

Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS)

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

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY.

DD MM YY

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | | |
|--|--|--|

Designation date

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

Site Reference Number

2. Date this sheet was completed/updated:

Designated: 04 October 1996

3. Country:

UK (England)

4. Name of the Ramsar site:

Foulness (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 5)

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:

Ramsar criterion 2

The site supports a number of nationally-rare and nationally-scarce plant species, and British Red Data Book invertebrates.

Ramsar criterion 3

The site contains extensive saltmarsh habitat, with areas supporting full and representative sequences of saltmarsh plant communities covering the range of variation in Britain.

Ramsar criterion 5

Assemblages of international importance:

Species with peak counts in winter:

82148 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003)

Ramsar criterion 6 – species/populations occurring at levels of international importance.

Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation):

Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:

Common redshank , *Tringa totanus totanus*, 2586 individuals, representing an average of 1% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Species with peak counts in winter:

Dark-bellied brent goose, *Branta bernicla bernicla*, 6475 individuals, representing an average of 3% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Eurasian oystercatcher , *Haematopus ostralegus ostralegus*, Europe & NW Africa -wintering 14674 individuals, representing an average of 1.4% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Grey plover , *Pluvialis squatarola*, E Atlantic/W Africa -wintering 4343 individuals, representing an average of 1.7% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Red knot , *Calidris canutus islandica*, W & Southern Africa (wintering) 22439 individuals, representing an average of 4.9% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Bar-tailed godwit , *Limosa lapponica lapponica*, W Palearctic 4095 individuals, representing an average of 3.4% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Contemporary data and information on waterbird trends at this site and their regional (sub-national) and national contexts can be found in the Wetland Bird Survey report, which is updated annually. See www.bto.org/survey/webs/webs-alerts-index.htm.

See Sections 21/22 for details of noteworthy species

Details of bird species occurring at levels of National importance are given in Section 22

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 | shingle, sand, mud, clay, nutrient-rich, sedimentary, gravel |
| Geomorphology and landscape | lowland, coastal, floodplain, subtidal sediments (including sandbank/mudbank), intertidal sediments (including sandflat/mudflat), open coast (including bay), estuary |
| Nutrient status | eutrophic |
| pH | circumneutral |
| Salinity | brackish / mixosaline, fresh, saline / euhaline |
| Soil | mainly organic |
| Water permanence | usually permanent |
| Summary of main climatic features | Annual averages (Lowestoft, 1971–2000) (www.metoffice.com/climate/uk/averages/19712000/sites/lowestoft.html) Max. daily temperature: 13.0° C Min. daily temperature: 7.0° C Days of air frost: 27.8 Rainfall: 576.3 mm Hrs. of sunshine: 1535.5 |

General description of the Physical Features:

Foulness is part of an open coast estuarine system comprising grazing marsh, saltmarsh, intertidal mudflats, cockle-shell banks and sandflats. It includes one of the three largest continuous sand-silt flats in the UK.

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).

Foulness is part of an open coast estuarine system comprising grazing marsh, saltmarsh, intertidal mudflats, cockle-shell banks and sandflats. It includes one of the three largest continuous sand-silt flats in the UK.

18. Hydrological values:

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

Shoreline stabilisation and dissipation of erosive forces, Sediment trapping

19. Wetland types:

Human-made wetland, Marine/coastal wetland

| Code | Name | % Area |
|------|-------------|--------|
| G | Tidal flats | 89.5 |

| | | |
|-------|---|-----|
| Ts | Freshwater marshes / pools: seasonal / intermittent | 3.7 |
| B | Marine beds (e.g. sea grass beds) | 2.7 |
| H | Salt marshes | 2.1 |
| Other | Other | 1.4 |
| Q | Saline / brackish lakes: permanent | 0.5 |
| E | Sand / shingle shores (including dune systems) | 0.1 |

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.

The main habitat types of this site are:

mudflats, sandflats, saltmarsh, brackish-water lagoon, freshwater, grazing marsh.

Pioneer saltmarsh communities with *Spartina maritima*, *Sarcocornia perennis* and *Suaeda vera*; mature saltmarsh communities with *Atriplex pedunculata*. Species-rich perennial saltmarsh and drift-like communities with *Suaeda vera*, eelgrass *Zostera* beds. Brackish-water vegetation dominated by *Bolboschoenus maritimus*. Grazing marsh with *Alopecurus geniculatus*, *Hordeum secalinum* and fescues *Festuca* spp.

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.

Atriplex pedunculata, *Cynodon dactylon*, *Bupleurum tenuissimum*, *Carex divisa*, *Hordeum marinum*, *Inula crithmoides*, *Limonium humile*, *Parapholis incurva*, *Poa bulbosa*, *Polypogon monspeliensis*, *Puccinellia fasciculata*, *Puccinellia rupestris*, *Ruppia cirrhosa*, *Salicornia pusilla*, *Spartina maritima*, *Suaeda vera*, *Trifolium squamosum*, *Trifolium suffocatum*, *Vulpia fasciculata*, *Zostera angustifolia*, *Zostera noltei*.

