

Spittal – Loch Buidhe – Beauly 400 kV OHL Connection

EIA Scoping Report – Appendix C: Ornithological Designated Sites

October 2024



Table C-1 Ornithological Designated Sites

Site (SPA/Ramsar within 20 km, SSSI within 10 km of Proposed Development)	Qualifying feature(s)	Publish NatureScot feature connectivity distance (breeding)	Published NatureScot feature connectivity distance (wintering)	Approx distance to section of Proposed Development (smallest – largest distance) ¹	Scoped IN/OUT
Achanalt Marshes SPA	The site qualifies under Article 4.1 by regularly supporting, in summer, a nationally important population of the Annex 1 ² species wood sandpiper with an average of 3 breeding pairs between 1991-1995, representing 50% of the British breeding population. The site is also of interest for its assemblage of breeding waterfowl which includes, wigeon (6 pairs), teal (5 pairs), mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>) (14 pairs), tufted duck (10 pairs), oystercatcher (3 pairs), lapwing (3 pairs), dunlin (3 pairs), snipe (7 pairs), curlew (7 pairs), redshank (6 pairs), greenshank (4 pairs) and common sandpiper (<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>) (5 pairs). The figures in brackets are the average number of breeding pairs recorded in the five-year period 1991-1995	Dunlin: up to 3 km, core range 500 m. Curlew: up to 2 km, core range 1 km. Greenshank: up to 3 km, core range 2 km.	-	D1.3 – 11.7 km D1 – 18.5 km E1.1 – 17.8 km E1 – 19.5 km	OUT due to distance OUT due to distance
Balnagrantach SSSI	Birds: Slavonian grebe. The lochs support a range of aquatic plant communities reflecting their moderate nutrient status. Around the edges of the lochs there are extensive beds of bottle sedge (<i>Carex rostrata</i>) which provide nesting habitat for 1-2 pairs of Slavonian grebe.	-	-	E1 – 9.1 km	IN
Beaully Firth SSSI	Birds: Goosander, greylag goose, red-breasted merganser. There are abundant food resources for a great variety and number of wintering waders and wildfowl. Non-breeding populations of greylag goose, red-breasted merganser and goosander (<i>Mergus merganser</i>) are all notified features of the SSSI.	-	Greylag goose: core range 15-20 km.	E1 – 4.2 km E1.1 – 5.6 km	IN
Beinn Dearg SPA	Beinn Dearg SPA is of outstanding nature conservation importance within the European Community because it supports a nationally important population of breeding dotterel. Britain holds one of the largest populations of dotterel in the European Community, and because of its rarity in Europe, it is listed (Annex 1) as requiring special conservation measures under Article 4.1 of the Birds Directive. From 1987 to 1993, an average of 22 pairs of	-	-	D1.3 – 18.1 km	OUT due to distance

¹ SPA/Ramsar sites searched for within 20 km, SSSI's within 10 km.

² European Commission. The Birds Directive. Available at: https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/birdsdirective_en#:~:text=For%20threatened%20bird%20species%2C%20Member,of%20wetlands%20of%20international%20importance.

Site (SPA/Ramsar within 20 km, SSSI within 10 km of Proposed Development)	Qualifying feature(s)	Publish NatureScot feature connectivity distance (breeding)	Published NatureScot feature connectivity distance (wintering)	Approx distance to section of Proposed Development (smallest – largest distance) ¹	Scoped IN/OUT
	<p>dotterel bred within the Beinn Dearg SPA, representing 3% of the British breeding population. In spring, Beinn Dearg acts as a staging area for dotterel that go on to breed elsewhere in Britain and in Scandinavia. Beinn Dearg is also important to the species range in Britain as it lies well outside the core population in the Grampians.</p> <p>Beinn Dearg is exceptional among British mountain massifs because, in addition to dotterel, it supports a further five species of breeding wader, including the Annex I golden plover, instead of the one to three species more usually found at high altitude on such mountain massifs. It also supports typical montane species such as ptarmigan, dunlin, ring ouzel and snow bunting.</p>				
Ben Wyvis SPA	Ben Wyvis SPA is of outstanding nature conservation importance within the European Community because it supports a nationally important population of breeding dotterel. From 1987 to 1993, an average of 20 pairs of dotterel bred within the Ben Wyvis SPA, representing 2% of the British breeding population. This is one of the highest density breeding populations in Britain. In spring, Ben Wyvis SPA acts as a staging area for dotterel that go on to breed elsewhere in Britain and in Scandinavia and it is also important to the species' range in Britain as it lies outside the core population in the Grampians.	-	-	D1.3 – 2.4 km D1 – 3.6 km	IN
				E1.1 – 8.6 km E1 – 8.8 km	OUT due to distance
Ben Wyvis SSSI	<p>Birds: Dotterel.</p> <p>The extensive high-altitude plateau supports a breeding population of dotterel.</p>	-	-	D1.3 – 1.6 km D1 – 2.2 km	IN
Berriedale Cliffs SSSI	<p>Birds: Seabird colony.</p> <p>Birds: Fulmar, guillemot, kittiwake, razorbill, shag.</p> <p>Berriedale Cliffs SSSI supports a nationally important seabird colony. More than 10,000 pairs of 10 different species of seabird breed here: fulmar, kittiwake, razorbill, guillemot, black guillemot, great black-backed gull, herring gull, puffin, shag, and cormorant. Some of the individual bird species within the seabird colony are nationally important in their own right. More than 1% of the British</p>	-	-	A1.5 – 0.1 km A1.6 – 0.9 km A1.3 – 1 km A1 – 6.3 km	IN

