

# Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS)



*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.**

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

13.03.2001

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**2. Country:**

Germany

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**3. Name of wetland:**

Helmestausee Berga-Kelbra

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**4. Geographical coordinates:**

51° 26' N    11° 00' E

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**5. Elevation:** (average and/or maximum and minimum)

150 m above sea level

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

Total area 1453 ha, therefrom 784 ha in Sachsen-Anhalt and 669 ha in Thüringen

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

The wetland comprises the shallow water reservoir in the lowland of the Helme with wet, permanent grassland and reed west of the places Berga and Kelbra. The area has an outstanding meaning as a food and resting place for the migration of water- and wading birds in summer and autumn and is part of two EU-bird conservation areas.

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**8. Wetland Type:** (please circle the applicable codes for wetland types as listed in Annex I of the *Explanatory Note and Guidelines* document)

inland: M P Ts

human-made: 4 6

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

6 P M 4 Ts

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

4 5 6

Please specify the most significant criterion applicable to this site: 5

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

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

See also the map included

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

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*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).

To criterion 4:

The Helme water reservoir has an outstanding meaning als a food and resting place for water- and wading birds during their migration, especially for the migration of limicolae.

To criterion 5:

The RAMSAR-area shelters regularly more than 20.000 waterbirds, mostly in late summer and autumn. Particularly high resting groups are formed by the following species: *Anas platyrhynchos* 15.000 exs., *Anas crecca* 4.000 exs., *Fulica atra* 2.000 exs., *Grus grus* up to 10.000 exs., *Vanellus vanellus* 10.000 exs., *Calidris alpina* 1.000 exs. (see also appendix 1).

To criterion 6:

The area harbors at least 1 % of a biogeographic population of the following water- and wading birds: *Grus grus* (see also appendix 1).

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

The wetland is located about 20 km WSW of Sangerhausen on both sides of the border between the federal states of Sachsen-Anhalt and Thüringen.

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**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 artificial water reservoir laid out in the Helme lowland, that stored the water for the first time in 1967, is a striking enrichment of the landscape. The lake flown through by the Helme, only 3,5 m in depth, covered an area of more than 600 ha, at high water, however, an area of 1400 ha. The largeness and the deepness occasionally favor an increased growth of algae in the eutrophic water. In summer, especially at the beginning of the bird migration, extended slime and mud fields become uncovered by a remarkably fast progressing sedimentation in the reservoir and by water removal. In winter the lake sometimes dried up. The precipitation with only 470 to 490 mm refers to a lee position related to the Hercynia mountains. The mean annual temperature is 8,8 °C. Cold air accumulates on stable weather conditions and manifests itself in increased mist frequency.

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

By setting up the water reservoir for flood protection the hydrology of this region was in parts strongly modified. The Helme was dammed up in its lowlands. By proper adjustments at the retaining wall floodings can be prevented or reduced. Sometimes water is taken away for watering the surrounding agricultural area. In winter the water reservoir is emptied to a large extent.

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

The vast water area of the reservoir shades away from plainwater area and mud banks into shallow banks, finally in south-west into 700 ha large continuous cane reeds, succession area with large-sedges and extended wet grasslands. Along the Helme, at ditches and ways grow single trees, tree rows and bushes, traversed by reeds. Furthermore, intensively used meadows and fields characterize the surrounding of the water reservoir. Near to this place exists a little willow-dominated alluvial forest in the north.

Between October and April the water reservoir dried partially up.

Concerning the [%] cover of the main habitat classes occurring in the area see appendix 2.

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

The nature-related habitats of plant communities are affected by the aperiodical floodings with connected floodplain loam sediments, the sediments of the Helme as well as the anthropogenic influences by lowering the water level in winter, the fish farming in summer and by the agriculture in the vicinity. Reed communities exist in the flood protection area as well as plant communities belonging to the wet tall herbs and to salt marshes in the inland.

