

# Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS)

*Categories approved by Recommendation 4.7 (1990), as amended by Resolution VIII.13 of the 8<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Contracting Parties (2002) and Resolutions IX.1 Annex B, IX.6, IX.21 and IX. 22 of the 9<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Contracting Parties (2005).*

## Notes for compilers:

1. The RIS should be completed in accordance with the attached *Explanatory Notes and Guidelines for completing the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands*. Compilers are strongly advised to read this guidance before filling in the RIS.
2. Further information and guidance in support of Ramsar site designations are provided in the *Strategic Framework for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance* (Ramsar Wise Use Handbook 7, 2nd edition, as amended by COP9 Resolution IX.1 Annex B). A 3rd edition of the Handbook, incorporating these amendments, is in preparation and will be available in 2006.
3. Once completed, the RIS (and accompanying map(s)) should be submitted to the Ramsar Secretariat. Compilers should provide an electronic (MS Word) copy of the RIS and, where possible, digital copies of all maps.

---

## 1. Name and address of the compiler of this form:

### Joint Nature Conservation Committee

Monkstone House

City Road

Peterborough

Cambridgeshire PE1 1JY

UK

Telephone/Fax: +44 (0)1733 – 562 626 / +44 (0)1733 – 555 948

Email: [RIS@JNCC.gov.uk](mailto:RIS@JNCC.gov.uk)

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY.

DD MM YY

--	--	--

Designation date

--	--	--	--	--	--

Site Reference Number

---

## 2. Date this sheet was completed/updated:

Designated: 11 March 1992

---

## 3. Country:

UK (England)

---

## 4. Name of the Ramsar site:

Chippenham Fen

---

## 5. Designation of new Ramsar site or update of existing site:

**This RIS is for:** Updated information on an existing Ramsar site

---

## 6. For RIS updates only, changes to the site since its designation or earlier update:

### a) Site boundary and area:

\*\* Important note: If the boundary and/or area of the designated site is being restricted/reduced, the Contracting Party should have followed the procedures established by the Conference of the Parties in the Annex to COP9 Resolution IX.6 and provided a report in line with paragraph 28 of that Annex, prior to the submission of an updated RIS.

### b) Describe briefly any major changes to the ecological character of the Ramsar site, including in the application of the Criteria, since the previous RIS for the site:

**7. Map of site included:**

Refer to Annex III of the *Explanatory Notes and Guidelines*, for detailed guidance on provision of suitable maps, including digital maps.

**a) A map of the site, with clearly delineated boundaries, is included as:**

- i) **hard copy** (required for inclusion of site in the Ramsar List): *yes* ✓ -or- *no* ☐;
- ii) **an electronic format** (e.g. a JPEG or ArcView image) *Yes*
- iii) **a GIS file providing geo-referenced site boundary vectors and attribute tables** *yes* ✓ -or- *no* ☐;

**b) Describe briefly the type of boundary delineation applied:**

e.g. the boundary is the same as an existing protected area (nature reserve, national park etc.), or follows a catchment boundary, or follows a geopolitical boundary such as a local government jurisdiction, follows physical boundaries such as roads, follows the shoreline of a waterbody, etc.

The site boundary is the same as, or falls within, an existing protected area.

For precise boundary details, please refer to paper map provided at designation

**8. Geographical coordinates (latitude/longitude):**

52 17 52 N                      00 24 57 E

**9. General location:**

Include in which part of the country and which large administrative region(s), and the location of the nearest large town.

Nearest town/city: Newmarket

The site is in east Cambridgeshire, 6 km north of Newmarket.

**Administrative region:** Cambridgeshire

**10. Elevation (average and/or max. & min.) (metres):    11. Area (hectares): 112.13**

Min.      14

Max.      14

Mean     14

**12. General overview of the site:**

Provide a short paragraph giving a summary description of the principal ecological characteristics and importance of the wetland.

The site is of international importance for its wide range of wetland habitats and associated flora, birds and insects. Areas of tall and often rich fen, fen grassland and basic flush have developed over shallow peat soils. The site also contains calcareous grassland, neutral grassland, woodland, mixed scrub and open water.

**13. Ramsar Criteria:**

Circle or underline each Criterion applied to the designation of the Ramsar site. See Annex II of the *Explanatory Notes and Guidelines* for the Criteria and guidelines for their application (adopted by Resolution VII.11).

