

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

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Designation date

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Site Reference Number

2. Date this sheet was completed/updated:

Designated: 10 August 2001

3. Country:

UK (England)

4. Name of the Ramsar site:

Isles of Scilly

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):

49 57 46 N 06 20 42 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: Penzance (nearest mainland town).

The Isles of Scilly are situated in the South-West Approaches, 45 km south-west of Land's End.

Administrative region: Cornwall; Isles of Scilly

10. Elevation (average and/or max. & min.) (metres): **11. Area** (hectares): 401.64

Min.	3
Max.	38
Mean	16

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 within the Isles of Scilly archipelago and mainly consists of many small uninhabited islands but is also partly within several inhabited islands, with habitats including coastal cliffs, boulder beaches, heathland and some dune grassland. The economy of the Isles of Scilly community depends heavily on the tourist business, which benefits from there being high numbers of breeding seabirds in an attractive environment.

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).

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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 6 – species/populations occurring at levels of international

importance.

Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation):

Species regularly supported during the breeding season:

European storm-petrel , *Hydrobates pelagicus*, 71 apparently occupied sites, representing an average of 0.2% of the GB population (Seabird World 2000 Census)

Lesser black-backed gull , *Larus fuscus graellsii*, 3603 apparently occupied nests, representing an average of 2.4% of the breeding population W Europe/Mediterranean/W Africa (Seabird 2000 Census)

Species/populations identified subsequent to designation for possible future consideration under criterion 6.

Species regularly supported during the breeding season:

European shag , *Phalacrocorax aristotelis aristotelis*, Coastal N Europe 1091 apparently occupied nests, representing an average of 1.3% of the breeding population (Seabird 2000 Census)

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.

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, granite
Geomorphology and landscape	coastal, islands, cliffs
Nutrient status	oligotrophic
pH	acidic
Salinity	saline / euhaline
Soil	mainly mineral
Water permanence	usually permanent
Summary of main climatic features	Annual averages (St Mawgan, 1971–2000) (www.metoffice.com/climate/uk/averages/19712000/sites/st.mawgan.html) Max. daily temperature: 13.3° C Min. daily temperature: 7.9° C Days of air frost: 14.3 Rainfall: 1042.6 mm Hrs. of sunshine: 1703.7

General description of the Physical Features:

The Scilly archipelago encompasses extensive areas of undisturbed intertidal sandflats and sublittoral sandy sediments. Although sheltered, the shallow sandy sediments include little

mud or silt because the surrounding seas have a low suspended sediment concentration, resulting from the islands' isolation and the presence of fully marine oceanic water. The shallow sublittoral sediments are colonised by the most extensive and best-developed eelgrass *Zostera marina* beds in southern England (Hocking & Tompsett 2001).

The Isles of Scilly are surrounded by reefs and rocky islets, some only extending into the shallow sublittoral, others extending well beyond 50 m depth.

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).

The Isles of Scilly form an archipelago of over 200 low-lying granite islands and rocks situated in the South-West Approaches 45 km south-west of Land's End at the extreme south-west of England. The Scilly archipelago encompasses extensive areas of undisturbed intertidal sandflats and sublittoral sandy sediments. Although sheltered, the shallow sandy sediments include little mud or silt because the surrounding seas have a low suspended sediment concentration, resulting from the islands' isolation and the presence of fully marine oceanic water. The shallow sublittoral sediments are colonised by the most extensive and best-developed eelgrass *Zostera marina* beds in southern England (Hocking & Tompsett 2001).

The Isles of Scilly are surrounded by reefs and rocky islets, some only extending into the shallow sublittoral, others extending well beyond 50 m depth.

18. Hydrological values:

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

19. Wetland types:

Marine/coastal wetland

Code	Name	% Area
D	Rocky shores	69
Other	Other	20
E	Sand / shingle shores (including dune systems)	10
Tp	Freshwater marshes / pools: permanent	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.

