

Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands

Categories approved by Recommendation 4.7 of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

NOTE: It is important that you read the accompanying *Explanatory Note and Guidelines* document before completing this form.

1. **Date this sheet was completed/updated:** 09.2001/03.2002

2. **Country:** Austria

3. **Name of wetland:** LAFNITZTAL

4. **Geographical coordinates:** 16°5` longitude
47°15` latitude

5. **Elevation:** (average and/or max. & min.) 300m – 400m a.s.l.

6. **Area:** (in hectares) 2180 ha

7. **Overview:** (general summary, in two or three sentences, of the wetland's principal characteristics)

The meandering river Lafnitz along the border of Southern Burgenland and Styria is a unique example of natural potamon and serves as an important landscape structure for the entire Lafnitz valley. Along the Lafnitz numerous natural or semi-natural stretches of river still exist amounting to over three quarters of its total length.

8. **Wetland Type** (please circle the applicable codes for wetland types as listed in Appendix A of the Strategic Framework.)

inland: • M • Ts • Xf •

human-made: • 4 • 9

Please now rank these wetland types by listing them from the most to the least dominant:

M, Ts, 4, 9, Xf

9. **Ramsar Criteria:** (please circle the applicable criteria; see point 12, next page.)

1, 2, 3, 4

Please specify the most significant criterion applicable to the site: 1

10. **Map of site included?** YES

(Please refer to the *Explanatory Note and Guidelines* document for information regarding desirable map traits).

11. Name and address of the compiler of this form:

Schneeweis Helmut
A-8234 Rohrbach/L. 114

Please provide additional information on each of the following categories by attaching extra pages (please limit extra pages to no more than 10):

12. Justification of the criteria selected under point 9, on previous page. (Please refer to Annex II in the *Explanatory Note and Guidelines* document).

The Ramsar site is characterised by a high species diversity, especially in the group of plants, amphibians, fishes and birds. Rare species as *Lutra lutra*, *Alcedo atthis*, *Ciconia ciconia*, *Ixobrychus minutus*, *Bombina bombina*, *Bombina variegata* and *Maculinea teleius* have to be specially mentioned. In the group of plants *Molinia caerulea*, *Iris sibirica*, *Gentiana pneumonanthe*, *Salix repens* are rare and endangered species.

Main parts are Natura 2000 sites both under the Birds Directive (Dir. 79/409/EEC) and under the Habitats and Species Directive (Dir. 92/43/EEC), the main nature conservation frameworks of the European Union. The site contains species and wetland types of national and international importance. The area also contains remnants of ash-alder alluvial forests (priority habitat) and various other habitats worth protecting. The Lafnitz is the oldest known and one of the important home for the otter (*Lutra lutra*).

13. General location: (include the nearest large town and its administrative region)

Federal Country: Burgenland, Styria
District Oberwart, Güssing, Jennersdorf, Hartberg, Fürstenfeld

14. Physical features: (e.g. geology, geomorphology; origins - natural or artificial; hydrology; soil type; water quality; water depth, water permanence; fluctuations in water level; tidal variations; catchment area; downstream area; climate)

The river rises in the area of „Wechsel“ – a part of the East Alps. The river leaves the crystalline rock near the town “Rohrbach” and continues its course as a meandering river in the “tertiary foreland”. Along the Lafnitz numerous natural or semi-natural stretches of river still exist amounting to over three quarters of its length. The material which is transported forms the river and the surrounding landscape. The climate is very dry and warm. The average annual temperature is 9°C. The average annual precipitation is 800 mm. During the summer there are many strong rainfalls. The Lafnitz shows a biological water quality of I – II.

15. Hydrological values: (groundwater recharge, flood control, sediment trapping, shoreline stabilisation etc)

Between the towns „Neustift“ and „Fürstenfeld“ the Lafnitz is a free meandering river with natural and semi-natural stretches. The river shows a different hydrological regime.

16. Ecological features: (main habitats and vegetation types)

The meandering river is a unique example of natural potamon and serves an important landscape structure. The area contains remnants of ash-alder alluvial forests (priority habitat) and various other habitats (natural eutrophic pools, humid tall herb fringes, molinia meadows and lowland hay meadows).The Lafnitz is an important home for the otter (*Lutra lutra*). From the ornithological

viewpoint (occurrence of *Alcedo atthis*, *Ciconia ciconia*, *Ixobrychus minutus*, *Lanius minor*) the Lafnitz valley deserves highest protection priority.

17. **Noteworthy flora:** (indicating, e.g., which species/communities are unique, rare, endangered or biogeographically important, etc.)

Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior*, molinia meadows (*Molinia caerulea*), *Iris sibirica*, *Gentiana pneumonanthe*, *Salix repens* and lowland hay meadows.

All these species and habitats are protected under the Habitats and Species Directive (Dir. 92/43/EEC) and/or included in the Red List.

18. **Noteworthy fauna:** (indicating, e.g., which species are unique, rare, endangered, abundant or biogeographically important; include count data, etc.)

The Lafnitz is an important area for *Lutra lutra*, *Alcedo atthis*, *Ciconia ciconia*, *Ixobrychus minutus*, *Lanius minor*, *Zingel zingel*, *Zingel streber*.

The Lafnitz valley provides around 10 % of the world population of *Bombina bombina* and *Bombina variegata*. Other important species are *Callimorpha quadripunctata*, *Maculinea nausithous* and *Maculinea teleius*. All these species are protected under the Birds Directive (Dir. 79/409/EEC) ,under the Habitats and Species Directive (Dir. 92/43/EEC) and/or included in the Red List.

19. **Social and cultural values:** (e.g. fisheries production, forestry, religious importance, archaeological site etc.)