Site (SPA/Ramsar within 20 km, SSSI within 10 km of Proposed Development)	Qualifying feature(s)	Publish NatureScot feature connectivity distance (breeding)	Published NatureScot feature connectivity distance (wintering)	Approx distance to section of Proposed Development (smallest – largest distance) ¹	Scoped IN/OUT
	populations of fulmar, guillemot, kittiwake, razorbill, and shag breed here.				
Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands SPA/Ramsar	<p>The Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands SPA qualifies under Article 4.1 by regularly supporting populations of European importance of the Annex 1 species: red-throated diver (2006, 46 pairs, 3.5% of the GB population); black-throated diver (1994, 26 pairs, 15% of the GB population); hen harrier (1993 to 1997, mean of at least 14 pairs, at least 2.8% of the GB population); golden eagle (1992, 5 pairs, 1% of the GB population); merlin (1993 and 1994, an estimated 54 pairs, 4% of the GB population); golden plover (1993 and 1994, 1,064 pairs, 5% of the GB population); wood sandpiper (up to 5 pairs, up to 40% of the GB population); short-eared owl (30 pairs, 2% of the GB population) and dunlin (1993 and 1994, 1,860 pairs, 20% of the GB population).</p> <p>The Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands SPA further qualifies under Article 4.2 by regularly supporting populations of European importance of the migratory species: common scoter (2007, at least 21 pairs, at least <0.1% of the Western Siberia/Western & Northern Europe/Northwestern Africa biogeographic population and at least 40.4% of the GB population); greenshank (2009, at least 653 pairs, at least 0.9% of the Europe/Western Africa biogeographic population and at least 59.4% of the GB population) and wigeon (1993/94, at least 43 pairs, at least at least <0.1% of the Western Siberia/Northwestern/Northeastern Europe biogeographic population and at least 10.8% of the GB population).</p> <p>Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands Ramsar site further qualifies under Ramsar Criterion 2 by supporting: Red-throated diver (2006, 46 pairs, 3.5% of the GB population). Black-throated (1994, 26 pairs, 15% of the GB population). Golden plover (1993 and 1994, 1,064 pairs, 5% of the GB population). Wood sandpiper (up to 5 pairs, up to 40% of the GB population), and Dunlin (1993 and 1994, 1,860 pairs, 20% of the GB population).</p> <p>Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands Ramsar site also qualifies under Ramsar Criterion 4 by supporting the following waterbird species at a critical stage in their life cycles: wigeon (1993/94, at</p>	<p>Red-throated diver: up to 13.5 km, core range 8 km.</p> <p>Black-throated diver: up to 10 km.</p> <p>Hen harrier: up to 10 km, core range 2 km.</p> <p>Golden eagle: up to 9 km, core range 6 km.</p> <p>Merlin: up to 5 km.</p> <p>Golden plover: up to 11 km, core range 3 km.</p> <p>Short-eared owl: up to 5 km, core range 2 km.</p> <p>Dunlin: up to 3 km, core range 500 m.</p> <p>Greenshank: up to 3 km, core range 2 km.</p>	-	A1 – within A1.1 – within A1.3 – 1 km A1.6 – 7.3 km A1.5 – 7.4 km	IN
				B1 – 6.3 km B1.1 – 11.9 km	IN
				C1 – 9.3 km	IN
				D1.3 – 12.7 km D1 – 13.7 km	IN

Site (SPA/Ramsar within 20 km, SSSI within 10 km of Proposed Development)	Qualifying feature(s)	Publish NatureScot feature connectivity distance (breeding)	Published NatureScot feature connectivity distance (wintering)	Approx distance to section of Proposed Development (smallest – largest distance) ¹	Scoped IN/OUT
	least 43 pairs, at least 10.8% of the GB population), common scoter (2007, at least 21 pairs, at least 40.4% of the GB population), and greenshank (2009, at least 653 pairs, at least 59.4% of the GB population).				
Caithness Lochs SPA/Ramsar	<p>The Caithness Lochs SPA qualifies under Article 4.1 by regularly supporting, in winter, populations of European importance of the Annex 1 species whooper swan (1993/94-1997/98 winter peak mean of 240 representing 4% of GB and 1% of Icelandic population) and Greenland white-fronted goose (1993/94-97/98 winter peak mean of 440 representing 3% of GB and 1% of Greenlandic population). The site lies at the northern limit of these species' wintering distributions and is important to the maintenance of the species' wintering ranges.</p> <p>The site qualifies under Article 4.2 by regularly supporting, in winter, a population of European importance of the greylag goose (1993/94-1997/98 winter peak mean of 7,190 representing 7% of the GB and Icelandic populations). The site lies towards the northern limit of this species' wintering distribution and is important to the maintenance of the species' wintering range.</p> <p>Caithness Lochs Ramsar site qualifies under Ramsar Criterion 6 by regularly supporting 1% or more of the individuals in a population of waterbirds (1993/94 to 1997/98): Whooper swan (winter peak mean of 240 individuals, 1% of the Iceland/UK & Ireland biogeographic population). Greenland white-fronted goose (winter peak mean of 440 individuals, 1% of the total biogeographic population), and Greylag goose (winter peak mean of 7,190 individuals, 7%</p>	-	<p>Whooper swan: core range 5 km.</p> <p>GWF goose: core range 5-8 km.</p> <p>Greylag goose: core range 15-20 km.</p>	<p>A1.1 – 2 km</p> <p>A1 – 9.9 km</p>	IN
Coir' an Eoin SSSI	<p>Birds: Golden plover.</p> <p>The peatland vegetation supports a particularly high density of breeding golden plover which makes this site nationally important for this species. Golden plover breed on this site at a density that is significantly greater than the average in the peatlands of Caithness and Sutherland. The blanket bog provides nest sites and areas suitable for both adult and young birds to feed.</p>	Golden plover: up to 11 km, core range 3 km.	-	A1.6 – 7.3 km A1.5 – 7.4 km	IN
				B1 – 6.3 km	IN

