



# Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands

As approved by Rec.C.4.7 of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, Montreux, Switzerland - July 1990

NOTE: Please read the accompanying guidelines before attempting to complete this form. An example of a completed data sheet is also included.

Completed sheets should be returned to: T.A. Jones, Ramsar Database, FWRB, Slimbridge, Gloucester GL2 7BX, England.

1. Country: Austria

2. Date: 12.11.1992 3. Ref: FAT 005

4. Name and address of compiler:

Dipl.Ing. Wolfgang Flor, Amt der Vorarlberger Landesregierung Abt. IVe, Landhaus,  
A-6901 Bregenz; Tel.: 05574- 511 Fax.: 05574- 51180

5. Name of wetland: Rheindelta

6. Date of Ramsar designation: 16.4.1983

7. Geographical coordinates: 9°34' - 9°40' E; 47°28' - 47°31' N

8. General location: (e.g. administrative region and nearest large town)  
Vorarlberg, 4 km west of Bregenz

9. Area: (in hectares) 1970 ha

10. Wetland type: (see attached classification, also approved by Montreux Rec.C.4.7)  
N, U

11. Altitude: (average and/or maximum & minimum)  
400 m

12. Overview: (general summary, in two or three sentences, of the wetland's principal characteristics)  
Roughly 2/3 of the area is covered with water, most of which is flat water area and dries out in winter. Approx. 450 ha are fens, large sedge communities and reed beds. The Rhine's delta is the most important breeding place and top over place for waders at the Bodensee. It is also a very important winter resting place for water birds in Austria.

13. 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 Rhine Delta lies between the original Rhine estuary in the west (Alter Rhein) and the Rhine Canal in the East, which was built at the turn of the century. The development goes back to sedimentation processes of the Alpine Rhine, which carries approx. 3 mt of sediments annually into the Bodensee. Due to the alluvial development the height differences are very small. Before construction of the dam the annual differences of the water level led to large-scale regular floods. Today only those mire areas north of the dam are flooded. Near the river estuaries, mires were formed on which one can find fen and transition mire vegetation today. These areas are used extensively as humid grasslands (water meadows). Additionally ca. 50 ha in the nature reserve is being used intensively for agriculture.)

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

The large flood water zones are important feeding areas for water birds. About 200 ha Phragmitetum communis and Caricetum elatae are important breeding areas. An important breeding area for bird dependend on meadows are the humid grasslands (Molinetum) and the transition mires (Rhynchosporetum albae, Caricetum lasiocarpae). At the Old Rhine one can find a riverine forest (Pruno fraxinetum).

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**15. Land tenure /ownership of:**

(a) site

Private property, water area largely Republik of Austria

(b) surrounding area

Private property

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**16. 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)

Existing nature reserve decree. Management plan

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

Development plan in preparation

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**18. Current land use: principal human activities in:**

(a) site

Nature protection, extensive and intensive agricultural use, forestry and arboretum, fishing, tourism, hunting

(b) surroundings/catchment

Agricultural area, settlement area

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**19. Disturbances/threats, including changes in land use and major development projects:**

(factors which may have a negative impact on the ecological character of the wetland)

(a) at the site

Partly drying up of water meadows. Heavy disturbance due to recreation activities, boating, hunting, fishing

(b) in the surroundings/catchment

Transformation of natural areas into agricultural areas

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**20. Hydrological and physical values:** (groundwater recharge, flood control, sediment trapping, shoreline stabilisation etc.)

A large part of the nature site is protected from floods through a dam. The ground water level south of the dam is artificially regulated with the help of 3 pumps. Due to the fact that an draining system exists, there is a danger of the mire further drying up.

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

Small-scale forestry. Intensive and extensive agriculture. Tourism, Fishing are economic factors.

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

Occurrence of more than 10000 waterbirds and 1000 waders. *Fulica atra* (10000), *Anas clypeata* (200), *Aythya fuligula* (5000), *Aythya ferina* (2500). Important roost during winter migration for: *Podiceps cristatus* (1000), *Mergus merganser* (500), *Cygnus cygnus*, *Anas strepera* (700 in autumn), *Anas acuta*, *Netta rufina* (100; in autumn max. >2000), *Aythya marila*, *Somateria mollissima*, *Melanitta fusca*. Wintering and roosting area for *Numenius arquata*, max. 1200). Near the whole alpine population of *Mergus merganser* (max. >1000) moults in the site. Breeding species: *Crex crex* (1-2 pairs), *Gallinago gallinago* (35-50 p.), *Limosa limosa* (12-15 p.), *Sterna hirunda* (50-150 p.), *Numenius arquata* (10-12 p.)

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

The only place in Austria where *Hydrocotyle vulgaris* exists. Endangered in Europe: *Thypha minima*, *Gladiolus palustris*, *Liparis loeselii*, *Sprianthes aestivalis* etc.

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

Regular documentation of breeding and resting birds. Presently, studies are carried out on dragon-fly and butterflies. Research project on the effects of draining systems on the vegetation and soil fauna of humid grasslands.

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

None. Preparations in process.

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

Pls see items 18 and 21. Tourism not organized. Mainly recreation activities, little nature tourism. No information possibilities.

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**27. Management authority:** (name and address of body responsible for managing the wetland)

Amt der Vorarlberger Landesregierung  
Abt. IVe, Landhaus, A-6901 Bregenz  
Tel.: 05574 - 511 Fax.: 05574 - 51180

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

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**29. Bibliographical references:** (scientific/technical only)

Grabher, M.; Blum, V. (1990): Naturschutzgebiet Rheindelta.-Ramsarbericht 1, Bestandsaufnahme österreichischer Schutzgebiete, Teil A: 1-58. Umweltbundesamt, Wien.

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**30. Reasons for inclusion:** (state which Ramsar criteria - as adopted by Rec.C.4.15 of the Montreux Conference - are applicable)

1d, 2a, 3a

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**31. Map of site** (please enclose the most detailed and up-to-date map available - preferably at least 1:25,000 or 1:50,000)

ÖK numbers: 110 and 111 (M 1:50000)

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