The Lafnitz is one of the oldest borders in Europe. During the monarchy it was the border between Austria and Hungary. Today it is the border between the Austrian states Burgenland and Styria. In the past numerous alluvial forests and retention plains have been turned into agricultural land.

20. **Land tenure/ownership of:** (a) site (b) surrounding area

(a) private, public ownership

(b) mostly private owners

21. **Current land use:** (a) site (b) surroundings/catchment

(a) river: angling, meadows: hay production, agricultural use, small electric power plants

(b) meadows: hay production, agricultural use, forest: hunting, production of wood

22. **Factors (past, present or potential) adversely affecting the site's ecological character,** including changes in land use and development projects: (a) at the site (b) around the site

past: alluvial forests and retention plains have been turned into agricultural land and the remainders of these forests are endangered through an increasing spread of intensively managed farmland and the lack of extensively managed borders and buffer zones. Larger meadows have been drained causing a change in the species composition.

present: afforestation of wet meadows,

potential: afforestation of wet meadows, single farmers giving up agriculture, afforestation of wet meadows as a result of „restructuring“ agriculture in the EU, road building project.

23. **Conservation measures taken:** (national category and legal status of protected areas - including any boundary changes which have been made: management practices; whether an officially approved management plan exists and whether it has been implemented)

Main parts of the area are Natura 2000 sites.

„Naturschutzgebiet Wolfau“ Nature Conservation Site

“Naturschutzgebiet Kaltenbrunner Lahn” Nature Conservation Site

Non-governmental organisations have for some time been purchasing land for the creation of habitat island.

24. **Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:** (e.g. management plan in preparation; officially proposed as a protected area etc.)

More land for purchase or lease is held in reserve in the region of Rohr, Wörth and Blumau-Neudau. Priority management activities include the establishment of a variety of small ecosystems, planting of native wood along the river bank, further land purchase, creation of succession areas, elimination of plants and biotops unsuitable for the area and re-introduction of traditional land management.

LIFE project

25. **Current scientific research and facilities:** (e.g. details of current projects; existence of field station etc.)

Theses, Historical and current land use in the “Lafnitztal”
2 theses about *Maculinea teleius*,
A work about retention plains

26. **Current conservation education:** (e.g. visitors centre, hides, information booklet, facilities for school visits etc.)

Ramsar Centre Lafnitztal, information and visitor centre, education, school courses, field excursions

Information booklets

27. **Current recreation and tourism:** (state if wetland is used for recreation/tourism; indicate type and frequency/intensity)

Path and trails, information and visitor centre, thermal tourism, little “nature tourism”

28. **Jurisdiction:** (territorial e.g. state/region and functional e.g. Dept of Agriculture/Dept. of Environment etc.)

Amt der Burgenländischen Landesregierung
Abteilung 5 – Anlagenrecht, Umweltschutz und Verkehr
Hauptreferat III – Natur und Umweltschutz
A-7001 Eisenstadt, Europaplatz 1

Amt der Steiermärkischen Landesregierung
Fachabteilung 13 C Naturschutz
Karmeliterplatz 2
A-8010 Graz

29. Management authority: (name and address of local body directly responsible for managing the wetland)

Weideverein Ramsargebiet Lafnitztal
A-7411 Loipersdorf-Kitzladen

Verein Management Naturschutzgebiet Wolfau
A-7412 Wolfau

Landeswasserbaubezirksamt Oberwart, A-7400 Oberwart

Landeswasserbaubezirksamt Güssing, A-7540 Güssing

Biologische Arbeitsgemeinschaft, Körösisstraße 182
A-8010 Graz

Österreichischer Naturschutzbund, Landesgruppe
Steiermark, Heinrichstraße 5, A-8010 Graz

Österreichischer Naturschutzbund, Landesgruppe
Burgenland, Josef-Haydngasse 11, A-7000 Eisenstadt

Baubezirksleitung Hartberg, Referat Wasserbau
Rochusplatz 2, A-8230 Hartberg

30. Bibliographical references: (scientific/technical only)

Bundesministerium für Land- und Forstwirtschaft, Sektion IV
Wasserrückhalt Lafnitz, Schutzwasserwirtschaft an einem Grenzfluß, 1996

Biologische Arbeitsgemeinschaft
Lafnitz – Fluß des Jahres 1996
Mitt.72/97, 19Jg. Graz

Dvorak, Ranner, Berg
Atlas der Brutvögel Österreichs
Umweltbundesamt Wien, 1993

Hozang, Gerger, Lazowski, Samwald, Wiesbauer, Woschitz, Zauner
Gewässerbetreuungskonzept Lafnitz –Doberdorf bis Heiligenkreuz
1992

Key Documents of the Ramsar Convention
Strategic framework for the List of Wetlands of International Importance
Strategic framework and guidelines for the future development of List

Koo A.
Pflegekonzept für die Naturschutzgebiete des Burgenlandes, 1994

LIFE 98, Wildflußgebiet Lafnitz

Österreichischer Naturschutzbund
Lafnitz – Fluß des Jahre 1996, 169. Naturschutzbrief 1/96. Landesgruppe Steiermark

Wolkinger, Breitegger
Naturführer Südburgenland, Int. Clusius-Forschungsgesellschaft Güssing, Bd 51

Lafnitz Biotoptypenkartierung 1997/98

Mag. Jost, DI Wendelin, Projektförderung Bgld. Landesregierung Abteilung 5

Österreichische Karte 167 Güssing, 1:25000 V , BEV

Österreichische Karte 136 Hartberg, 1:25000 V , BEV

Please return to: Ramsar Convention Bureau, Rue Mauverney 28, CH-1196 GLAND, Switzerland
Telephone: +41 22 999 0170 • Fax: +41 22 999 0169 • e-mail: ramsar@ramsar.org