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 currently occurring at levels of national importance:

Species regularly supported during the breeding season:

| | |
|--|---|
| Sandwich tern, <i>Sterna</i> (<i>Thalasseus</i>) <i>sandvicensis sandvicensis</i> , W Europe | 320 pairs, representing an average of 3% of the GB population (5 year mean 1992-1996) |
| Common tern, <i>Sterna hirundo hirundo</i> , N & E Europe | 134 apparently occupied nests, representing an average of 1.3% of the GB population (Seabird 2000 Census) |
| Little tern, <i>Sterna albifrons albifrons</i> , W Europe | 24 pairs, representing an average of 1.2% of the GB population (5 year mean 1992-1996) |

Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:

| | |
|--|---|
| Little egret , <i>Egretta garzetta</i> , West Mediterranean | 55 individuals, representing an average of 3.3% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3) |
| Ringed plover , <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> , Europe/Northwest Africa | 547 individuals, representing an average of 1.6% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3) |
| Sanderling , <i>Calidris alba</i> , Eastern Atlantic | 432 individuals, representing an average of 2.1% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3) |
| Ruff , <i>Philomachus pugnax</i> , Europe/W Africa | 20 individuals, representing an average of 2.8% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3) |
| Whimbrel , <i>Numenius phaeopus</i> , Europe/Western Africa | 34 individuals, representing an average of 1.1% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3) |
| Eurasian curlew , <i>Numenius arquata arquata</i> , N. a. <i>arquata</i> Europe (breeding) | 2948 individuals, representing an average of 2% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3) |
| Common greenshank , <i>Tringa nebularia</i> , Europe/W Africa | 139 individuals, representing an average of 23.2% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3) |
| Species with peak counts in winter: | |
| Little grebe , <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis ruficollis</i> , Europe to E Urals, NW Africa | 97 individuals, representing an average of 1.2% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3) |
| Common shelduck , <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> , NW Europe | 1305 individuals, representing an average of 1.6% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3) |
| Hen harrier, <i>Circus cyaneus</i> , Europe | <19 individuals, representing an average of 2.5% of the GB population (5 year mean 1987/8-1991/2) |
| Pied avocet , <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i> , Europe/Northwest Africa | 255 individuals, representing an average of 7.5% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3) |
| European golden plover , <i>Pluvialis apricaria apricaria</i> , P. a. <i>altifrons</i> Iceland & Faroes/E Atlantic | 4066 individuals, representing an average of 1.6% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3) |
| Dunlin , <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i> , W Siberia/W Europe | 9905 individuals, representing an average of 1.7% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3) |
| Spotted redshank , <i>Tringa erythropus</i> , Europe/W Africa | 5 individuals, representing an average of 3.6% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3) |

Species Information

Nationally important species occurring on the site.

Invertebrates.

Lestes dryas, *Aethes margarotana*, *Malacosoma castrensis*, *Hybomitra expollicata*, *Lejops vittata*, *Poecilobothrus ducalis*, *Stratiomys longicornis*, *Parydroptera discomyzina*, *Paragus albifrons*, *Tachys scutellaris*, *Berosus spinosus*, *Gammarus insensibilis*

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
- Archaeological/historical site
- Fisheries production
- Livestock grazing
- Sport hunting

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 |
|-------------------------------------|---------|----------|
| Non-governmental organisation (NGO) | + | + |
| Local authority, municipality etc. | + | + |
| National/Crown Estate | + | + |
| Private | + | |

25. Current land (including water) use:

| Activity | On-site | Off-site |
|--|---------|----------|
| Nature conservation | + | + |
| Tourism | | + |
| Recreation | | + |
| Current scientific research | | + |
| Fishing: commercial | + | + |
| Fishing: recreational/sport | | + |
| Bait collection | | + |
| Arable agriculture (unspecified) | + | + |
| Grazing (unspecified) | + | + |
| Hunting: recreational/sport | + | + |
| Flood control | + | + |
| Mineral exploration (excl. hydrocarbons) | | + |

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| Transport route | + | + |
| Urban development | | + |
| Non-urbanised settlements | + | + |
| Military activities | + | |

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? |
|-------------------------|--------------------|--|---------|----------|---------------|
| Erosion | 2 | | + | | + |
| | | | | | |

For category 2 factors only.

What measures have been taken / are planned / regulatory processes invoked, to mitigate the effect of these factors?
 Erosion - The Essex Coast and Estuaries Coastal Habitat Management Plan (CHaMP) (Anon. 2002) covers the site and it is expected to inform the shoreline management plan as well as local plan policies. The MoD are responsible for the site and there are discussions underway as to the possibility of managed realignment.