**1, 2, 3**

**14. Justification for the application of each Criterion listed in 13 above:**

Provide justification for each Criterion in turn, clearly identifying to which Criterion the justification applies (see Annex II for guidance on acceptable forms of justification).

Ramsar criterion 1

A spring-fed calcareous basin mire with a long history of management, which is partly reflected in the diversity of present-day vegetation.

Ramsar criterion 2

The invertebrate fauna is very rich, partly due to its transitional position between Fenland and Breckland. The species list is very long, including many rare and scarce invertebrates characteristic of ancient fenland sites in Britain.

Ramsar criterion 3

The site supports diverse vegetation types, rare and scarce plants. The site is the stronghold of Cambridge milk parsley *Selinum carvifolia*.

See Sections 21/22 for details of noteworthy species

**15. Biogeography** (required when Criteria 1 and/or 3 and /or certain applications of Criterion 2 are applied to the designation):

Name the relevant biogeographic region that includes the Ramsar site, and identify the biogeographic regionalisation system that has been applied.

**a) biogeographic region:**

Atlantic

**b) biogeographic regionalisation scheme** (include reference citation):

Council Directive 92/43/EEC

**16. Physical features of the site:**

Describe, as appropriate, the geology, geomorphology; origins - natural or artificial; hydrology; soil type; water quality; water depth, water permanence; fluctuations in water level; tidal variations; downstream area; general climate, etc.

Soil & geology	peat, limestone/chalk
Geomorphology and landscape	lowland, valley, pools
Nutrient status	mesotrophic
pH	alkaline
Salinity	fresh
Soil	mainly organic
Water permanence	usually permanent
Summary of main climatic features	Annual averages (Cambridge, 1971–2000) ( <a href="http://www.metoffice.com/climate/uk/averages/19712000/sites/cambridge.html">www.metoffice.com/climate/uk/averages/19712000/sites/cambridge.html</a> ) Max. daily temperature: 14.1° C Min. daily temperature: 6.1° C Days of air frost: 41.9 Rainfall: 553.5 mm Hrs. of sunshine: 1501.2

**General description of the Physical Features:**

No information available

**17. Physical features of the catchment area:**

Describe the surface area, general geology and geomorphological features, general soil types, general land use, and climate (including climate type).

Chippenham Fen lies in a shallow peat-filled depression underlain by a thick layer of chalky marl which rises to the surface in places. The fen is fed by rainfall and springs arising from the chalk

aquifer. There are several ponds on the site and a system of dykes take water from the springs, in the south of the reserve, to the Chippenham River, near its northern boundary.

---

### 18. Hydrological values:

Describe the functions and values of the wetland in groundwater recharge, flood control, sediment trapping, shoreline stabilization, etc.

Recharge and discharge of groundwater

---

### 19. Wetland types:

Inland wetland

Code	Name	% Area
U	Peatlands (including peat bogs swamps, fens)	48.8
Xp	Forested peatland	35.5
W	Shrub-dominated wetlands	12.4
9	Canals and drainage channels	1.7
Tp	Freshwater marshes / pools: permanent	0.8
M	Rivers / streams / creeks: permanent	0.8

---

### 20. General ecological features:

Provide further description, as appropriate, of the main habitats, vegetation types, plant and animal communities present in the Ramsar site, and the ecosystem services of the site and the benefits derived from them.

Large areas of tall fen dominated by a mosaic of saw sedge *Cladium mariscus* and reed *Phragmites australis* are present with abundant purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*. A rich fen has developed in mown areas, supporting the nationally rare Cambridge milk parsley *Selinum carvifolia*. In one area this merges into a species-rich basic flush, where black bog-rush *Schoenus nigricans* becomes abundant. Dense and scattered scrub has developed. There are areas of chalk grassland that grade into the fen grassland. The damp neutral grassland meadows are developing a fen meadow flora. The site is fed by chalk springs. The water levels are controlled within a series of ditches which support a rich aquatic flora. Much of the woodland was planted in the 1790s and alder and willow carr have established in the wetter areas.

Ecosystem services

---

### 21. Noteworthy flora:

Provide additional information on particular species and why they are noteworthy (expanding as necessary on information provided in 12. Justification for the application of the Criteria) indicating, e.g. which species/communities are unique, rare, endangered or biogeographically important, etc. *Do not include here taxonomic lists of species present – these may be supplied as supplementary information to the RIS.*

#### Nationally important species occurring on the site.

##### Higher Plants.

*Selinum carvifolia*, *Potamogeton coloratus*, *Dactylorhiza traunsteineri*, *Dactylorhiza incarnata* ssp. *ochroleuca*.

