

# 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: 02 February 2000

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## 3. Country:

UK (England)

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## 4. Name of the Ramsar site:

Northumbria Coast

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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:

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### 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

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

55 27 58 N                      01 35 18 W

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### 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: Newcastle

The site comprises several discrete stretches of the coastline in north-east England, between Spittal in the north of Northumberland to an area just south of Blackhall Rocks in County Durham.

**Administrative region:** Durham; North Tyneside; Northumberland; South Tyneside; Sunderland; Tyne and Wear

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### 10. Elevation (average and/or max. & min.) (metres):    11. Area (hectares): 1107.98

Min.	-1
Max.	8
Mean	0

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### 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 Northumbria Coast Ramsar site comprises several discrete sections of rocky foreshore between Spittal, in the north of Northumberland, and an area just south of Blackhall Rocks in County Durham. These stretches of coast regularly support nationally important numbers of purple sandpiper and high concentrations of turnstone. The Ramsar site also includes an area of sandy beach at Low Newton, which supports an nationally important breeding colony of little tern, and parts of three artificial pier structures which form important roost sites for purple sandpiper.

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### 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:**

Little tern , *Sterna albifrons albifrons*, W Europe 43 apparently occupied nests, representing an average of 2.2% of the GB population (Seabird 2000 Census)

**Species with peak counts in winter:**

Purple sandpiper , *Calidris maritima maritima*, E Atlantic -wintering 291 individuals, representing an average of 1.6% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Ruddy turnstone , *Arenaria interpres interpres*, NE Canada, Greenland/W Europe & NW Africa 978 individuals, representing an average of 1% 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](http://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, basic, neutral, shingle, sand, igneous, sedimentary, sandstone, metamorphic, slate/shale, limestone/chalk, clay, gravel
Geomorphology and landscape	coastal, crags/ledges, open coast (including bay), cliffs, pools, intertidal rock
Nutrient status	no information
pH	no information
Salinity	saline / euhaline
Soil	mainly mineral
Water permanence	usually permanent

Summary of main climatic features	Annual averages (Boulmer, 1971–2000) ( <a href="http://www.metoffice.com/climate/uk/averages/19712000/sites/boulmer.html">www.metoffice.com/climate/uk/averages/19712000/sites/boulmer.html</a> ) 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:**

The Northumbria Coast includes much of the coastline between the Tweed and Tees estuaries, consisting of mainly discrete sections of rocky shore with associated boulder and cobble beaches. The site also includes parts of three artificial pier structures and a small section of sandy beach.

**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 Northumbria Coast includes much of the coastline between the Tweed and Tees estuaries, consisting of mainly discrete sections of rocky shore with associated boulder and cobble beaches. The site also includes parts of three artificial pier structures and a small section of sandy beach.

**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:**

Marine/coastal wetland

Code	Name	% Area
D	Rocky shores	96
E	Sand / shingle shores (including dune systems)	3.3
Other	Other	0.5
M	Rivers / streams / creeks: permanent	0.2

**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.

The site consists mainly of areas of rocky shore with associated boulder and cobble beaches. These support a rich algal flora and associated fauna and form an important feeding area for wading birds. The areas of sandy beach within the site support a flora which includes marram *Ammophila arenaria* and sea sandwort *Honkenya peploides*.

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 regularly supported during the breeding season:**

Great cormorant , *Phalacrocorax carbo carbo*, 248 apparently occupied nests, representing an average of 2.9% of the GB population (Seabird NW Europe 2000 Census)

Black-legged kittiwake , *Rissa tridactyla tridactyla*, E Atlantic 4070 apparently occupied nests, representing an average of 1.1% of the GB population (Seabird 2000 Census)

Arctic tern , *Sterna paradisaea*, Europe/N Atlantic 1200 apparently occupied nests, representing an average of 2.2% of the GB population (Seabird 2000 Census)

**Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:**

European golden plover , *Pluvialis apricaria apricaria*, P. a. altifrons Iceland & Faroes/E Atlantic 2911 individuals, representing an average of 1.1% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

