

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: 16 December 1993

3. Country:

UK (England)

4. Name of the Ramsar site:

Stodmarsh

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):

51 18 18 N 01 10 19 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: Canterbury

The site lies along the flood plain of the Great Stour just to the east of Canterbury.

Administrative region: Kent

10. Elevation (average and/or max. & min.) (metres): **11. Area** (hectares): 481.33

Min.	1
Max.	2
Mean	1

12. General overview of the site:

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

Stodmarsh is a wetland site resulting in part from subsidence under the valley of the Great Stour in Kent and aggregate extraction but lies within the natural floodplain of the river. There are a range of wetland habitats including open water, reedbeds, grazing marsh and alder *Alnus glutinosa* carr. The site supports a number of uncommon wetland invertebrates and plants, and provides breeding and wintering habitats for important assemblages of wetland bird species, particularly waterfowl.

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 2

Six British Red Data Book wetland invertebrates. Two nationally rare plants, and five nationally scarce species. A diverse assemblage of rare wetland birds.

Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation):**Species regularly supported during the breeding season:**

Gadwall , *Anas strepera strepera*, NW Europe 6 pairs, representing an average of 1% of the GB population (1988-92)

Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:

Gadwall , *Anas strepera strepera*, NW Europe 267 individuals, representing an average of 1.5% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Species with peak counts in winter:

Great bittern , *Botaurus stellaris stellaris*, W Europe, NW Africa 2 individuals, representing an average of 2% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Northern shoveler , *Anas clypeata*, NW & C Europe 274 individuals, representing an average of 1.8% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Hen harrier, *Circus cyaneus*, Europe 9 individuals, representing an average of 1.2% of the GB population (5 winter period peak count 1987/8-1991/2)

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	neutral, sand, mud, clay, alluvium, peat, gravel
Geomorphology and landscape	lowland, valley, floodplain
Nutrient status	eutrophic
pH	circumneutral
Salinity	brackish / mixosaline, fresh
Soil	mainly mineral
Water permanence	usually permanent
Summary of main climatic features	Annual averages (Wye, 1971–2000) (www.metoffice.com/climate/uk/averages/19712000/sites/wye.html) Max. daily temperature: 13.8° C Min. daily temperature: 6.3° C Days of air frost: 43.9 Rainfall: 727.9 mm Hrs. of sunshine: 1603.2

General description of the Physical Features:

Stodmarsh is a wetland resulting from coal mining subsidence under the valley of the Great Stour. The range of wetland habitats include open water, extensive reedbeds, grazing marsh and alder *Alnus glutinosa* carr.

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).

Stodmarsh is a wetland resulting from coal mining subsidence under the valley of the Great Stour. The Great Stour is a major watercourse, originating above Ashford and entering the sea at Pegwell Bay. The Kentish Stour catchment covers most of east Kent, including parts of the South Downs, The Weald and the lowlands downstream of Canterbury. The Stour is largely spring-fed by two major aquifers: the Lower Greensand and most significantly, the Chalk. Changes in groundwater level affect river flow, and in recent years there have been episodes of both extreme low flows and severe flooding.

18. Hydrological values:

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

No special values known, Flood water storage / desynchronisation of flood peaks

19. Wetland types:

Inland wetland, Marine/coastal wetland

Code	Name	% Area
U	Peatlands (including peat bogs swamps, fens)	33.2
O	Freshwater lakes: permanent	25.6
Other	Other	16.9
Tp	Freshwater marshes / pools: permanent	12.7
Q	Saline / brackish lakes: permanent	3.5
W	Shrub-dominated wetlands	2.9
M	Rivers / streams / creeks: permanent	2.7
Xf	Freshwater, tree-dominated wetlands	2.5

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.

Woodland: The most mature areas of woodland are patches of alder *Alnus glutinosa* carr growing over nettles *Urtica dioica*. There are also patches of osier *Salix viminalis* growing over nettles, yellow flag *Iris pseudacorus* ladies smock *Cardamine pratensis* and marsh marigold *Caltha palustris*. There are also patches of goat willow *Salix caprea* and crack willows *Salix fragilis* invading the reedbed. Overall these habitats are not the main reason for declaration of the site, although they add to the diversity, but in larger quantities would damage the interest of the site.

