woodland.

The Special Protection Area site boundary is entirely coincident with the composite boundary of the following Areas of Special Scientific Interest:

|                             |                              |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Corraslough Point           | Dernish Island               |
| Finn Floods                 | Inishroosk                   |
| Killymackan Lough           | Upper Lough Erne - Belleisle |
| Upper Lough Erne - Crom     | Upper Lough Erne - Galloon   |
| Upper Lough Erne - Trannish |                              |

The site qualifies under Article 4.1 of EC Directive 79/409 on the Conservation of Wild Birds by regularly supporting internationally important numbers of wintering Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus* (the five year peak mean for the period 1991/92 to 1995/96 was 352 which comprises 2 % of the international Icelandic population). Upper Lough Erne provides a core protected area for Whooper Swans in the region of Northern Ireland, there being interchange between the swans using protected areas and those ranging more widely on surrounding farmland.

Upper Lough Erne contributes to the maintenance of the geographic range of the Annex 1 Greenland White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons flavirostris* population of Northern Ireland through supporting regionally important numbers.

Upper Lough Erne also supports an important assemblage of breeding birds which includes Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* and has in the past supported breeding Corncrake *Crex crex*. Both are Annex 1 species. Other migratory birds breeding on the site include Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* (100 pairs - 3 % of Irish population) and important concentrations of three species of waders which are declining elsewhere, Curlew *Numenius arquata*, Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*, and Redshank *Tringa totanus*.

Nationally important wintering wildfowl species, many of which are migratory, include Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*, Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*, Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*, Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*, Wigeon *Anas penelope*, Teal *Anas crecca*, Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*, Coot *Fulica atra*, Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*, Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*, Curlew *Numenius arquata* and Redshank *Tringa totanus*.

The Register of European Sites in Northern Ireland

Register reference number UK9020071

Date of registration 17 February 1998

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