Is the site subject to adverse ecological change? YES

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) | | + |
| Special Protection Area (SPA) | + | |
| Land owned by a non-governmental organisation for nature conservation | | + |
| Management agreement | + | |
| Site management statement/plan implemented | + | |
| Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) | + | + |
| 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.

Fauna.

Numbers of migratory and wintering wildfowl and waders are monitored annually as part of the national Wetland Birds Survey (WeBS) organised by the British Trust for Ornithology, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

Flora.

Reintroduction of *Atriplex pedunculata* as part of the English Nature Species Recovery Programme.

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.

None reported

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.

There is no significant regular use of the site for recreation or tourism.

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

Anon. (2002) *Essex Coast and Estuaries Coastal Habitat Management Plan: Executive summary*. English Nature, Peterborough (Living with the Sea LIFE Project). www.english-nature.org.uk/livingwiththesea/champs/pdf/ESSEX.FINALEXEC.SUMMARY.pdf

Barne, JH, Robson, CF, Kaznowska, SS, Doody, JP, Davidson, NC & Buck, AL (eds.) (1998) *Coasts and seas of the United Kingdom. Region 7 South-east England: Lowestoft to Dungeness*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough. (Coastal Directories Series.)

Buck, AL (ed.) (1993) *An inventory of UK estuaries. Volume 5. Eastern England*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough

Burd, F (1989) *The saltmarsh survey of Great Britain. An inventory of British saltmarshes*. Nature Conservancy Council, Peterborough (Research & Survey in Nature Conservation, No. 17)

- Cottle, R, Pethick, J & Dalton, H (2002) *Essex Estuaries Coastal Habitat Management Plan: final report*. English Nature, Peterborough (Living with the Sea LIFE Project)
- Covey, R (1998) Chapter 6. Eastern England (Bridlington to Folkestone) (MNCR Sector 6). In: *Benthic marine ecosystems of Great Britain and the north-east Atlantic*, ed. by K. Hiscock, 179-198. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough. (Coasts and Seas of the United Kingdom. MNCR series)
- Davidson, NC, Laffoley, D d'A, Doody, JP, Way, LS, Gordon, J, Key, R, Pienkowski, MW, Mitchell, R & Duff, KL (1991) *Nature conservation and estuaries in Great Britain*. Nature Conservancy Council, Peterborough
- Doody, JP, Johnston, C & Smith, B (1993) *Directory of the North Sea coastal margin*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough
- Hill, TO, Emblow, CS & Northen, KO (1996) *Marine Nature Conservation Review Sector 6. Inlets in eastern England: area summaries*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough (Coasts and seas of the United Kingdom. MNCR series)
- May, VJ & Hansom, JD (eds.) (2003) *Coastal geomorphology of Great Britain*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough (Geological Conservation Review Series, No. 28)
- McLeod, CR, Yeo, M, Brown, AE, Burn, AJ, Hopkins, JJ & Way, SF (eds.) (2004) *The Habitats Directive: selection of Special Areas of Conservation in the UK*. 2nd edn. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough. www.jncc.gov.uk/SACselection
- Musgrove, AJ, Langston, RHW, Baker, H & Ward, RM (eds.) (2003) *Estuarine waterbirds at low tide. The WeBS Low Tide Counts 1992-93 to 1998-99*. WSG/BTO/WWT/RSPB/JNCC, Thetford (International Wader Studies, No. 16)
- Musgrove, AJ, Pollitt, MS, Hall, C, Hearn, RD, Holloway, SJ, Marshall, PE, Robinson, JA & Cranswick, PA (2001) *The Wetland Bird Survey 1999-2000: wildfowl and wader counts*. British Trust for Ornithology, Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds & Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Slimbridge. www.wwt.org.uk/publications/default.asp?PubID=14
- Pritchard, DE, Housden, SD, Mudge, GP, Galbraith, CA & Pienkowski, MW (eds.) (1992) *Important Bird Areas in the United Kingdom including the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man*. Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Sandy
- 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.)
- Shirt, DB (ed.) (1987) *British Red Data Books: 2. Insects*. Nature Conservancy Council, Peterborough
- Stroud, DA, Chambers, D, Cook, S, Buxton, N, Fraser, B, Clement, P, Lewis, P, McLean, I, Baker, H & Whitehead, S (eds.) (2001) *The UK SPA network: its scope and content*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough (3 vols.) www.jncc.gov.uk/UKSPA/default.htm
- Thames Estuary Conservation Group (n.d.) *The Thames estuary*. Thames Estuary Conservation Group
- Worley, A & Simpson, M (1998) Littoral and sublittoral biotope mapping and data capture exercise for the Essex estuaries candidate Marine Special Area of Conservation. *English Nature Research Reports*, No. 305

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