Site (SPA/Ramsar within 20 km, SSSI within 10 km of Proposed Development)	Qualifying feature(s)	Publish NatureScot feature connectivity distance (breeding)	Published NatureScot feature connectivity distance (wintering)	Approx distance to section of Proposed Development (smallest – largest distance) ¹	Scoped IN/OUT
Cromarty Firth SPA/Ramsar	<p>Cromarty Firth SPA qualifies under Article 4.1 by regularly supporting populations of European importance of the Annex 1 species: osprey forage throughout the SPA (2008 to 2012, five year mean of up to 25 territories within feeding range, 12.5% of the GB population, with 1 pair breeding within the site, 1% of the GB population); common tern (1989 to 1993 mean of 294 pairs; 2% of the GB population); whooper swan (1992/93 to 1996/97 winter peak mean of 64 individuals, 1% of the GB population) and bar-tailed godwit (1,355 wintering individuals, 3% of the GB population).</p> <p>Cromarty Firth SPA further qualifies under Article 4.2 by regularly supporting a population of European importance of the migratory species: greylag goose (1992/93 to 1996/97 winter peak mean of 1,782 individuals; 2% of the Iceland/UK/Ireland biogeographic population).</p> <p>Cromarty Firth SPA also qualifies under Article 4.2 by regularly supporting in excess of 20,000 individual waterfowl. In the five-year period 1992/93 to 1996/97, a winter peak mean of 30,200 individual waterfowl was recorded, comprising 14,800 wildfowl and 15,400 waders including nationally important populations of the following species: redshank (1,149 individuals, 1% of the GB population); curlew (1,313 individuals, 1% of the GB population); knot (4,312 individuals, 1% of the GB population); red-breasted merganser (204 individuals, 2% of the GB population); greater scaup (295 individuals, 3% of the GB population); pintail (319 individuals, 1% of the GB population); wigeon (9,204 individuals, 3% of the GB population); greylag goose (1,782 individuals, 2% of the GB population); bar-tailed godwit (1,355 individuals) and whooper swan (64 individuals). In the five-year period 1991/92 to 1995/96, a winter peak mean of 34,847 individual waterfowl was recorded with the assemblage additionally including nationally important populations greater than 2,000 individuals of: dunlin (3,384 individuals, 0.6% of the GB population) and oystercatcher (2004/5 to 2009/10, 2,702 individuals, 0.8% of the GB population).</p> <p>Cromarty Firth Ramsar site also qualifies under Ramsar Criterion 2 by supporting: osprey forage throughout the Ramsar site (2008 to 2012, five year mean of up to 25 territories within feeding range,</p>	Osprey: up to 28 km, core range 10 km.	Whooper swan: core range 5 km. Greylag goose: core range 15-20 km.	D1 – 3.8 km D1.3 – 9.1 km	IN
				E1 – 6.7 km E1.1 – 7.3 km	IN

Site (SPA/Ramsar within 20 km, SSSI within 10 km of Proposed Development)	Qualifying feature(s)	Publish NatureScot feature connectivity distance (breeding)	Published NatureScot feature connectivity distance (wintering)	Approx distance to section of Proposed Development (smallest – largest distance) ¹	Scoped IN/OUT
	<p>12.5% of the GB population, with 1 pair breeding within the site, 1% of the GB population), common tern (1989 to 1993, mean of 294 pairs; 2% of the GB population), and whooper swan (1992/93 to 1996/97 winter peak mean of 64 individuals, 1% of the GB population).</p> <p>Cromarty Firth Ramsar site further qualifies under Ramsar Criterion 5 by regularly supporting waterbirds in numbers of 20,000 individuals or more. In the five-year period 1992/93 to 1996/97 a winter peak mean of 30,200 individual waterbirds was recorded, comprising 14,800 wildfowl and 15,400 waders.</p> <p>The site also qualifies under Ramsar Criterion 4 by supporting the following waterbird species at a critical stage in their life cycles: redshank (1,149 individuals, 1% of the GB population), curlew (1,313 individuals, 1% of the GB population), knot (4,312 individuals, 1% of the GB population), red-breasted merganser (204 individuals, 2% of the GB population), greater scaup (295 individuals, 3% of the GB population), pintail (319 individuals, 1% of the GB population), and wigeon (9,204 individuals, 3% of the GB population). In the five-year period 1991/92 to 1995/96, a winter peak mean of 34,847 individual waterbirds was recorded with the assemblage additionally including nationally important populations greater than 2,000 individuals of: dunlin (3,384 individuals, 0.6% of the GB population), oystercatcher (2004/5 to 2009/10, 2,702 individuals, 0.8% of the GB population). whooper swan, greylag goose and bar-tailed godwit are also components of the waterbird assemblage.</p> <p>Cromarty Firth Ramsar site qualifies under Ramsar Criterion 6 by regularly supporting 1% or more of the individuals in a population of waterbirds: greylag goose (1992/93 to 1996/97 winter peak mean of 1,782 individuals; 2% of the Iceland/UK/Ireland biogeographic population), and bar-tailed godwit (1,355 wintering individuals, 1% of the Western European biogeographic population).</p>				
Cromarty Firth SSSI	Birds: Bar-tailed godwit, red-breasted merganser, redshank, wigeon, whooper swan.	-	Whooper swan: core range 5 km.	D1 – 3.8 km D1.3 – 9.9 km	IN