Sea cliffs, rocky islets and boulder beaches are relatively devoid of plant communities except for the sparse crevice vegetation with *Crithmum maritimum* and *Armeria maritima*. In some places the *Armeria* cover is dominant, which is a feature peculiar to Scilly. The characteristic 'waved' heathland of the most exposed headlands is dominated by *Calluna vulgaris* with sheltered areas supporting scrub of *Ulex europaeus*, *Pteridium aquilinum* and *Rubus* spp. Some areas of low-lying land have overlying embryonic dunes developing, dominated by *Ammophila arenaria* and *Carex arenaria*. One site has a small pool fringed by beds of *Scirpus maritimus*.

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.*

Species occurring at levels of international importance

Higher Plants

Rumex rupestris

Species occurring at levels of national importance

Habitat type

Heathland H4

Higher Plants

Ornithopus pinnatus

Viola kitaibeliana

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:

Great black-backed gull , <i>Larus marinus</i> , NE Atlantic	778 apparently occupied nests, representing an average of 4.5% of the GB population (Seabird 2000 Census)
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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

Archaeological/historical site

Non-consumptive recreation

Scientific research

Tourism

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	+	

25. Current land (including water) use:

Activity	On-site	Off-site
Nature conservation	+	+
Tourism	+	+
Fishing: commercial		+
Fishing: recreational/sport	+	+
Arable agriculture (unspecified)		+
Grazing (unspecified)		+
Permanent pastoral agriculture		+
Sewage treatment/disposal		+
Harbour/port		+
Domestic water supply		+
Non-urbanised settlements		+
Other		+

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)	+	
Site management statement/plan implemented	+	
Area of Outstanding National Beauty (AONB)	+	+
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.

- 3 year Species Recovery Programme to assist with breeding success of terns, particularly Roseate Tern, including the employment of a Seasonal Tern Warden.

- Recent (1999) census of breeding seabirds on all islands, giving a baseline for future surveys.

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.

Currently small-scale wildlife tours which operate throughout the main season for the tourists, and some schools from Cornwall have regular summer camps when they receive basic environmental information as part of their general educational activities. The AONB Unit has recently produced an educational pack for schools which includes general information on the environment, conservation designations and protection and raises awareness of the ecology of seabirds at a basic level. The Seasonal Tern Warden will give talks about seabirds to schools and has provided material for media coverage on his seabird work.

31. Current recreation and tourism:

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

There are many boat trips and some wildlife walks provided on a daily basis throughout the main tourist season. These provide only basic information on the wildlife that is present, including the breeding seabirds. There are some interpretive panels on the main islands and more are planned. Landing of people from the tripper boats on to particularly sensitive sites is controlled by voluntary agreement between the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust and the boat operators.

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

- Barne, JH, Robson, CF, Kaznowska, SS, Doody, JP, Davidson, NC & Buck, AL (eds.) (1996) *Coasts and seas of the United Kingdom. Region 11 The Western Approaches: Falmouth Bay to Kenfig*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough. (Coastal Directories Series.)
- Campbell, S, Hunt, CO, Scourse, JD, Keen, DH & Stephens, N (1998) *Quaternary of south-west England*. Chapman & Hall, London, for Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough (Geological Conservation Review Series, No. 14)
- Davies, J (1998) Chapter 8. Western Channel (Durlston Head to Cape Cornwall, including the Isles of Scilly) (MNCR Sector 8). In: *Benthic marine ecosystems of Great Britain and the north-east Atlantic*, ed. by K. Hiscock, 219-253. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough. (Coasts and Seas of the United Kingdom. MNCR series)
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- Hocking, S & Tompsett, P (2001) *The location and conservation of eelgrass beds in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, Vols. I and II*. ERCCIS, Cornwall Wildlife Trust, Truro
- Isles of Scilly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (2002) *Isles of Scilly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Official website*. www.ios-aonb.info
- May, VJ & Hansom, JD (eds.) (2003) *Coastal geomorphology of Great Britain*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough (Geological Conservation Review Series, No. 28)
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- 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.)
- Robinson, P (1999) *Distribution of European storm petrel Hydrobates pelagicus in the Isles of Scilly with probable abundance*. Unpublished report to English Nature
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- 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
- Weighell, AJ, Donnelly, AP & Calder, K (eds.) (2000) *Directory of the Celtic coasts and seas*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough
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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