**Species with peak counts in winter:**

Common eider , *Somateria mollissima mollissima*, NW Europe 1361 individuals, representing an average of 1.8% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Sanderling , *Calidris alba*, Eastern Atlantic 419 individuals, representing an average of 2% 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  
 Environmental education/ interpretation  
 Non-consumptive recreation  
 Other  
 Scientific research  
 Sport fishing  
 Tourism  
 Transportation/navigation

**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	+	+
Public/communal		+

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

Activity	On-site	Off-site
Nature conservation	+	+
Tourism	+	+
Recreation	+	+
Current scientific research	+	
Collection of non-timber natural products: (unspecified)	+	+
Fishing: (unspecified)	+	+
Fishing: commercial	+	+
Fishing: recreational/sport	+	+
Marine/saltwater aquaculture		+
Gathering of shellfish	+	+
Shell collection	+	+
Bait collection	+	+
Arable agriculture (unspecified)		+
Permanent arable agriculture		+
Grazing (unspecified)		+
Hay meadows		+
Industry		+
Sewage treatment/disposal	+	+
Harbour/port	+	+
Urban development		+
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?
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	+	
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.

Fauna:

## Monitoring of bird populations

**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.

A diverse range of recreational activities takes place along the coast including walking, camping, sea angling, bird watching, water sports (water-skiing, sailing, windsurfing and canoeing) and general use of amenity beaches. Bird watching is particularly popular at Druridge Bay where there is a Country Park and a number of Nature Reserves. As well as attracting a large number of day trippers, a sizable population of summer visitors stay in caravan sites and other accommodation along the coast.

**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**

- Anderson, N (1989) *A report on the number and distribution of waders and wildfowl on Northumberland coast*
- Anon. (1997) *Monitoring the effects of a new sea outfall at Cambois on the invertebrate fauna*. (Contractor: University of Durham). Interim report to Northumbria Water, Durham
- Barne, JH, Robson, CF, Kaznowska, SS, Doody, JP & Davidson, NC (eds.) (1995) *Coasts and Seas of the United Kingdom. Region 5 North-east England: Berwick-upon-Tweed to Filey Bay*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough (Coastal Directories Series)
- Bennett, TL & Foster-Smith, JL (1998) Chapter 5. South-east Scotland and north-east England (Dunbar to Bridlington) (MNCR Sector 4). In: *Benthic marine ecosystems of Great Britain and the north-east Atlantic*, ed. by K. Hiscock, 123-154. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough. (Coasts and Seas of the United Kingdom. MNCR series)
- Brazier, DP, Davies, J, Holt, RHF & Murray, E (1998) *Marine Nature Conservation Review Sector 5. South-east Scotland and north-east England: area summaries*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough (Coasts and seas of the United Kingdom. MNCR series)
- Doody, JP, Johnston, C & Smith, B (1993) *Directory of the North Sea coastal margin*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough
- Hagemeijer, EJM & Blair, MJ (eds.) (1997) *The EBCC atlas of European breeding birds: their distribution and abundance*. Poyser, London
- Huddart, D & Glasser, NF (2002) *Quaternary of northern England*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough (Geological Conservation Review Series, No. 25)
- Lloyd, C, Tasker, ML & Cartridge, K (1991) *The status of seabirds in Britain and Ireland*. Poyser, London
- 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.  
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[www.wwt.org.uk/publications/default.asp?PubID=14](http://www.wwt.org.uk/publications/default.asp?PubID=14)



- Radley, GP (1994) *Sand dune vegetation survey of Great Britain: a national inventory. Part 1: England*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough
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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. Volume 3: Site accounts*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough [www.jncc.gov.uk/UKSPA/default.htm](http://www.jncc.gov.uk/UKSPA/default.htm)
- Stroud, DA, Mudge, GP & Pienkowski, MW (eds.) (1990) *Protecting internationally important bird sites: a review of the EEC Special Protection Area Network in Great Britain*. Nature Conservancy Council, Peterborough
- Thomas, GJ (1982) Breeding terns in Britain and Ireland, 1975–79. *Seabird report*, **6**, 59–69
- Thompson, KR, Brindley, E & Heubeck, M (1998) *Seabird numbers and breeding success in Britain and Ireland, 1997*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough (UK Nature Conservation, No. 22)

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