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

The importance for the fauna bases upon the occurrence of numerous wading and waterbirds. The area is important for breeding birds, especially for resting and passage birds. For the following species the area has an outstanding meaning as a resting and wintering area:

*Tachybaptus ruficollis*, *Podiceps cristatus*, *Ardea cinerea*, *Anas crecca*, *Anas querquedula*, *Anas platyrhynchos*, *Anas clypeata*, *Aythya ferina*, *Aythya fuligula*, *Mergus merganser*, *Pandion haliaetus*, *Fulica atra*, *Grus grus*, numerous wading birds (among others *Vanellus vanellus*,

*Pluvialis apricaria*, *Pluvialis squatarola*, *Numenius arquata*, *Gallinago gallinago*, *Philomachus pugnax*, *Calidris alpina*, *Tringa glareola*), *Larus ridibundus* as well as numerous rare guests (see also appendix 1)

The following species belonging to the breeding birds should be emphasized: *Tachybaptus ruficollis*, *Podiceps cristatus*, *Ardea cinerea*, *Anas querquedula*, *Anas clypeata*, *Aythya fuligula*, *Crex crex*, *Vanellus vanellus*, *Gallinago gallinago* (see also appendix 1).

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

The site offers suitable possibilities for research and education with respect to the ecology and bird protection. The use of grassland areas is performed by mowing and grazing, the farming is accomplished mainly by cultivation of maize. The lake is used for fishing. Hunting takes also place. The lake is an increasing attraction point for touristic activities. By these numbers of uses not being always in harmony with the nature often interferences in the area are brought about.

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

To a) many parted areas, state and private properties, mainly used by several private owners and tenures, partly extensive use

To b) several private owners

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

To a) **Water management, flood protection, bird protection, conservation of nature, fresh water fishery, grassland use** (mowing and grazing), agriculture, recreation, shipping, hunting

To b) **Agriculture**, recreation, settlements

Uses marked with boldface type dominate in each case.

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**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

To a) Measures for damming up the lake, especially the insufficient harmonizing with aspects of bird conservation during the drainage of the water in summer. Increasing recreation and sailing sport activities. Intensive agriculture as well as eutrophication of the waters and wetlands by land use activities (interferences, input by agriculture, input of substances by waters), hunting

To b) intensification of agriculture, growing recreation, hunting

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**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)

Part of two landscape conservation areas with nature conservation areas; part of two EU-bird conservation areas, „Helmereservoir Berga-Kelbra“, „Berga-Kelbra“; part of a FFH-area; It exists a guideline for the water management, the fresh-water fishery, agriculture, hunting and recreation. The guideline is advanced on the basis of new structural conditions.

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

Extension of the protection level by designating suitable areas as nature conservation areas.  
Site-specific cultivation and development concept, that ensures an ecologically-orientated farming balanced with the users.

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

Unsufficient or unsufficiently published faunal and ecological investigations.

Area monitoring:

Association for ornithology and bird protection, Nordhausen

Special investigations:

Waterbird monitoring by the centre for water bird research in Germany (ZWFD), limicolae-fowling program by the association for ornithology and bird protection, Nordhausen

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

Doesn't take place at present.

To some extent a mobile bird watching field station is used, guided tours are offered and a booklet was published.

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

Parts of the area are not suited for touristic purposes and, therefore, closed for such use. Altogether the area is exposed to growing touristic activities with swimming, camping, tourism, rowing, sailing and surfing by a recreation centre, whereby the interferences connected with these activities increase. The region is a destination for ornithologists and local people, who can be seen there mostly during the bird migration in late summer and autumn.

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

Bezirksregierung Halle, Obere Naturschutzbehörde, Willy-Lohmann-Str. 7, 06114 Halle  
Staatl. Umweltamt Sondershausen, Dezernat Naturschutz, Am Petersenschacht 3,  
99701 Sondershausen

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

Landkreis Sangerhausen, Untere Naturschutzbehörde, R.-Breitscheid-Str. 20-22,  
06526 Sangerhausen

Landkreis Nordhausen, Untere Naturschutzbehörde, Behringstr. 3, 99734 Nordhausen

Landkreis Kyffhäuserkreis, Untere Naturschutzbehörde, Markt 8, 99706 Sondershausen

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

Dornbusch, G., Dornbusch M. & P. Dornbusch (1996): Internationale Vogelschutzgebiete im Land Sachsen-Anhalt – Helmestausee Berga-Kelbra. Naturschutz im Land Sachsen-Anhalt 33, Sonderheft, 28-32.

