

A6.1b Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata* (non-breeding)

1. Status in UK

See section A6.1a.

2. Population data

	Population sizes (individuals)	Selection thresholds	Totals in species' SPA suite
GB	4,850	50	88 (2% of GB total)
Ireland	1,000	50 (see section 5.1.2 for rationale)	No SPAs selected in Northern Ireland
Biogeographic population	75,000	750	88 (0.1% of biogeographic population)

GB population source: Danielsen et al. 1993

Ireland population source: Lack 1986

Biogeographic population count source: Rose & Scott 1997

3. Distribution

In the non-breeding season, Red-throated Divers move south from their arctic and northern breeding areas to winter in temperate and sub-tropical marine areas. They occur around the coasts of the Northern Pacific and North Atlantic Oceans as well as in the Black, Caspian and north Mediterranean Seas (Cramp & Simmons 1977). Wintering Red-throated Divers are found along most of the coasts of north-west Europe including the Atlantic fringes of the UK, Ireland and Iceland. They especially occur in the southern North Sea, with particular concentrations in the international Wadden Sea and the Dutch Delta area (Stone *et al.* 1995). Those occurring in north-west European waters in winter include not only breeding birds from Russia and Europe, but probably also birds that breed in Greenland.

In the UK, the species is associated with inshore waters, often occurring within sandy bays, firths and sea lochs, although open coastline is also frequently used (Skov *et al.* 1995; Stone *et al.* 1995). The 1981/2 – 1983/4 winter atlas (Lack 1986) found the distribution to be fairly even along the east coast, with perhaps slightly fewer in the south compared to the north. Around western coasts the species is less abundant and has a patchy distribution, though it is still common, especially off western Scotland (Moser *et al.* 1986; Stone *et al.* 1995). Notable concentrations have been recorded in Cardigan Bay, the Moray Firth, the Clyde and Forth Estuaries, the Aberdeenshire coast, the Suffolk/Essex coast, as well as close to Tiree (Moser *et al.* 1986; Barrett & Barrett 1985; Pollitt *et al.* 2000).

4. Population structure and trends

In the non-breeding season, the biogeographic population (Europe/Greenland) is estimated to be 75,000 individuals (Rose & Scott 1997) with about 4,850 of these occurring in UK waters (Danielsen *et al.* 1993.). Little information is available on changes to either the British or European wintering numbers (Cranswick *et al.* 1999) as there is poor winter monitoring.

Enhancements to monitoring provision are currently being planned at both national and international scales.

5. Protection measures for population in UK

SPA suite

In the non-breeding season, the UK's terrestrial SPA suite for Red-throated Diver supports, on average, 88 individuals. This amounts to about 1.8% of the British and 0.1% of the international populations. Within an all-Ireland context, there have been no terrestrial SPAs selected in Northern Ireland. The suite amounts to one site (Firth of Forth — Table 6.1b.1) at which Red-throated Diver has been listed as a qualifying species.

6. Classification criteria

Most sites supporting non-breeding Red-throated Divers in the UK (Pollitt *et al.* 2000) are marine, with birds occurring offshore. Accordingly, these sites have not been included within this review (see section 2.3 outlining scope of review). Only one terrestrial site supporting more than 1% of the national total in close inshore areas was identified. This was considered under Stage 1.1, and selected after consideration of Stage 2 judgements.

Distribution map for non-breeding Red-throated Diver SPA suite

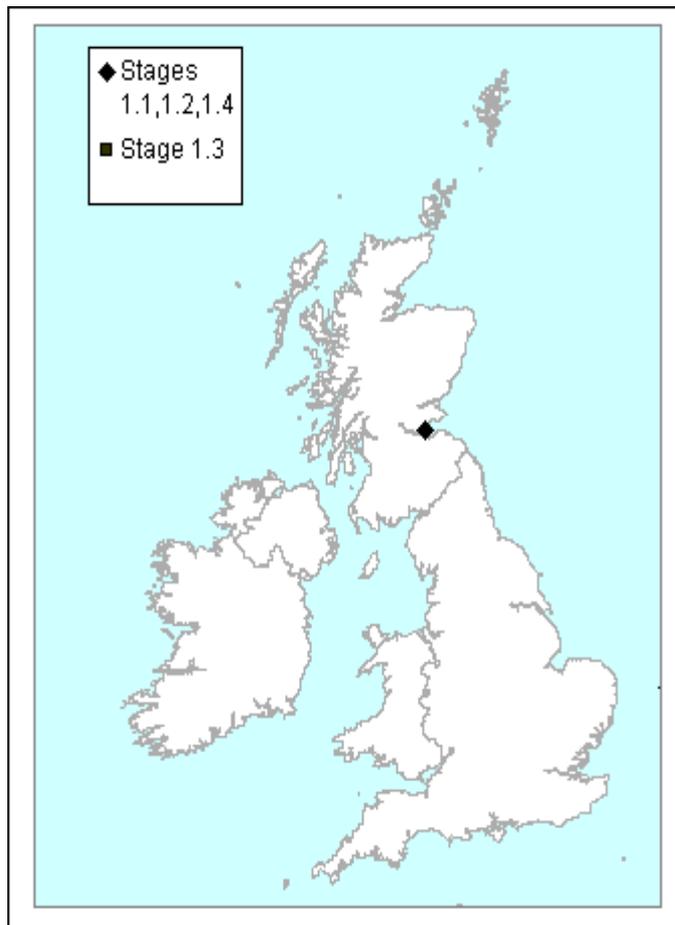


Table 6.1b.1 – SPA suite

Site name	Site total	% of biogeographical population	% of national population	Selection stage
Firth of Forth	88	0.1	1.8	1.1
TOTALS	88	0.1%	1.8%	