

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 Official Respondent:

Joint Nature Conservation Committee

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Name and address of the compiler of this form:

UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum
102 Broadway, Peterborough, PE1 4DG, UK

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Designation date

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Site Reference Number

2. Date this sheet was completed/updated:

Designated: 24 September 2001

3. Country:

UK (Falkland Islands)

4. Name of the Ramsar site:

Bertha`s Beach

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):

58 25 00 W 51 55 00 S

9. General location:

Include in which part of the country and which large administrative region(s), and the location of the nearest large town.

On the north shore of Choiseul Sound, East Falkland, 40 km south-west of Stanley (population 1,600) and 8 km south-east of Mount Pleasant Airport and the British Forces Falkland Islands Garrison main complex (personnel approx. 2,000).

Administrative region: Falkland Islands

10. Elevation (average and/or max. & min.) (metres): 11. Area (hectares): 3191

Min.	0
Max.	10
Mean	No information available

12. General overview of the site:

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

Sandy beach on the northern shore of Choiseul Sound, East Falkland, connecting the former islands at Fox Point to the mainland. Above high tide mark includes coastal dunes, dune slacks and pools, and grasslands; offshore, includes kelp beds in shallow seas and two islands with tussac vegetation, Direction Island and Fox Point Islet. Of value as a good representative example of Falkland coastal wetland types, including beach, small lakes, shallow marine ecosystems and tussac islands, supporting a broad range of Falkland avifauna and flora, including the endemic Falkland steamer duck and other endemic subspecies of waterfowl, and gentoo penguin colonies.

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, 4, 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).

The principal criterion under which Bertha's Beach qualifies is Criterion 1, since it is a good representative example (in a relatively natural state) of several different wetland habitat types found around much of the coast of the Falkland Islands, including:

- Low sand dunes at the top of the beach (Ramsar wetland type E);
- Shallow waters offshore, with kelp beds (Ramsar wetland type A & B);
- Freshwater pools above high water mark and associated short turf grassland (coastal 'greens') (Ramsar wetland type K);
- Fox Point Islet and Direction Island, two offshore rock outcrops with tussac grass (Ramsar wetland type D); and
- Areas of peaty moorland with whitegrass *Cortaderia pilosa* and diddle-dee *Empetrum rubrum* (Ramsar type U).

It qualifies under Criterion 2 because it supports appreciable numbers of ruddy-headed goose *Chloephaga rubidiceps*, listed as 'Lower Risk: near-threatened' by IUCN (1996). Cobb's wren *Troglodytes cobbi*, listed by IUCN as 'vulnerable', may occur on Direction Island and/or Fox Point Islet. Several of the six Falkland plant species, listed as 'globally threatened' by IUCN (Walter & Gillett 1998) may occur.

The site qualifies under Criterion 3 by virtue of the richness of the waterfowl populations which are important value for maintaining the genetic and ecological diversity of the region. The site supports populations of the endemic Falkland steamer duck *Tachyeres brachydactyla* and a number of endemic Falkland subspecies including upland goose *Chloephaga picta leucoptera*, kelp goose *Chloephaga hybrida malvinarum*, white-tufted grebe *Podiceps rolland rolland* and tussacbird *Cinclodes a. antarcticus*. The endemic Cobb's wren may occur on the tussac islands. Two of the twelve Falkland endemic plants (Moore 1973), clubmoss cudweed *Chevreulia lycopodioides* and coastal nassauvia *Nassauvia gaudichaudii* occur.

It qualifies under Criterion 3 because it provides breeding habitat for an unusually diverse assemblage of breeding water birds of the Falklands, in greater variety and numbers than many other apparently similar areas in the islands, including the rare species mentioned under Criterion 2, the endemic species and subspecies indicated under Criterion 3 and other more widespread species noted in section 18. Populations of endemic species and subspecies may be of international importance on this site.

It qualifies under Criterion 4 because it supports breeding southern sea lion *Otaria flavescens* and breeding colonies of gentoo penguins *Pygoscelis papua* at a critical stage in their biological cycle. Also, the whole coastal area is particularly important for large congregations of migratory species such as white-rumped sandpipers *Calidris fuscicollis* and sanderling *Calidris alba*, which occur in much higher numbers here than in other parts of the island. The ponds behind the main dune system are excellent for a variety of waterfowl.