---

### 22. Noteworthy fauna:

Provide additional information on particular species and why they are noteworthy (expanding as necessary on information provided in 12. Justification for the application of the Criteria) indicating, e.g. which species/communities are unique, rare, endangered or biogeographically important, etc., including count data. *Do not include here taxonomic lists of species present – these may be supplied as supplementary information to the RIS.*

#### Birds

#### Species Information

**Nationally important species occurring on the site.**

**Invertebrates.**

*Deltote bankiana*, *Clubiona rosserae*, *Parochthiphila spectabilis*, *Cyrturells albasetosa*,  
*Thaumatomyia* sp., *Gyrophaena pseudonana*, *Tasciocera collini*, *Scrobipalpa pauperella*,  
*Heterosphilus fuscehilis*, *Phrudus badensis*, *Blacometeorus pusillus*, *Entedon marci*.

**23. Social and cultural values:**

Describe if the site has any general social and/or cultural values e.g. fisheries production, forestry, religious importance, archaeological sites, social relations with the wetland, etc. Distinguish between historical/archaeological/religious significance and current socio-economic values.

- Aesthetic
- Aquatic vegetation (e.g. reeds, willows, seaweed)
- Archaeological/historical site
- Livestock grazing
- Non-consumptive recreation
- Scientific research

b) Is the site considered of international importance for holding, in addition to relevant ecological values, examples of significant cultural values, whether material or non-material, linked to its origin, conservation and/or ecological functioning? No

If Yes, describe this importance under one or more of the following categories:

- i) sites which provide a model of wetland wise use, demonstrating the application of traditional knowledge and methods of management and use that maintain the ecological character of the wetland:
- ii) sites which have exceptional cultural traditions or records of former civilizations that have influenced the ecological character of the wetland:
- iii) sites where the ecological character of the wetland depends on the interaction with local communities or indigenous peoples:
- iv) sites where relevant non-material values such as sacred sites are present and their existence is strongly linked with the maintenance of the ecological character of the wetland:

**24. Land tenure/ownership:**

Ownership category	On-site	Off-site
Private	+	+
Other	+	

**25. Current land (including water) use:**

Activity	On-site	Off-site
Nature conservation	+	+
Recreation	+	
Current scientific research	+	
Collection of non-timber natural products: (unspecified)	+	
Cutting of vegetation (small-scale/subsistence)	+	
Permanent arable agriculture		+
Grazing (unspecified)	+	

Hay meadows	+	
Hunting: recreational/sport	+	+
Domestic water supply		+
Non-urbanised settlements		+

**26. Factors (past, present or potential) adversely affecting the site’s ecological character, including changes in land (including water) use and development projects:**

*Explanation of reporting category:*

1. Those factors that are still operating, but it is unclear if they are under control, as there is a lag in showing the management or regulatory regime to be successful.
2. Those factors that are not currently being managed, or where the regulatory regime appears to have been ineffective so far.

NA = Not Applicable because no factors have been reported.

Adverse Factor Category	Reporting Category	Description of the problem (Newly reported Factors only)	On-Site	Off-Site	Major Impact?
Water diversion for irrigation/domestic/industrial use	1			+	

For category 2 factors only.

What measures have been taken / are planned / regulatory processes invoked, to mitigate the effect of these factors?

Is the site subject to adverse ecological change? NO

**27. Conservation measures taken:**

List national category and legal status of protected areas, including boundary relationships with the Ramsar site; management practices; whether an officially approved management plan exists and whether it is being implemented.

Conservation measure	On-site	Off-site
Site/ Area of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI/ASSI)	+	
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	+	
Site management statement/plan implemented	+	
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	+	

**b) Describe any other current management practices:**

The management of Ramsar sites in the UK is determined by either a formal management plan or through other management planning processes, and is overseen by the relevant statutory conservation agency. Details of the precise management practises are given in these documents.

**28. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:**

e.g. management plan in preparation; official proposal as a legally protected area, etc.

No information available

---

**29. Current scientific research and facilities:**

e.g. details of current research projects, including biodiversity monitoring; existence of a field research station, etc.

**Environment.**

Monitoring of water levels; 15 dipwells read fortnightly; 3 staff gauges; rain gauge; and river flow gauge. Further dipwells and piezometers installed in 2004.