Site (SPA/Ramsar within 20 km, SSSI within 10 km of Proposed Development)	Qualifying feature(s)	Publish NatureScot feature connectivity distance (breeding)	Published NatureScot feature connectivity distance (wintering)	Approx distance to section of Proposed Development (smallest – largest distance) ¹	Scoped IN/OUT
	<p>The Cromarty Firth is a large estuary within the Moray Firth in north-east Scotland. It stretches for 25 kilometres from the mouth of the River Conon at Conon Bridge to Nigg and Cromarty in the east. The SSSI contains a range of estuarine habitats including sand and mud flats and saltmarsh. The extensive sand and mud flats support internationally important numbers of wintering wildfowl and wading birds.</p> <p>The Cromarty Firth is of outstanding interest for its overwintering populations of wildfowl and waders, including nationally important populations of bar-tailed godwit, red-breasted merganser, redshank, wigeon, whooper swan.</p>			E1 – 7.7 km E1.1 – 8.4 km	OUT due to distance
Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet SPA/Ramsar	<p>The Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet SPA qualifies under Article 4.1 by regularly supporting populations of European importance of the Annex 1 species: osprey forage throughout the SPA (up to 6 territories within feeding range, 6% of the GB population, with 1 pair breeding within the site, 1% of the GB population) and bar-tailed godwit (1989/90 to 1993/94 winter peak mean of 1,184 individuals, 2% of the GB population).</p> <p>Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet SPA further qualifies under Article 4.2 by regularly supporting populations of European importance of the migratory species: greylag goose (1989/90 to 1993/94 winter peak mean of 1,146 individuals, 1% of the Icelandic/UK/Ireland biogeographic population) and wigeon (1989/90 to 1993/94 winter peak mean of 15,304 individuals, 2% of the W Siberia/NW & NE Europe biogeographic population).</p> <p>Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet SPA also qualifies under Article 4.2 by regularly supporting in excess of 20,000 individual waterfowl. In the five-year period 1989/90 to 1993/94, a winter peak mean of approximately 34,500 individual waterfowl was recorded, comprising 22,000 wildfowl and 12,500 waders, including nationally important populations of the following species: curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) (1,397 individuals, 1.0% of the GB population); teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) (1,592 individuals, 1.0% of the GB population); scaup (<i>Aythya marila</i>) (123 individuals, 1% of the GB population), redshank (1,272 individuals, 1% of the GB population), wigeon (15,304 individuals, 5% of the GB population); greylag goose (1,146 individuals, 1% of the GB population) and</p>	Osprey: up to 28 km, core range 10 km.	Greylag goose: core range 15-20 km.	A1.5 – 13.2 km A1.6 – 13.2 km	IN
				B1 – within B1.1 – within	IN
				C1 – 8.9 km	IN
				D1 – 12.4 km D2 – 13.7 km	IN

Site (SPA/Ramsar within 20 km, SSSI within 10 km of Proposed Development)	Qualifying feature(s)	Publish NatureScot feature connectivity distance (breeding)	Published NatureScot feature connectivity distance (wintering)	Approx distance to section of Proposed Development (smallest – largest distance) ¹	Scoped IN/OUT
	<p>bar-tailed godwit (1,184 individuals). The assemblage additionally now includes nationally important populations greater than 2,000 individuals of: dunlin (2005/06 to 2009/10, winter peak mean of 4,088 individuals, 1% of the GB population) and oystercatcher (2004/05 to 2009/10, winter peak mean of a minimum of 2,459 individuals, 0.8% of the GB population).</p> <p>Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet Ramsar site qualifies under Ramsar Criterion 2 by supporting: Osprey which forage throughout the Ramsar site (up to 6 territories within feeding range, 6% of the GB population, with 1 pair breeding within the site, 1% of the GB population).</p> <p>Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet Ramsar site also qualifies under Ramsar Criterion 5 by regularly supporting waterbirds in numbers of 20,000 individuals or more. In the five year period 1989/90 to 1993/94 a winter peak mean of approximately 34,500 individual waterbirds was recorded, comprising 22,000 wildfowl and 12,500 waders.</p> <p>The site also qualifies under Ramsar Criterion 4 by supporting the following waterbird species at a critical stage in their life cycles (1989/90 to 1993/94 data except where stated): curlew (1,397 individuals, 1.0% of the GB population). Teal (1,592 individuals, 1.0% of the GB population), greater scaup (123 individuals, 1% of the GB population), and redshank (1,272 individuals, 1% of the GB population). The assemblage additionally now includes nationally important populations greater than 2,000 individuals of: dunlin (2005/06 to 2009/10, winter peak mean of 4,088 individuals, 1% of the GB population), and oystercatcher (2004/05 to 2009/10, winter peak mean of a minimum of 2,459 individuals, 0.8% of the GB population). Greylag goose, wigeon and bar-tailed godwit are also components of the waterbird assemblage.</p> <p>Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet Ramsar site qualifies under Ramsar Criterion 6 by regularly supporting 1% or more of the individuals in a population of waterbirds (1989/90 to 1993/94 winter peak means): greylag goose (1,146 individuals, 1% of the Icelandic/UK/Ireland biogeographic population), wigeon (15,304 individuals, 2% of the W Siberia/NW & NE Europe biogeographic</p>				

Site (SPA/Ramsar within 20 km, SSSI within 10 km of Proposed Development)	Qualifying feature(s)	Publish NatureScot feature connectivity distance (breeding)	Published NatureScot feature connectivity distance (wintering)	Approx distance to section of Proposed Development (smallest – largest distance) ¹	Scoped IN/OUT
	population), and bar-tailed godwit (1,184 individuals, 1% of the Western European biogeographic population).				
Dornoch Firth SSSI	<p>Birds: Bar-tailed godwit, whooper swan, wigeon.</p> <p>The site supports nationally important aggregations of non-breeding bar-tailed godwit, whooper swan, and wigeon. The mud and sand flats provide rich feeding areas for wildfowl and wading birds throughout the year. The saltmarshes also provide autumn and winter foraging areas during high tides and periods of flood. In normal conditions, intertidal flats, saltmarsh and dune vegetation provide high tide roost sites for bar-tailed godwit and other waders. Very large concentrations of wigeon graze on the eelgrass beds at Edderton sands, Poll na Caorach, Cuthill Sands and east of Ardjachie Point. The site also offers sheltered bays such as Ardmore Bay and Poll na Caorach where waterfowl, such as wigeon and whooper swan, can find valuable undisturbed feeding sites during harsh weather. Loch Evelix is traditionally used by night roosting and foraging whooper swans.</p>	-	Whooper swan: core range 5 km.	B1 – 9 km B1.1 – 9.1 km	OUT due to distance
Dunbeath Peatlands SSSI	<p>Birds: Breeding bird assemblage</p> <p>Birds: Dunlin, golden plover, greenshank.</p> <p>This extensive area of moorland with its many lochs, streams, bog pools and mosaic of vegetation types supports a wide range of upland bird species. Notable species include red-throated diver, black-throated diver, arctic skua, hen harrier, common scoter, merlin and golden eagle. Other breeding birds include wigeon, red grouse (<i>Lagopus lagopus scotica</i>), raven (<i>Corvus corax</i>), teal, buzzard, snipe, curlew, common sandpiper and dipper (<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>) as well as the waders described below. The site provides suitable habitat for wading birds that breed in upland areas. Greenshank, golden plover and dunlin have all been recorded breeding on this site at densities well above average for the peatlands of Caithness and Sutherland.</p>	<p>Red-throated diver: up to 13.5 km, core range 8 km.</p> <p>Black-throated diver: up to 10 km.</p> <p>Hen harrier: up to 10 km, core range 2 km.</p> <p>Golden eagle: up to 9 km, core range 6 km.</p> <p>Merlin: up to 5 km.</p> <p>Golden plover: up to 11 km, core range 3 km.</p> <p>Dunlin: up to 3 km, core range 500 m.</p>	-	A1.3 – 4.6 km A1 – 6.7 km A1.6 – 7.7 km A1.5 – 7.9 km	IN