Görner, M., Kneis, J., Karlstedt, K., Schulze, W. & W. Schrödter (1983): Das Feuchtgebiet von internationaler Bedeutung „Stausee Berga-Kelbra“ und seine Vogelwelt. Landschaftspflege und Naturschutz in Thüringen 20, 2, 30-54.

Karlstedt, K. (1979): Die Bedeutung des Helmestausees für Wasservögel. Beiträge zur Vogelkunde 25, 75-80.

Warthold, R. (1987): Die Feuchtgebietskonvention, ein internationales Projekt zum Schutz von Wasser- und Watvögeln. Naturschutzarbeit in den Bezirken Halle und Magdeburg 24, 1, 13-24.

Zentrale für Wasservogelforschung in Deutschland (1993): Die Feuchtgebiete Internationaler Bedeutung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Münster, Potsdam, Wesel. 232 S.

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Please return this Information Sheet to:

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Appendix 1:

Review of breeding and resting birds in the RAMSAR-area „Helmestausee Berga-Kelbra“ (selection) 1990 - 2000

<b>Species</b>	<b>Breeding pairs</b>	<b>Passage birds/Winter guests</b>
<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	5	100
<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>		80
<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	120	
<i>Cygnus olor</i>		50
<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>		10
<i>Anser fabalis</i>		1.000
<i>Anser anser</i>		100
<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	3	
<i>Anas penelope</i>		100
<i>Anas strepera</i>	1	50
<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>		15.000
<i>Anas crecca</i>		4.000
<i>Anas querquedula</i>	3	450
<i>Anas acuta</i>		60
<i>Anas clypeata</i>	2	750
<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	5	750
<i>Aythya ferina</i>		1.000
<i>Mergus merganser</i>		130
<i>Amergus albellus</i>		5
<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>		15
<i>Milvus migrans</i>	2	
<i>Milvus milvus</i>	3	
<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	4	
<i>Fulica atra</i>		2.000
<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>	5	
<i>Porzana porzana</i>	2	
<i>Crex crex</i>	10	
<i>Grus grus</i>		5.000 – 10.000
<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>		400
<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>		180
<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	3	
<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	10	10.000
<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>		250
<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	10	500
<i>Limosa limosa</i>		20
<i>Numenius arquata</i>		350
<i>Calidris alpina</i>		1.000
<i>Calidris minuta</i>		230
<i>Tringa totanus</i>		60
<i>Tringa glareola</i>		160
<i>Tringa ochruros</i>		20
<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>		140
<i>Chlidonias niger</i>		100

Appendix 2:

Review of habitat types occurring in the RAMSAR-area

a) Thüringen (according to the data of the standard data form EU SPA „Berga-Kelbra“)

<b>Habitat classes</b>	<b>[%] cover</b>
Salt marshes, Salt pastures, Salt steppes	1
Inland water bodies	5
Bogs, Marshes, Fens	6
Humid grassland, Mesophile grassland	41
Other arable land	46
Other land (including Towns, Villages, Roads, Waste places)	1

b) Sachsen-Anhalt (according to the data of the standard data form EU SPA „Helmestausee Berga-Kelbra“)

<b>Habitat classes</b>	<b>[%] cover</b>
Inland water bodies	66
Arable land	6
Mesophile grassland	22
Humid grassland and floodplain classes on mineral soil	3
Deciduous woodland (up to 30 % coniferous trees)	1
Deciduous forest monocultures (habitat-extraneous or exotic trees)	1
Anthropogenic strongly influenced habitat	1