

# 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.

---

## 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](mailto:RIS@JNCC.gov.uk)

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY.

DD MM YY

--	--	--

Designation date

--	--	--	--	--	--

Site Reference Number

---

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

Designated: 15 February 1991

---

## 3. Country:

UK (England)

---

## 4. Name of the Ramsar site:

Redgrave and South Lopham Fens

---

## 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):**

52 22 34 N                      01 00 42 E

**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: Bury St Edmunds

The site straddles the Norfolk /Suffolk border, west of Diss.

**Administrative region:** Norfolk; Suffolk

**10. Elevation** (average and/or max. & min.) (metres):    **11. Area** (hectares): 127.09

Min.      0

Max.      0

Mean      0

**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 an extensive example of lowland base-rich valley, remarkable for its lack of fragmentation. The diversity of the site is due to the lateral and longitudinal zonation of the vegetation types characteristic of valley mires, such as dry birch woodland, scrub and carr, floristically-rich fen grassland, mixed fen, wet heath and areas of reed and saw sedge. The site supports many rare and scarce invertebrates, including a population of the fen raft spider *Dolomedes plantarius*.

**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, 2, 3**

**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 an extensive example of spring-fed lowland base-rich valley, remarkable for its lack of fragmentation.

Ramsar criterion 2

The site supports many rare and scarce invertebrates, including a population of the fen raft spider *Dolomedes plantarius*.

Ramsar criterion 3

The site supports many rare and scarce invertebrates, including a population of the fen raft spider *Dolomedes plantarius*. The diversity of the site is due to the lateral and longitudinal zonation of the vegetation types characteristic of valley mires.

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, basic, sand, clay, alluvium, nutrient-rich, nutrient-poor, sedimentary, limestone/chalk, maerl, peat
Geomorphology and landscape	lowland, valley, floodplain
Nutrient status	eutrophic, mesotrophic, oligotrophic
pH	acidic, alkaline
Salinity	fresh
Soil	mainly mineral, mainly organic
Water permanence	usually permanent
Summary of main climatic features	Annual averages (Wattisham, 1971–2000) ( <a href="http://www.metoffice.com/climate/uk/averages/19712000/sites/wattisham.html">www.metoffice.com/climate/uk/averages/19712000/sites/wattisham.html</a> ) Max. daily temperature: 13.4° C Min. daily temperature: 5.8° C Days of air frost: 48.3 Rainfall: 573.8 mm Hrs. of sunshine: 1635.2

**General description of the Physical Features:**

Redgrave and Lopham Fen is an extensive area of spring-fed valley fen in the headwaters of the River Waveney. It is the largest fen in lowland England. The reserve has a range of distinct habitats including the internationally important saw sedge beds and purple-moor grasslands.

**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).

Redgrave and Lopham Fen is an extensive area of spring-fed valley fen in the headwaters of the River Waveney. It is the largest fen in lowland England.

**18. Hydrological values:**

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

Sediment trapping, Recharge and discharge of groundwater, Flood water storage / desynchronisation of flood peaks, Maintenance of water quality (removal of nutrients)

**19. Wetland types:**

Inland wetland

Code	Name	% Area
U	Peatlands (including peat bogs swamps, fens)	37.6
Tp	Freshwater marshes / pools: permanent	35.2
Xp	Forested peatland	12.6
W	Shrub-dominated wetlands	12.6
9	Canals and drainage channels	1.2
M	Rivers / streams / creeks: permanent	0.8

**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.

Part of the site exhibits a classic zonation of vegetation types, characteristic of valley mires. Dry marginal woodland is replaced by floristically-rich fen grassland, dominated by purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*. This grades into a mixed fen vegetation community and areas dominated by reed and sedge, notably saw sedge *Cladium mariscus* in the valley bottom. Sandy ridges protrude into these zones and support damp, heathy vegetation. Most of the fen communities are prone to invasion by willow and locally this has developed into dense scrub and carr.

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.*

**Assemblage.**

The site supports a diverse assemblage of plant species and is internationally important because it supports *Molinia caerulea* meadows and *Cladium mariscus*-dominated chalk fen.

**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 Information****Nationally important species occurring on the site.**

**Invertebrates.**

*Dolomedes plantarius* (Endangered (RDB 1); Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended)

**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	+	+
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)	+	

Cutting of vegetation (small-scale/subsistence)	+	
Permanent arable agriculture		+
Grazing (unspecified)	+	
Sewage treatment/disposal		+
Flood control	+	
Transport route	+	+
Domestic water supply		+
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?
Dredging	1		+		+
Eutrophication	1		+		
Pollution – agricultural fertilisers	1			+	
Pollution – pesticides/agricultural runoff	1			+	

For category 2 factors only.

What measures have been taken / are planned / regulatory processes invoked, to mitigate the effect of these factors?

Eutrophication - Catchment nutrient-loading hoped to be investigated to address eutrophication.

Pollution – agricultural fertilisers - Catchment nutrient-loading hoped to be investigated to address fertiliser pollution.

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)	+	
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	+	
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.

**Flora and Fauna.**

Vegetation, bird and invertebrate surveys/monitoring carried out by SWT.

English Nature has been funding research into the ecology and monitoring of *Dolomedes plantarius* through its Species Recovery Programme.

Work carried out to improve understanding of the fen and its hydrology.

**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 used by schools but mostly by naturalists and local inhabitants. A visitor centre has been constructed and is in regular use for educational activities and displays for groups and visitors. The restoration programme for the site has been designated as an EC demonstration project.

**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.**

Low level of usage by tourists, more in the summer months. The visitor centre is available and is holding regular events to encourage visitors to the site. The site is grazed by Konik ponies that have proved popular with visitors.

**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

Aspinwall and Company (1992) *Redgrave and stage II study; Data collection and analysis*. Essex and Suffolk Water, Chelmsford.

ECUS (1995) *Ecological studies towards the restoration of Redgrave and Lopham fen*. Ecological Consultancy of the University of Sheffield, for Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Ashbocking

Humphries, H (1994) *Redgrave and Lopham Fens Restoration Project: Hydrological and Environment Impact Assessment*. National Rivers Authority, Peterborough

Jerram, R (1992) *The Waveney–Little Ouse fens: A survey of fen vegetation communities*. English Nature, Peterborough.

Jo Parmenter Ecological Associates (1997) Redgrave and Lopham Fen NNR Report on the fen vegetation monitoring programme, August 1997

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.)*

Smith, H (2001) *Fen raft spider recovery project: a decade of monitoring. Part 1: Report for 1991–1999; Part 2: Report for 2000; Part 3: The status and conservation of the fen raft spider Dolomedes plantarius at Redgrave and Lopham Fen National Nature Reserve, England*. English Nature Research Reports, No. 358

Stewart, NF (2004) Important stonewort areas. An assessment of the best areas for stoneworts in the United Kingdom. Plantlife International, Salisbury

---

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](mailto:ramsar@ramsar.org)