Site (SPA/Ramsar within 20 km, SSSI within 10 km of Proposed Development)	Qualifying feature(s)	Publish NatureScot feature connectivity distance (breeding)	Published NatureScot feature connectivity distance (wintering)	Approx distance to section of Proposed Development (smallest – largest distance) ¹	Scoped IN/OUT
		Greenshank: up to 3 km, core range 2 km. Curlew: up to 2 km, core range 1 km.			
East Caithness Cliffs SPA	<p>East Caithness Cliffs SPA qualifies under Article 4.1 by regularly supporting a population of European importance of the Annex 1 species: peregrine (an estimated 6 pairs, 0.5% of the GB population and selected as one of the most suitable sites for peregrine in GB).</p> <p>East Caithness Cliffs SPA further qualifies under Article 4.2 by regularly supporting populations of European importance of the migratory species (1985 to 1987): common guillemot (106,700 individuals, 3.1% of north Atlantic biogeographic population); razorbill (15,800 individuals, 1.8% of total A. t. islandica biogeographic population); herring gull (9,400 pairs, 1.0% of NW European biogeographic population); black-legged kittiwake (32,500 pairs, 1.0% of north Atlantic biogeographic population), and European shag (2,300 pairs, 1.8% of the north Europe biogeographic population).</p> <p>East Caithness Cliffs SPA also qualifies under Article 4.2 by regularly supporting in excess of 20,000 individual seabirds. It regularly supports 300,000 individual seabirds including nationally important populations of the following species (1985 to 1987): great black-backed gull (800 pairs, 4% of the GB population); cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) (230 pairs, 3% of the GB population); northern fulmar (15,000 pairs, 3% of the GB population); razorbill (15,800 individuals, 11% of the GB population); common guillemot (106,700 individuals, 10% of the GB population); black-legged kittiwake (32,500 pairs, 7% of the GB population); herring gull (9,400 pairs, 6% of the GB population) and European shag (2,300 pairs, 6% of the GB population).</p>	Peregrine falcon: up to 18 km, core range 2 km.	-	A1.5 – 0.1 km A1.6 – 0.9 km A1.3 – 1 km A1 – 2.9 km A1.1 – 12.2 km	IN
				B1 – 15.4 km	IN
Glen Affric to Strathconon SPA	Glen Affric to Strathconon SPA qualifies under Article 4.1 by regularly supporting a population of European importance of the Annex 1 species golden eagle (10 active territories in 2003, 2.2% of the GB population).	Golden eagle: up to 9 km, core range 6 km.	-	D1.3 – 2.1 km D1 – 6.9 km	IN
				E1.1 – 4.6 km	IN

Site (SPA/Ramsar within 20 km, SSSI within 10 km of Proposed Development)	Qualifying feature(s)	Publish NatureScot feature connectivity distance (breeding)	Published NatureScot feature connectivity distance (wintering)	Approx distance to section of Proposed Development (smallest – largest distance) ¹	Scoped IN/OUT
				E1 – 7 km	
Glen Strathfarrar SSSI	Birds: Breeding bird assemblage. 65 species of bird have been recorded on the site including several associated with pinewoods, such as crested tit and Scottish crossbill.	-	-	E1 – 6.4 km	IN
Grudie Peatlands SSSI	Birds: Dunlin, golden plover, greenshank. The peatland habitat supports a range of breeding moorland birds. Greenshank, golden plover, and dunlin, have all been recorded on Grudie Peatlands at breeding densities well above the average for the peatlands of Caithness & Sutherland. Each species is a notified feature in its own right.	Golden plover: up to 11 km, core range 3 km. Dunlin: up to 3 km, core range 500 m. Greenshank: up to 3 km, core range 2 km.	-	C1 – 9.3 km	IN
Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar	Inner Moray Firth SPA qualifies under Article 4.1 by regularly supporting populations of European importance of the Annex 1 species: osprey forage throughout the SPA (2008 to 2012, up to 25 territories within feeding range, 12.5% of the GB population, with 4 pairs breeding within the site, 4% of the GB population); common tern (310 pairs, 2% of the GB population) and bar-tailed godwit (1992/93 to 1996/97 a winter peak mean of 1,090 individuals, 2% of the GB population). The Inner Moray Firth SPA further qualifies under Article 4.2 by regularly supporting populations of European importance of the migratory species (1992/93 to 1996/97 winter peak means): greylag goose (2,651 individuals, 3% of the Iceland/UK/Ireland biogeographic population); red-breasted merganser (1,184 individuals, 1% of the NW & Central Europe biogeographic population), and redshank (1,621 individuals, 1% of the Eastern Atlantic biogeographic population). Inner Moray Firth SPA also qualifies under Article 4.2 by regularly supporting in excess of 20,000 individual waterfowl. Between 1992/93 to 1996/97 a winter peak mean of 26,800 individual waterfowl comprising 16,800 wildfowl and 10,000 waders including nationally important populations of the following species: greater scaup (118 individuals, 1% of the GB population); curlew (1,262 individuals, 1% of the GB population); goosander (325 individuals,	Osprey: up to 28 km, core range 10 km.	Greylag goose: core range 15-20 km.	D1 – 10.5 km D1.3 – 11.3 km	IN
				E1 – 4.2 km E1.1 – 5.6 km	IN

