

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: 01 October 1986

3. Country:

UK (Scotland)

4. Name of the Ramsar site:

Loch Eye

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):

57 47 30 N 03 58 00 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: Inverness

Loch Eye Ramsar site lies 6 km south-east of Tain in Easter Ross.

Administrative region: Highland

10. Elevation (average and/or max. & min.) (metres): **11. Area (hectares):** 205.14

Min.	16
Max.	19
Mean	17

12. General overview of the site:

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

Loch Eye is a relatively large, shallow, nutrient-rich inland water body located between the Cromarty and Dornoch Firths. In winter the loch acts as an important roosting site for internationally important numbers of waterfowl. The loch and surrounding area also supports a diverse range of higher plant communities.

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 with peak counts in spring/autumn:**

Whooper swan , *Cygnus cygnus*,
Iceland/UK/Ireland 80 individuals, representing an average of 1.3%
of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-
2002/3)

Species with peak counts in winter:

Greylag goose , *Anser anser anser*, Iceland/UK,
Ireland 6338 individuals, representing an average of
7.1% of the population (5 year peak mean for
1995/6-1999/2000)

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	basic, alluvium, nutrient-rich, sedimentary, sandstone
Geomorphology and landscape	lowland
Nutrient status	eutrophic
pH	alkaline
Salinity	fresh
Soil	mainly organic
Water permanence	usually permanent
Summary of main climatic features	Annual averages (Kinloss, 1971–2000) (www.metoffice.com/climate/uk/averages/19712000/sites/kinloss.html) Max. daily temperature: 12.2° C Min. daily temperature: 5.1° C Days of air frost: 53.5 Rainfall: 624.4 mm Hrs. of sunshine: 1261.4

General description of the Physical Features:

Loch Eye is a relatively large, shallow, nutrient-rich inland water body, and is the best example of a eutrophic lowland loch north of the Highland boundary fault. The loch and surrounding area supports a diverse range of plant communities.

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).

Loch Eye is a relatively large, shallow, nutrient-rich inland water body, and is the best example of a eutrophic lowland loch north of the Highland boundary fault.

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

19. Wetland types:

Inland wetland

Code	Name	% Area
O	Freshwater lakes: permanent	68.2
Other	Other	14.8
U	Peatlands (including peat bogs swamps, fens)	8.5
Ts	Freshwater marshes / pools: seasonal / intermittent	8.5

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.

Open water forms the majority of the Ramsar site. Alder and willow carr occur in and adjacent to the loch in places. The loch supports a diverse range of submerged macrophytic plants. An extensive draw-down zone is usually present in summer, which together with fens/marshes, separates the loch from the surrounding land.

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.**

Goodyera repens, Potamogeton filiformis, Potamogeton rutilus

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**

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
- Fisheries production
- Livestock grazing
- Sport fishing
- 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
Local authority, municipality etc.		+
Private	+	+

25. Current land (including water) use:

Activity	On-site	Off-site
Nature conservation	+	
Tourism	+	
Recreation	+	
Current scientific research	+	
Fishing: recreational/sport	+	
Permanent arable agriculture		+
Livestock watering hole/pond	+	
Grazing (unspecified)	+	+
Irrigation (incl. agricultural water supply)	+	

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	+	
Other	+	

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.

Completed.

Habitat.

The palaeolimnology of Loch Eye was studied during 1998 as part of a wider study investigating the palaeolimnology of Scottish Freshwater Lochs.

Easter Ross Loch Survey 1994

Loch Eye, Easter Ross: a case study in eutrophication (Bailey-Watts 1991).

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.

Activities, Facilities provided and Seasonality.

Land based recreation:

Walkers and bird watchers tend to go where there is easy public access or where the site can be viewed from the road. Walking occurs all year; birdwatching concentrates between September and April.

Wildfowling has largely ceased following the Bird Sanctuary Order effective since 1974. Shooting by the owners/occupiers on site is not problematic. Goose are scared off adjacent agricultural fields and this requires a licence out of season. The Loch Eye Angling Association fish the loch (season April to September) and have occasionally stocked it with brown trout in the past. Fishing uses rowing boats only and this activity does not conflict with the conservation objectives of the site.

Water based recreation:

Windsurfing occurs less frequently now than in the past. Mainly April to September.

32. Jurisdiction:

Include territorial, e.g. state/region, and functional/sectoral, e.g. Dept. of Agriculture/Dept. of Environment, etc.

Scottish Executive, Environment and Rural Affairs Department

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.

Scottish Natural Heritage, 2 Anderson Place, Edinburgh, EH6 5NP

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

Bailey-Watts, AE (1991). *Loch Eye, Easter Ross – a case study in eutrophication*. Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, Edinburgh (unpublished report)

Batten, LA, Bibby, CJ, Clement, P, Elliot, GD & Porter, RF (1990) *Red Data Birds in Britain. Action for rare, threatened and important species*. Poyser, London, for Nature Conservancy Council and Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

Lassiere, O (1994) *Easter Ross loch survey*. Scottish Natural Heritage

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.)

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

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

Wortham, P (1998) *Loch Eye Site of Special Scientific Interest, 5 Year Management Statement. 1997/8 – 2001/2*. Scottish Natural Heritage, Dingwall

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