

# 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.

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

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Designation date

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Site Reference Number

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

Designated: 28 November 1985

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## 3. Country:

UK (England)

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## 4. Name of the Ramsar site:

Martin Mere

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

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

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## 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):**

53 37 24 N                      02 52 37 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: Southport

Martin Mere lies between Ormskirk and Southport, close to the village of Burscough.

**Administrative region:** Lancashire

**10. Elevation (average and/or max. & min.) (metres):    11. Area (hectares): 119.89**

Min.	3
Max.	4
Mean	4

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

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

Martin Mere occupies part of a former lake and mire which extended over some 1300 hectares of the Lancashire Coastal Plain during the 17th century. In 1972 the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust purchased 147 hectares of the former Holcrofts Farm, consisting mainly of rough damp pasture, with the primary aim of providing grazing and roosting opportunities for wildfowl. Since acquisition the rough grazed pastures have been transformed by means of positive management into a wildfowl refuge of international importance. Areas of open water with associated muddy margins have been created, whilst maintaining seasonally flooded marsh and reed swamp habitats via water level control. In addition large areas of semi-improved damp grassland, unimproved species rich damp grassland and rush pasture have been maintained and enhanced via appropriate grazing management. Of the pastures the most botanically important are those species rich areas supporting whorled caraway, present here at one of very few sites in northern England. Such pastures are nationally important. However, the outstanding importance of Martin Mere is as a refuge for its large and diverse wintering, passage and breeding bird community. In September 2002, an additional 63 hectares of land were purchased on the southern most part of the refuge at Woodend Farm, with the aid of the Heritage Lottery Fund, to restore arable land to a variety of wetland habitats including seasonally flooded grassland, reedbed, wet woodland and open water habitats. These are all key Biodiversity Action Plan habitats within the Lancashire Plain and Valleys Natural Area.

### 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).

5, 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 5

#### Assemblages of international importance:

##### Species with peak counts in winter:

25306 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:

Pink-footed goose , <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i> , Greenland, Iceland/UK	8186 individuals, representing an average of 3.4% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
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##### Species with peak counts in winter:

Tundra swan , <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i> , NW Europe	61 individuals, representing an average of 0.7% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9- 2002/3)
Whooper swan , <i>Cygnus cygnus</i> , Iceland/UK/Ireland	1320 individuals, representing an average of 6.3% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
Eurasian wigeon , <i>Anas penelope</i> , NW Europe	3062 individuals, representing an average of 0.7% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
Northern pintail , <i>Anas acuta</i> , NW Europe	415 individuals, representing an average of 1.4% of the GB 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](http://www.bto.org/survey/webs/webs-alerts-index.htm).

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	acidic, sand, mud, clay, alluvium, peat, nutrient-poor, sedimentary, sandstone
Geomorphology and landscape	lowland, coastal, floodplain
Nutrient status	eutrophic, highly eutrophic
pH	alkaline, circumneutral
Salinity	fresh
Soil	mainly organic
Water permanence	usually permanent, usually seasonal / intermittent
Summary of main climatic features	Annual averages (Blackpool, 1971–2000) ( <a href="http://www.metoffice.com/climate/uk/averages/19712000/sites/blackpool.html">www.metoffice.com/climate/uk/averages/19712000/sites/blackpool.html</a> ) Max. daily temperature: 12.9° C Min. daily temperature: 6.4° C Days of air frost: 40.3 Rainfall: 871.3 mm Hrs. of sunshine: 1540.3

**General description of the Physical Features:**

Martin Mere comprises open water, seasonally-flooded marsh and damp, neutral hay meadows overlying deep peat.

**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).

Martin Mere comprises open water, seasonally-flooded marsh and damp, neutral hay meadows overlying deep peat.

**18. Hydrological values:**

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

Other, Recharge and discharge of groundwater, Flood water storage / desynchronisation of flood peaks

**19. Wetland types:**

Human-made wetland, Inland wetland

Code	Name	% Area
Ts	Freshwater marshes / pools: seasonal / intermittent	78
O	Freshwater lakes: permanent	13.7
U	Peatlands (including peat bogs swamps, fens)	7.1
Xf	Freshwater, tree-dominated wetlands	1.2

**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 open water with muddy margins associated with seasonally flooded grazing marsh and reed swamp. There are also large areas of surrounding damp species-rich grassland and semi-improved areas of damp grassland maintained by grazing.