Site (SPA/Ramsar within 20 km, SSSI within 10 km of Proposed Development)	Qualifying feature(s)	Publish NatureScot feature connectivity distance (breeding)	Published NatureScot feature connectivity distance (wintering)	Approx distance to section of Proposed Development (smallest – largest distance) ¹	Scoped IN/OUT
	<p>4% of the GB population); goldeneye (218 individuals, 1% of the GB population); teal (2,066 individuals, 1% of the GB population); wigeon (7,310 individuals, 3% of the GB population); cormorant (409 individuals, 3% of the GB population); redshank (1,621 individuals, 1% of the GB population); red-breasted merganser (1,184 individuals, 12% of the GB population); greylag goose (2,651 individuals, 3% of the GB population) and bar-tailed godwit (1,090 individuals). In the five-year period 1991/92 to 1995/96, a winter peak mean of 33,148 individual waterfowl was recorded with the assemblage additionally including a nationally important population, greater than 2,000 individuals, of oystercatcher (3,063 individuals, 0.9% of the GB population).</p> <p>Inner Moray Firth Ramsar site also qualifies under Ramsar Criterion 2 by supporting: osprey forage throughout the Ramsar site (2008 to 2012, up to 25 territories within feeding range, 12.5% of the GB population, with 4 pairs breeding within the site, 4% of the GB population), and common tern (310 pairs, 2% of the GB population).</p> <p>Inner Moray Firth Ramsar site further qualifies under Ramsar Criterion 5 by regularly supporting waterbirds in numbers of 20,000 individuals or more. In the five-year period 1992/93 to 1996/97, a winter peak mean of 26,800 individual waterbirds was recorded, comprising 16,800 wildfowl and 10,000 waders.</p> <p>The site also qualifies under Ramsar Criterion 4 by supporting the following waterbird species at a critical stage in their life cycles: greater scaup (118 individuals, 1% of the GB population), curlew (1,262 individuals, 1% of the GB population), goosander (325 individuals, 4% of the GB population), goldeneye (218 individuals, 1% of the GB population), teal (2,066 individuals, 1% of the GB population), wigeon (7,310 individuals, 3% of the GB population), and cormorant (409 individuals, 3% of the GB population). In the five-year period 1991/92 to 1995/96, a winter peak mean of 33,148 individual waterbirds was recorded with the assemblage additionally including a nationally important population, greater than 2,000 individuals, of: oystercatcher (3,063 individuals, 0.9% of the GB population), bar-tailed godwit, greylag goose, red-</p>				

Site (SPA/Ramsar within 20 km, SSSI within 10 km of Proposed Development)	Qualifying feature(s)	Publish NatureScot feature connectivity distance (breeding)	Published NatureScot feature connectivity distance (wintering)	Approx distance to section of Proposed Development (smallest – largest distance) ¹	Scoped IN/OUT
	breasted merganser and redshank are also components of the waterbird assemblage. Inner Moray Firth Ramsar site qualifies under Ramsar Criterion 6 by regularly supporting 1% or more of the individuals in a population of waterbirds (1992/93 to 1996/97, winter peak means): bar-tailed godwit (1,090 individuals, 1% of the Western European biogeographic population), greylag goose (2,651 individuals, 3% of the Iceland/UK/Ireland biogeographic population), red-breasted merganser (1,184 individuals, 1% of the NW & Central Europe biogeographic population), and redshank (1,621 individuals, 1% of the Eastern Atlantic biogeographic population).				
Lairg and Strath Brora Lochs SPA/SSSI	The Lairg and Strath Brora Lochs SPA qualifies under Article 4.1 of the EC Wild Birds Directive by supporting a population of European importance of black-throated diver, an Annex I species. The site supports six pairs of black-throated diver, representing 3% of the British population. Single territories are formed by Lochs Dola & Tigh na Greige and Lochs Beannach (Dalnessie) & na Gainmh	Black-throated diver: up to 10 km.	-	A1.5 – 13.6 km A1.6 – 17.7 km	OUT due to distance
				B1 – 8 km B1.1 – 8.6 km	IN
				C1 – 9.1 km	IN
				D1.3 – 15.9 km D1 – 16 km	OUT due to distance
Loch Ashie SPA	Loch Ashie SPA qualifies under Article 4.1 by regularly supporting a population of European importance of the Annex 1 species: Slavonian grebe an autumn gathering of (up to 60 individuals, up to 15% of the GB population). This is the most important known moult site in Scotland.	-	-	E1 – 15.7 km	OUT due to distance
Loch Calder SSSI	Birds: Greenland white-fronted goose, greylag goose, whooper swan. Greenland white-fronted goose, Icelandic greylag goose, and whooper swan use Loch Calder between late September and late April each year. The loch is used as an overnight roost, with the geese and swans usually dispersing to feeding areas at dawn and returning at dusk. Whooper swans may remain on the loch throughout the day, using the site for feeding as well as roosting. Loch Calder is relatively deep and has areas of open water when neighbouring shallower lochs are completely iced over. It is	-	Whooper swan: core range 5 km. GWF goose: core range 5-8 km. Greylag goose: core range 15-20 km.	A1.1 – 7.5 km	IN