Criterion 6

Especially with extension, qualifies also under 5 as holding >1% white-rumped sandpipers *Calidris fuscicollis* in the non-breeding season

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:

South Atlantic Ocean

b) biogeographic regionalisation scheme (include reference citation):

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, clay, peat, sedimentary, sandstone
Geomorphology and landscape	coastal, pools
Nutrient status	
pH	alkaline
Salinity	no information
Soil	mainly organic
Water permanence	usually permanent
Summary of main climatic features	Cool temperate oceanic climate, with average temperatures between 2 – 6° C. Rainfall averages 610 mm per annum.

General description of the Physical Features:

No information available

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).

No information available

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, Other

19. Wetland types:

Marine/coastal wetland

Code	Name	% Area
U	Peatlands (including peat bogs swamps, fens)	45
E	Sand / shingle shores (including dune systems)	15
A	Shallow marine waters	15
K	Coastal fresh lagoons	10
B	Marine beds (e.g. sea grass beds)	10
D	Rocky shores	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.

Starting from the seaward side, six main wetland types can be distinguished: offshore islands (Ramsar type D); shallow seas (Ramsar type A), with kelp beds (type B); beach and dune systems (type E);

coastal grasslands and pools (type K); and eroded sandy outcrops in the oceanic heath (type U), important as the site of the penguin colonies.

Offshore island. About 1 km offshore lies Direction Island (so called because it presents a magnetic anomaly which affects ships' compasses, including that of the Norwegian iron barque *Bertha* which was wrecked in 1892 and bestowed its name on the beach), a 1 ha rocky outcrop covered with a hectare of tussock grass *Parodichloa flabellata*. Tussock grass is typical of Falkland coastal areas, but has in many areas suffered from overgrazing and is now much more restricted than formerly, so that it mostly survives on small offshore islands. Direction Island has in the past supported a small population of southern sea lions *Otaria flavescens* and there are indications of breeding shearwaters (Strange *et al.* 1988). Fox Point Islet, the other tussock island, is located immediately off Fox Point and covers about 1 ha.

Shallow seas. Below low tide mark are a number of low-lying reefs and extensive beds of kelp *Macrocystis pyrifera*, which extends beyond the 6 metre mark, as in many offshore sites in the Falklands. Kelp helps to protect coastlines from erosion, and probably provides spawning grounds and shelter for many fish (mullet, smelt), squid, jellyfish, molluscs (including chitons), crabs and other marine life forms. In addition it provides feeding grounds for dolphins, seals, fish and some water birds such as shags, steamer ducks and terns. Several pods of Peale's dolphins *Lagenorhynchus australis* are frequently seen between Bertha's Beach and Direction Island, feeding in the kelp.

Beach and dune systems. The littoral vegetation is composed of associations of sea cabbage *Senecio candidans*, and non-native marram-lyme grass *Ammophila-Elymus* (the latter introduced to stabilise sand dunes). The beach is used by South American tern *Sterna hirundinacea* and shorebirds, mainly resident Magellanic oystercatcher *Haematopus leucopodus*, together with white-rumped sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis* and some sanderling *C. alba*, both of which spend the austral summer here. Falkland steamer duck and kelp gull *Larus dominicanus* loaf on the beach.

Coastal grassland ('greens') and pools. Behind Bertha's Beach, above high water mark, at the foot of the higher ground which slopes gradually down from inland, is an area of flat coastal grassland grazed by sheep and some cattle, with occasional pools and marshy ground. The associations in the short-cropped grasslands (greens) are characterised by *Agrostis* and *Festuca* spp. and, on the damper areas, pigvine *Gunnera magellanica* and *Cotula scariosa*. In the ponds spike rush *Eleocharis melanostachys* provides cover, while water-milfoil *Myriophyllum elatinoides* and filamentous algae are important food sources for water birds.

Sandy outcrops. In the higher ground, dominated by the ubiquitous white grass and diddle-dee, some outcrops have been eroded, and support nesting colonies of gentoo penguin.