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.**

*Carum verticillatum, Rumex maritimus, Oenanthe fistulosa, Oenanthe aquatica, Lemna gibba*

**Lower Plants.**

*Leucagaricus serenus*

**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 , <i>Anas crecca</i> , NW Europe	3494 individuals, representing an average of 1.8% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
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**Species with peak counts in winter:**

Common shelduck , <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> , NW Europe	936 individuals, representing an average of 1.1% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
Common pochard , <i>Aythya ferina</i> , NE & NW Europe	829 individuals, representing an average of 1.3% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
Ruff , <i>Philomachus pugnax</i> , Europe/W Africa	139 individuals, representing an average of 19.8% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
Spotted redshank , <i>Tringa erythropus</i> , Europe/W Africa	2 individuals, representing an average of 1.4% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1991/92-1995/96)

**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

Aquatic vegetation (e.g. reeds, willows, seaweed)  
 Archaeological/historical site  
 Environmental education/ interpretation  
 Livestock grazing  
 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
Non-governmental organisation (NGO)	+	
Private		+
Other	+	+

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

Activity	On-site	Off-site
Nature conservation	+	+
Tourism	+	+
Current scientific research	+	+
Arable agriculture (unspecified)		+
Permanent arable agriculture		+
Grazing (unspecified)	+	+
Rough or shifting grazing	+	+
Permanent pastoral agriculture	+	+
Flood control		+

**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)	+	
Land owned by a non-governmental organisation for nature conservation	+	
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.

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.

Considerable amounts of research continues to undertaken by the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust at Martin Mere on the feeding/breeding and behavioural ecology of individual species of wildfowl, in addition to fresh water grazing marsh management.

**Environment.**

Daily weather records, water level and water quality monitoring is undertaken by wardening staff.

**Habitat.**

Invertebrate and plant species records are collected by volunteers on a regular basis.

**Miscellaneous.**

Visitor and educational usage of the Refuge is monitored on a daily basis at this extremely popular and well visited Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust Refuge.

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**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.

WWT employs a number of warden-teacher staff who undertake environmental education work and escort large numbers of school parties around the refuge throughout most of the year. Various educational programmes have also been run for adults in recent years. WWT has excellent visitor and schoolroom facilities as part of its Interpretative Centre on the Refuge.

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**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.**

The WWT Refuge at Martin Mere has excellent bird watching and interpretative facilities, including toilets a tea room/restaurant and shop for the selling of WWT goods and other commodities, as well as educational/interpretative materials and an adventure playground based on a bird theme. In addition its waterfowl collection allows close contact with many species of duck, goose and swan from all over the world.

The latter compliments large areas of refuge which remain free from disturbance for wintering, passage and breeding wildfowl and wading birds. The latter being overlooked from many well constructed tower hides. The Refuge including its waterfowl gardens are extremely well visited throughout the year by large numbers of visitors and parties of school children alike. The Refuge features in tourist literature and is well known throughout the country. People management is of the highest order and from a tourist point of view is sustainable without causing detrimental effects upon the wildlife interest of the refuge.

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**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

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**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

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### 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

##### *Phase I Habitat Survey*

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

Environment Agency (1997) *Martin Mere Water Level Management Plan*. Environment Agency

Forshaw, DW (\*\*\*\*) *Wild geese and swans in Lancashire 1995–1998*

Gray, LC (1980) *Environmental bibliography of north-west England (vice-counties 59, 60, 69 and 70) 1850–1979*. University of Lancaster Library, Lancaster (Library Occasional Paper, No. 10)

Hale, WG (1985) *Martin Mere. Its history and natural history*. Causeway Press, Ormskirk

Huddart, D & Glasser, NF (2002) *Quaternary of northern England*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough (Geological Conservation Review Series, No. 25)

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](http://www.wwt.org.uk/publications/default.asp?PubID=14)

Nature Conservancy Council (1987) *Invertebrate Site Register – Lancashire*. Nature Conservancy Council

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](http://www.jncc.gov.uk/UKSPA/default.htm)

Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (\*\*\*\*) *Draft Management Plan*. Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust

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