Site (SPA/Ramsar within 20 km, SSSI within 10 km of Proposed Development)	Qualifying feature(s)	Publish NatureScot feature connectivity distance (breeding)	Published NatureScot feature connectivity distance (wintering)	Approx distance to section of Proposed Development (smallest – largest distance) ¹	Scoped IN/OUT
	therefore particularly important during extended periods of severe weather, when wintering wildfowl from across Caithness come to roost here.				
Loch Fleet SSSI	<p>Birds: Breeding bird assemblage.</p> <p>Birds: Eider.</p> <p>Coastal bird species such as; ringed plover, oystercatcher, shelduck, eider, Arctic tern, common tern, and little tern breed on the foreshore, dune and saltmarsh habitats. Other coastal breeding birds include; wheatear (<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>), sedge warbler (<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>) and reed bunting (<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>). Species which breed in the pine woodlands include osprey, Scottish crossbill, treecreeper (<i>Certhia familiaris</i>) and great spotted woodpecker (<i>Dendrocopos major</i>). The site supports nationally important numbers of eider, approximately 1% of the British wintering population. This species feeds on the rich marine invertebrate fauna, and benefits from the low level of human disturbance.</p>	Osprey: up to 28 km, core range 10 km.	Wintering eider 15 km	B1 – 1.6 km B1.1 – 3.2 km	IN
Loch Ruthven SPA/Ramsar	<p>Loch Ruthven SPA qualifies under Article 4.1 by regularly supporting a population of European Importance of the Annex 1 species: Slavonian grebe (1988 to 1992, 14 pairs, 18.9% of the GB population).</p> <p>Loch Ruthven Ramsar site qualifies under Ramsar Criterion 2 by supporting: Slavonian grebe 1988 to 1992, 14 pairs, 18.9% of the GB population).</p>	-	-	E1 – 18.6 km	OUT due to distance
Loch Scarmclate SSSI	<p>Birds: Greylag goose.</p> <p>Loch Scarmclate is an important roosting site for wintering greylag goose which are present between late September and late April each year. More than 1% of the British population of greylag goose regularly overwinter here. The loch is used mainly as an overnight roost site but birds sometimes also remain on the loch during the day.</p>	-	Greylag goose: core range 15-20 km.	A1.1 – 3.1 km	IN
Loch Watten SSSI	Birds: Greylag goose non-breeding	-	Greylag goose: core range 15-20 km.	A1.1 – 2 km A1 – 9.9 km	IN

Site (SPA/Ramsar within 20 km, SSSI within 10 km of Proposed Development)	Qualifying feature(s)	Publish NatureScot feature connectivity distance (breeding)	Published NatureScot feature connectivity distance (wintering)	Approx distance to section of Proposed Development (smallest – largest distance) ¹	Scoped IN/OUT
Morangie Forest SPA	The Morangie Forest SPA qualifies under Article 4.1 by regularly supporting a breeding population of European importance of the Annex I species capercaillie. The site supports approximately 30 individuals, representing about 2.8 % of the GB population.	-	-	B1 – 13.7 km B1.1 – 13.9 km	OUT due to distance
				C1 – 15.2 km	OUT due to distance
				D1 – 7.2 km D1.3 – 16.2 km	IN
Moray Firth SPA	<p>The Moray Firth SPA qualifies under Article 4.1 by regularly supporting a non-breeding population of European importance of the following Annex 1 species: great northern diver (a mean peak annual non-breeding population of 144 individuals (5.8% of the Great Britain population) for the years 2001/02-2006/07), red-throated diver (a mean peak annual non-breeding population of 324 individuals (1.9% of the Great Britain population) for the years 2001/02-2006/07) and Slavonian grebe (a mean peak annual non-breeding population of 43 individuals (3.9% of the Great Britain population) for the years 2001/02-2005/06).</p> <p>The site further qualifies under Article 4.2 by regularly supporting populations of European importance of the following migratory species: greater scaup (a mean peak annual non-breeding population of 930 individuals (17.9% of the Great Britain population) for the years 2001/02 to 2005/06), common eider (a mean peak annual non-breeding population of 1,733 individuals (2.9% of the Great Britain population) for the years of 2001/02 to 2006/07), long-tailed duck (a mean peak annual nonbreeding population of 5,001 individuals (45.5% of the Great Britain population) for the years of 2001/02 to 2005/6), common scoter (a mean peak annual non-breeding population of 5,479 individuals (5.5% of the Great Britain population) for the years 2001/02 to 2005/06), velvet scoter (a mean peak annual non-breeding population of 1,488 individuals (59.5% of the Great Britain population) for the years 2001/02 to 2005/06), common goldeneye (a mean peak annual non-breeding population of 907 individuals (4.5% of the Great Britain population) for the years 2001/02 to 2005/06), red breasted merganser (a mean peak annual non-breeding population of 151 individuals (1.8% of the Great Britain</p>	-	-	A1.5 – 0.4 km A1.6 – 1.2 km A1.3 – 4.6 km A1 – 13.2 km	IN
				B1 – 2.2 km B1.1 – 5.5 km	IN
				C1 – 16.4 km	OUT due to distance
				D1 – 10.6 km D1.3 – 11.7 km	OUT due to distance
				E1 – 6.3 km E1.1 – 6.9 km	IN