**Fauna.**

National Butterfly Census (ITE) - weekly transect April to September. Annual wetland bird counts. Invertebrate monitoring.

**Flora.**

Monitoring of rare/scarcely species of flora, especially *Selinum carvifolia*.

Monitoring of fen vegetation and aquatic invertebrates following installation of water compensation scheme in 1991.

---

**30. Current communications, education and public awareness (CEPA) activities related to or benefiting the site:**

e.g. visitor centre, observation hides and nature trails, information booklets, facilities for school visits, etc.

There are occasional guided walks conducted by the Site Manager. Full-colour leaflet and video available.

---

**31. Current recreation and tourism:**

State if the wetland is used for recreation/tourism; indicate type(s) and their frequency/intensity.

**Activities, Facilities provided and Seasonality.**

Low level of usage by local inhabitants using the public Right of Way through the middle of the reserve. Access to the rest of the reserve is by permit only. Few people apply for permits for recreational purposes, they are mainly requested by naturalists.

---

**32. Jurisdiction:**

Include territorial, e.g. state/region, and functional/sectoral, e.g. Dept. of Agriculture/Dept. of Environment, etc.

Head, Natura 2000 and Ramsar Team, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, European Wildlife Division, Zone 1/07, Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6EB

---

**33. Management authority:**

Provide the name and address of the local office(s) of the agency(ies) or organisation(s) directly responsible for managing the wetland. Wherever possible provide also the title and/or name of the person or persons in this office with responsibility for the wetland.

Site Designations Manager, English Nature, Sites and Surveillance Team, Northminster House, Northminster Road, Peterborough, PE1 1UA, UK

---

**34. Bibliographical references:**

Scientific/technical references only. If biogeographic regionalisation scheme applied (see 15 above), list full reference citation for the scheme.

**Site-relevant references**

East Midlands Environmental Consultants (1996) *Chippenham Fen NNR management plan*. English Nature

English Nature (2001) *Chippenham Fen: National Nature Reserve*. Cambridge Film & Television Productions, Cambridge, for English Nature Suffolk Team, Bury St Edmunds [video]

English Nature (2001) *Chippenham Fen NNR management plan 2001–2006*. English Nature

ESL (1996) *NVC survey of Chippenham Fen NNR/SSSI north and east meadows*. ESL, Lincolnshire

Kassas, M (1951) Studies in the ecology of Chippenham Fen. The fen water table and recent history of the fen. *Journal of Ecology* **39**, 1-18

- Kirby, P (1996) Chippenham Fen NNR botanical, invertebrate and hydrological monitoring 1991–1995. Appendix 3: Invertebrate monitoring. *English Nature Research Reports*, No. **194**
- Ratcliffe, DA (ed.) (1977) *A Nature Conservation Review. The selection of biological sites of national importance to nature conservation in Britain*. Cambridge University Press (for the Natural Environment Research Council and the Nature Conservancy Council), Cambridge (2 vols.)
- Shaw, SC & Wheeler, BD (1996) Chippenham Fen NNR botanical, invertebrate and hydrological monitoring 1991–1995. Appendix 2: Vegetation monitoring. *English Nature Research Reports*, No. **193**
- Shaw, SC, Wheeler, BD, Kirby, P & White, P (1996) Chippenham Fen NNR botanical, invertebrate and hydrological monitoring 1991–1995. Final report. *English Nature Research Reports*, No. **191**
- Smith, K & Harding, M (2001) *Wetland plant communities of Chippenham Fen NNR, Cambridgeshire*. English Nature Suffolk Team, Bury St Edmunds
- Stewart, NF (2004) *Important stonewort areas. An assessment of the best areas for stoneworts in the United Kingdom*. Plantlife International, Salisbury
- Wheeler, BD & Shaw, SC (1992) *East Anglian valley fen dossiers*. Sheffield University
- White, P, Townend, L & Butcher, DP (1996) Chippenham Fen NNR botanical, invertebrate and hydrological monitoring 1991–1995. Appendix 1: Hydrological assessment. *English Nature Research Reports*, No. **192**

---

Please return to: **Ramsar Secretariat, Rue Mauverney 28, CH-1196 Gland, Switzerland**  
Telephone: +41 22 999 0170 • Fax: +41 22 999 0169 • email: [ramsar@ramsar.org](mailto:ramsar@ramsar.org)