Reedbed: Extensive areas of reed occur, with varying quantities of scrub. When the reed is cut other species thrive including bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata*, greater spearwort *Ranunculus lingua*, and in the ditches that cross the reedbed greater bladderwort *Utricularia vulgaris*. Where the reedbeds are relatively dry the marsh sow thistle *Sonchus palustris* can be found. There are also stands of other emergent plants such as the great pond sedge *Carex riparia* and lesser pond sedge *Carex acutiformis*.

Grazing marsh: Small blocks of grazing marsh with a diverse flora that includes the rare sharp leaved pondweed *Potamogeton acutifolius*, flat-stalked pondweed *Potamogeton friesii*, frogbit *Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*, the nationally scarce whorled water-milfoil *Myriophyllum verticillatum*, and rootless duckweed *Wolffia arrhiza*.

Tidal river and adjacent lakes: The tidal habitats support a much less diverse flora with species such as the pondweed *Potamogeton pectinatus* in the tidal lake. The banks of the river support the nationally scarce plant dittander *Lepidium latifolium*.

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.– nationally scarce unless otherwise stated.

Potamogeton acutifolius (Vulnerable), *Taraxacum hygrophilum*, *Myriophyllum verticillatum*, *Wolffia arrhiza*, *Carex divisa*, *Lepidium latifolium*, *Sonchus palustris*.

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 winter:

Water rail , <i>Rallus aquaticus</i> , Europe	28 individuals, representing an average of 6.2% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
Ruff , <i>Philomachus pugnax</i> , Europe/W Africa	19 individuals, representing an average of 2.7% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Species Information

Nationally important species occurring on the site.

Invertebrates.

Eight British Red Data Book species of wetland invertebrates have been recorded on the site: *Segmentina nitida*, *Grammotaulius nitidus*, *Deltote banksianna*, *Polistichus connexus*, *Cercyon granarius*, *Haliphus mucronatus*, *Hydrophilus piceus* and *Vertigo moulinsiana* (RDB3).

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.

- Environmental education/ interpretation
- Livestock grazing
- Non-consumptive recreation
- Scientific research
- Sport fishing
- 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
National/Crown Estate	+	
Private	+	
Public/communal	+	

25. Current land (including water) use:

Activity	On-site	Off-site
Nature conservation	+	
Recreation	+	
Current scientific research	+	
Fishing: (unspecified)	+	
Fishing: recreational/sport	+	
Freshwater aquaculture		+
Arable agriculture (unspecified)		+
Permanent arable agriculture		+
Grazing (unspecified)	+	
Permanent pastoral agriculture	+	
Hunting: recreational/sport	+	
Sewage treatment/disposal		+
Irrigation (incl. agricultural water supply)		+
Mineral exploration (excl. hydrocarbons)	+	
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)	+	
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	+	+
Special Protection Area (SPA)	+	
Site management statement/plan implemented	+	
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.

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.

Other wintering birds: Numbers of wintering hen harrier and bearded tit are recorded each year by EN.

Bird ringing: A BTO constant effort site is maintained by volunteers at the Westbere reedbed with additional ringing activities undertaken elsewhere within the site.

Breeding birds: These are monitored by English Nature as a CBC recent surveys have been undertaken as part of national schemes for water rail and nightingale. Key species such as Cetti's warbler are monitored.

The site is surveyed regularly for otter and water vole.

Molluscs: The site has been surveyed for molluscs under English Nature's recovery programme for the rare snail *Segmentina nitida*. Survey work has recently been carried out for *Vertigo moulinsiana*.

Lepidoptera: Some monitoring is undertaken by volunteers.

Flora.

Aquatic plants have been surveyed by English Nature to establish a baseline for future monitoring of the site.

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.

English Nature provides regular guided walks. There are interpretation boards on the National Nature Reserve, and reserve leaflets available. There is a small amount of use by schools and universities.

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.

Shooting: part of the site is used for wildfowling.

Fishing: A number of lakes within the site are used for coarse fishing.

Bird watching: a very popular activity on the National Nature Reserve with nature trails and facilities for the disabled.

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

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- Williams, P (1996) *A survey of the ditch flora at Stodmarsh SSSI/NNR 1996*. English Nature, unpublished report

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