Site (SPA/Ramsar within 20 km, SSSI within 10 km of Proposed Development)	Qualifying feature(s)	Publish NatureScot feature connectivity distance (breeding)	Published NatureScot feature connectivity distance (wintering)	Approx distance to section of Proposed Development (smallest – largest distance) ¹	Scoped IN/OUT
	population) for the years of 2001/02 to 2005/06) and European shag (at least 6,462 individuals during the non-breeding season (3.2% of the biogeographic population and 5.9% of the Great Britain population) and 5,494 individuals during the breeding season ((2.7% of the biogeographic population & 10.2% of the Great Britain population) for the years 1980-2006).				
Mount Alderwoods SSSI	Birds: Breeding bird assemblage. This site supports a breeding bird assemblage characteristic of lowland open water and riverside habitats: red breasted merganser, teal, water rail, snipe, redshank, cuckoo (<i>Cuculus canorus</i>), grasshopper warbler (<i>ocustella naevia</i>), sedge warbler (<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>), and shelduck.	-	-	B1 – within B1.1 – within	IN
				C1 – 8.9 km	IN
North Caithness Cliffs SPA	North Caithness Cliffs SPA qualifies under Article 4.1 by regularly supporting a population of European importance of the Annex 1 species: peregrine (an estimated 6 pairs, 0.5% of the GB population and selected as one of the most suitable sites for peregrine in GB). North Caithness Cliffs SPA further qualifies under Article 4.2 by regularly supporting a population of European importance of the migratory species: common guillemot (1985 to 1987, 38,300 individuals, 1% of the North Atlantic biogeographic population). North Caithness Cliffs SPA also qualifies under Article 4.2 by regularly supporting in excess of 20,000 individual seabirds. The site regularly supports in the period 1985 to 1987 110,000 seabirds including nationally important populations of the following species: northern fulmar (14,700 pairs; 3% of the GB population); black-legged kittiwake (13,100 pairs, 3% of the GB population); common guillemot (38,300 individuals, 4% of the GB population); razorbill (4,000 individuals, 3% of the GB population) and Atlantic puffin (2,080 pairs, 0.4% of the GB population and greater than 2,000 individuals).	Peregrine falcon: up to 18 km, core range 2 km.	-	A1.1 – 12.5 km	IN
North Inverness Lochs SPA	North Inverness Lochs SPA qualifies under Article 4.1 by regularly supporting a population of European Importance of the Annex 1 species: Slavonian grebe (1991 to 1995, 7 pairs, 12% of the GB population).	-	-	E1 – 9.1 km E1.1 – 16.4 km	IN

Site (SPA/Ramsar within 20 km, SSSI within 10 km of Proposed Development)	Qualifying feature(s)	Publish NatureScot feature connectivity distance (breeding)	Published NatureScot feature connectivity distance (wintering)	Approx distance to section of Proposed Development (smallest – largest distance) ¹	Scoped IN/OUT
Novar SPA	The Novar SPA qualifies under Article 4.1 by regularly supporting a breeding population of European importance of the Annex I species capercaillie. The site supports approximately 13 individuals (mean 1999 – 2003), representing about 1.2 % of the GB population.	-	-	C1 – 19.4 km	OUT due to distance
				D1 – 1.6 km D1.3 – 14.6 km	IN
				E1 – 14.7 km E1.1 – 14.9 km	OUT due to distance
Shielton Peatlands SSSI	<p>Birds: Breeding bird assemblage.</p> <p>The extent and diversity of the blanket bog and dubh lochans on this site provide suitable habitat for a wide range of breeding birds of prey, waders and waterfowl. Notable birds of prey recorded on the site include hen harrier, merlin, peregrine and short-eared owl. A range of wader and waterbird species breed on the site including dunlin, golden plover, greenshank, greylag goose and wigeon. The Dubh lochans provide ideal breeding habitat for red-throated diver. Several pairs of Arctic skua also breed on the blanket bog.</p>	<p>Red-throated diver: up to 13.5 km, core range 8 km.</p> <p>Black-throated diver: up to 10 km.</p> <p>Hen harrier: up to 10 km, core range 2 km.</p> <p>Golden eagle: up to 9 km, core range 6 km.</p> <p>Merlin: up to 5 km.</p> <p>Golden plover: up to 11 km, core range 3 km.</p> <p>Short-eared owl: up to 5 km, core range 2 km.</p> <p>Dunlin: up to 3 km, core range 500 m.</p> <p>Greenshank: up to 3 km, core range 2 km</p> <p>Peregrine falcon: up to 18 km, core range 2 km</p>	-	A1 – within A1.1 – within A1.3 – 7.1 km	IN

Site (SPA/Ramsar within 20 km, SSSI within 10 km of Proposed Development)	Qualifying feature(s)	Publish NatureScot feature connectivity distance (breeding)	Published NatureScot feature connectivity distance (wintering)	Approx distance to section of Proposed Development (smallest – largest distance) ¹	Scoped IN/OUT
		Golden plover: up to 11 km, core range 3 km.			
Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors SPA/SSSI	Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors SPA qualifies under Article 4.1 by regularly supporting a population of European importance of the Annex I species hen harrier. The site supports 12 breeding pairs (mean value between 2002- 2004), representing about 2.5% of a GB population of 483 pairs.	Hen harrier: up to 10 km, core range 2 km.	-	A1.5 – 13.6 km A1.6 – 17.7 km	OUT due to distance
				B1 – within B1.1 – within	IN
				C1 – within	IN
				D1 – 6.5 km D1.3 – 6.7 km	IN
Strathmore Peatlands SSSI	<p>Birds: Breeding bird assemblage.</p> <p>Birds: Common scoter, dunlin, golden plover, greenshank, wigeon. Strathmore Peatlands provides ideal breeding and foraging habitat for a wide range of moorland birds. Waders are particularly associated with the bog pools, whilst the waterbirds congregate on the lochs. Greenshank, golden plover and dunlin have all been recorded at densities above the average for Caithness and Sutherland. The waterbirds of Strathmore Peatlands includes nationally important numbers (more than 1% of the UK population) of breeding wigeon and common scoter, which are very rare as breeding birds in the UK. In addition, there are populations of breeding greylag goose and black-throated and red-throated diver, and raptors such as short-eared owl, hen harrier and merlin regularly hunt across the site.</p>	<p>Red-throated diver: up to 13.5 km, core range 8 km.</p> <p>Black-throated diver: up to 10 km.</p> <p>Golden plover: up to 11 km, core range 3 km.</p> <p>Dunlin: up to 3 km, core range 500 m.</p> <p>Greenshank: up to 3 km, core range 2 km</p> <p>Golden plover: up to 11 km, core range 3 km.</p>	-	A1 – 5.1 km A1.1 – 5.1 km A1.3 – 5.9 km	IN