

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:

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Designation date

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Site Reference Number

2. Date this sheet was completed/updated:

Designated: 17 July 1985

3. Country:

UK (England)

4. Name of the Ramsar site:

Holburn Lake and Moss

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):

55 37 20 N 01 55 09 W

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: Berwick-upon-Tweed

Holburn Lake and Moss are located 10 km north-west of Belford in north Northumberland.

Administrative region: Northumberland

10. Elevation (average and/or max. & min.) (metres): **11. Area (hectares):** 28.03

Min.	142
Max.	171
Mean	154

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 Holburn Lake and Moss site is important for its wet mire habitat and the associated bird interest. The site comprises a lowland raised mire and the adjacent slopes which form its catchment area. The south-western outflow to the mire was dammed in 1934 to create Holburn Lake which has subsequently been designated for its internationally important birds. The core of the site is comprised of some 10 ha of largely heather-dominated vegetation, punctuated by wetter hollows which retain a *Sphagnum*-rich flora. There is a small area of poor-fen at the eastern end of the lake.

At the north of the site there is an area of conifer plantation. Much of the plantation is dense with little ground flora, but in an area where the canopy was opened up by fire, there are some typical bog plant species.

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, 3, 4, 6

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

The site is a nationally rare example of a lowland raised mire.

Ramsar criterion 3

The site is an important winter roost site for greylag geese, of which the entire Icelandic race winters in Britain.

Ramsar criterion 4

Regularly visited by large flocks of mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*, wigeon *Anas penelope* and teal *Anas crecca*, provides an inland roost for coastal wildfowl during unfavourable weather conditions. A few pairs of shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*, shoveler *Anas clypeata* and tufted duck *Aythya fuligula* regularly breed here.

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

Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation):

Species with peak counts in winter:

Greylag goose , *Anser anser anser*, Iceland/UK, 2150 individuals, representing an average of 2.4% of the population (Source period not collated)
Ireland

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

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	acidic, clay, peat, nutrient-poor, sandstone
Geomorphology and landscape	lowland, hilly
Nutrient status	oligotrophic
pH	acidic
Salinity	fresh
Soil	
Water permanence	usually permanent

Summary of main climatic features	Annual averages (Boulmer, 1971–2000) (www.metoffice.com/climate/uk/averages/19712000/sites/boulmer.html) Max. daily temperature: 11.9° C Min. daily temperature: 5.6° C Days of air frost: 34.5 Rainfall: 651.0 mm Hrs. of sunshine: 1540.4
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General description of the Physical Features:

Holburn Lake and Moss comprises part of a lowland raised mire and parts of the adjacent slopes that form its catchment area. The south-western outflow to the mire was dammed in 1934 to create Holburn Lake. The core of the site comprises some 10 ha of largely heather-dominated vegetation, punctuated by wetter hollows that retain a *Sphagnum*-rich flora. There is a small area of poor-fen at the eastern end of the lake.

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).

Holburn Lake and Moss comprises part of a lowland raised mire and parts of the adjacent slopes that form its catchment area. The south-western outflow to the mire was dammed in 1934 to create Holburn Lake.

18. Hydrological values:

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

Water supply

19. Wetland types:

Human-made wetland, Inland wetland

Code	Name	% Area
Xp	Forested peatland	58.1
U	Peatlands (including peat bogs swamps, fens)	35.4
Tp	Freshwater marshes / pools: permanent	6.1
W	Shrub-dominated wetlands	0.4

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 open part of the moss is dominated by *Calluna vulgaris*, with some *Eriophorum vaginatum*, *E. angustifolium* and *Erica tetralix*. Much of the vegetation is referable to a degraded form of *Erica tetralix-Sphagnum papillosum* raised and blanket mire (M18) and *Calluna vulgaris-Eriophorum vaginatum* blanket mire (M19), coming close to dry heath in some places. Much of the floristic interest lies in hollows, scattered across the surface of the Moss where water retention has allowed a more *Sphagnum*-rich vegetation to develop (M2).

An island in the middle of the lake supports large stands of reedmace *Typha latifolia*. The lake shores support a fringe of woody nightshade *Solanum dulcamara*, soft rush *Juncus effusus* and sharp-flowered rush *Juncus acutiflorus*. At the western end of the lake there is an area of poor-fen, largely dominated by *Juncus effusus* and *Eriophorum angustifolium* over a carpet of *Sphagnum* mosses.

On the northern side of the Moss conifers form a dense canopy with little undergrowth. The south-eastern part of this area, where the fire opened up the canopy, has a significant component of bog species. The small lake on the northern edge of the site is overgrown with rushes *Juncus* spp., *Eriophorum angustifolium* and *Sphagnum* species.

The heath is subjected to regular burning and now has a good cover of *Calluna vulgaris* with only minor patches of bracken infestation.

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.*

None reported

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 with peak counts in spring/autumn:

Eurasian teal, *Anas crecca*, NW Europe

2013 individuals, representing an average of 1% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Species Information

None reported

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

Forestry 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
Private	+	
Other	+	

25. Current land (including water) use:

Activity	On-site	Off-site
Nature conservation	+	
Collection of non-timber natural products: commercial		+
Commercial forestry	+	
Grazing (unspecified)	+	
Hunting: recreational/sport	+	+

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?
No factors reported	NA				

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)	+	
Special Protection Area (SPA)	+	
Management agreement	+	
Site management statement/plan implemented	+	

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.

None reported

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.

Environment.

Water levels are monitored using a gauge board on the lake and 12 dip-wells on the Moss.

Water levels on adjacent peat extraction site monitored by Northumberland County Council.

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

Cranswick, PA, Waters, RJ, Musgrove, AJ & Pollitt, MS (1997) *The Wetland Bird Survey 1995–96: wildfowl and wader counts*. British Trust for Ornithology, Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds & Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Slimbridge

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

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

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