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.*

Species occurring at levels of international importance

Higher Plants

Moonwort Fern *Botrychium dusenii*

Species occurring at levels of national importance

Habitat type

Greens

Higher Plants

Moonwort Fern *Botrychium dusenii*

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

The whole coastal area is particularly important for large congregations of migratory species such as white-rumped sandpipers and sanderling, which occur in much higher numbers here than in other parts of the island. The ponds behind the main dune system are excellent for a variety of waterfowl and rare visitors can often be seen here.

Gentoo penguin Near Threatened 565 pairs 2002/03 FISMP. 884 breeding adults (Clausen 2001).

Magellanic penguin Near Threatened Numbers unknown, but widespread and numerous throughout all islands.

White-tufted grebe (Range-restricted) subsp Several breeding pairs, numbers unknown.

Upland goose (Range-restricted) subsp
(> 1% pop) subsp

Kelp goose (Range-restricted) subsp
(> 1% pop) subsp

Ruddy-headed goose Data-deficient
Range-restricted

> 1% pop Presence confirmed. Numbers unknown.

Falkland steamer duck Range-restricted Presence confirmed throughout the area , numbers unknown, but numerous.

Two-banded plover (Range-restricted) subsp ?? Present and numerous. Numbers unknown.

White-rumped sandpiper > 1% pop Up to 2000 birds recorded (FC databases)

Falkland pipit (Range-restricted) subsp

Black-throated finch Data-deficient

Range-restricted Presence confirmed. Numbers unknown.

Long-tailed meadowlark (Range-restricted) subsp

Other Species of Interest

Hudsonian godwit and whimbrel have been recorded here, as non-breeding seasonal visitors during the southern summer, from their breeding grounds in the Arctic. The site is not known to hold any breeding populations of seals or sea lions, although a small colony breeds on Direction Island just off Bertha's Beach and seals can frequently be seen. Peale's dolphins *Lagenorhynchus australis* are also often seen from the shore, playing in the surf. The large areas of dunes and ponds behind the beach area are frequently used by breeding black-necked swan and numerous breeding speckled teal, wigeons, crested ducks, flying steamer-duck and visiting silver teal, yellow-billed pintail, as well as the occasional coscoraba swan and red shoveler. Numerous waders patrol the shore, including summer visitors like white-rumped sandpiper, the occasional sanderling, mixed with local two-banded plovers, dotterels and the two species of oystercatchers.

Species occurring at levels of national importance

Southern Sea Lion

Gentoo Penguins

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.

- Livestock grazing
- No special values known
- Non-consumptive recreation
- Other
- 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
Recreation	+	+
Current scientific research	+	
Livestock watering hole/pond	+	
Grazing (unspecified)		+
Military activities	+	+

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?

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
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	+	
Other		
Management plan in preparation	+	

b) Describe any other current management practices:

National Nature Reserve (NNR) - Nature Reserve status pending

28. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:

e.g. management plan in preparation; official proposal as a legally protected area, etc.

National Nature Reserve (NNR) - Management plan is drafted and agreed upon, and NNR status is pending.

Military activities are addressed in the draft management scheme.

Military activities - Military activities are addressed in the draft management scheme.

29. Current scientific research and facilities:

e.g. details of current research projects, including biodiversity monitoring; existence of a field research station, etc.

Area covered in Breeding Birds Survey of the Falkland Islands (Woods & Woods 1997)

Number of scientific papers on flora and fauna of Falklands

No ongoing research activities or facilities.

Volunteer monitoring scheme to become established at the site, involving developing a database of sightings for use by military personnel.

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.

No activities at present

Area has enormous potential for conservation education for military and civilian visitors

31. Current recreation and tourism:

State if the wetland is used for recreation/tourism; indicate type(s) and their frequency/intensity.

The site is currently exposed to low levels of tourism, although currently there are no facilities. It would be possible to develop visitor facilities, such as signs, a nature trail, and eventually perhaps a visitor centre, with a warden to guide visitors and oversee access to the more sensitive areas.

32. Jurisdiction:

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

Falkland Islands Government,

Government House, Port Stanley, Falkland Islands

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.

Deputy Governor and First Secretary, Governor's Office, Falkland Islands Government, Government House, Port Stanley, Falkland Islands

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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