

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: PETTIGO PLATEAU NATURE RESERVE SPA

SITE CODE: 004099

Located to the west of Lough Derg in Co. Donegal, this site comprises an extensive complex of blanket bog, wet heath, lakes and pools in an area of low hills and broad basins. The bog is mostly undisturbed and has a good range of vegetation communities and microtopographical features, e.g. hummocks, inter-connecting pools and flushes. The principal lakes within the site are the Dunragh Loughs, Lough Barderg and the eastern half of Lough Golagh. The site is bounded by extensive conifer plantations to the east and south, with further bog to the north and west. The area is underlain by metamorphic gneiss and schist.

At the time this site was designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) it was being utilised by a Greenland White-fronted Goose population. In the 1980s, the Greenland White-fronted Goose flock utilising this site largely deserted the bogs in favour of coastal grassland sites, e.g. Durnesh Lough SPA. Greenland White-fronted Goose still occurs within this site and it is one of the few places where this species continues to utilise peatland habitats. Greenland White-fronted Goose is regarded as a special conservation interest for this SPA.

Both Merlin and Hen Harrier have been recorded nesting in the vicinity of the site and may forage within it.

Much of the site is designated a Statutory Nature Reserve and a Biogenetic Reserve, and is also listed under the Ramsar Convention.