

EC Directive 79/409 on the Conservation of Wild Birds

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

NORTH HARRIS MOUNTAINS, WESTERN ISLES (157B)

The North Harris Mountains SPA is part of a range of steep rocky hills on the west coast of Harris in the Western Isles. These mountains, composed of Lewisian gneiss and granite, rise from sea level to 729m. They have a strongly oceanic character with an abundance of wet heath, an abundance of Atlantic bryophytes including the large endemic moss *Campylopus shawii*, and numerous streams, oligotrophic lochs and dystrophic lochans. The boundary of the SPA follows that of North Harris SSSI.

North Harris Mountains SPA qualifies under Article 4.1 by regularly supporting a nationally important breeding population of golden eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*, an Annex I species. The site supports 6-7 pairs, representing over 1% of the GB population. This population has a high breeding productivity for the west coast of Scotland and is one of the highest density populations in Britain.

The site also supports a notable assemblage of breeding birds including Annex I species, such as red-throated diver *Gavia stellata*, black-throated diver *G. arctica*, merlin *F. columbarius*, golden plover *Pluvialis apricaria*, common tern *Sterna hirundo* and Arctic tern *S. paradisaea*, which are recognised by the EC as requiring special protection measures.

Area: 12,920.6 ha

Central Grid Ref.: NB 065115

Latitude and Longitude: 57°59'47 -6°58'02

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RJ/GPM

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Research & Advisory Services Directorate

Scottish Natural Heritage