

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.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY.

DD MM YY

Designation date

Site Reference Number

1. Date this sheet was completed/updated:

May 2002

2. Country:

Denmark (Greenland)

3. Name of wetland:

Kuannersuit Kuussuat.

International No. 383

National No. 3

4. Geographical coordinates:

69°38'N, 53°17'W

5. Altitude: (min. & max.) 0-200 m

6. Area: 5.190 hectares

7. Overview:

 (general summary, in two or three sentences, of the wetland's principal characteristics)

Terrestrial/marine habitat area: 100/0%

A large valley with a wide braiding river and which recently was covered by ice. Barren moraines and small lakes (many with turbid water) dominate the landscape. A delta with extensive sand flats at the mouth of the fjord. Several "hot" (homeothermic) springs are found within the site. At the head of the valley at Sorte Hak, a glacier recently has surged more than 10 km during only 4 years.

8. Wetland Type

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

marine-coastal: A ! B ! C ! D ! E ! F ! G ! H ! I ! J ! K

inland: L ! M ! N ! O ! P ! Q ! R ! Sp ! Ss ! Tp ! Ts

!U ! Va ! Vt ! W ! Xf ! Xp ! Y ! Zg !Zk

man made: 1 ! 2 ! 3 ! 4 ! 5 ! 6 ! 7 ! 8 ! 9

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

Approximate ranking: M N Tp Ts

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

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Please specify the most significant criterion applicable to this site:

1

10. Map of site included? Please tick *yes* -or- *no*

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

As print and Word file on CD-rom.

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

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12. Justification of the criteria selected under point 9, on previous page.

(Please refer to Annex II in the *Explanatory Note and Guidelines* document).

1. Perhaps met due to the many wetlands in the valley.

(The site apparently does not meet any of the Ramsar criterias based on waterbirds. Previous high numbers reported from the site cannot be confirmed, and perhaps these figures originate from another site. Properly this site has never met any of the Ramsar criterias based on waterbirds (Egevang & Boertmann 2001b)).

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

The site is located at the bottom of the fjord Kuannersuit on the Disco Island in Disco Bay. The town Qeqertarsuaq is nearest settlement.

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 site is located within the low arctic climatic zone with continuous permafrost. The site is within the plant belt termed "mid-arctic oceanic". The average tidal amplitude is c. 4.1 meters. The U-shaped valley is dominated by the "galloping icecap" with braiding melt water river. The riverbed is very wide and covers almost completely the entire valley floor in the outermost 7 km of the Ramsar site. A single small pingo is located near the southwestern border of the Ramsar site. The delta is as wide as the riverbed, and during low tide (amplitude about 2 m) extensive mudflats become exposed. The following 2.5 km towards north the valley floor, recently de-iced moraines dominate the landscape. The northernmost 2 km of the Ramsar site is now covered by a glacier, which in the years 1995-1999 surged more than 10 km. The glacier covers about 14% of the Ramsar site (Egevang & Boertmann 2001b).

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

No information available.

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

Marches and dwarf scrub heaths dominate vegetation, but large areas are devoid of vegetation. At the "hot" springs a rich and unique diversity of vegetation are found.

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

None

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

None

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

The valley is a favoured excursion site for geologist, biologists and geographers from Artic Station.

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

a and b: Territorial ownership. No privately owned land.

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

a and b: As described in point 22.

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

(a) and (b) past:

There has neither been any human induced changes adversely affecting the physical structure of the site nor of the surroundings of the site. So the ecological potential of the site is expected to be preserved. Changes in the composition of the bird species using the site, might have been caused by factors affecting the birds in the whole of their distribution areas, but can also have been caused by traditional activities at the site.

(a) and (b) present:

The same as in the past. The human activities in the area have increased considerably due to glacier surge in 1995-1999. This factor could affect the bird life in the area.

(a) and (b) potential:

There are no planned activities, which will change the physical structure of the site or the surroundings of the site. Any future activities will be regulated. See point 23 and 24.

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)

The site has been designated an "Area important to wildlife" (eiders* and other seaducks on the marine parts and geese** on the terrestrial parts) by the Bureau of Minerals and Petroleum. In general the regulation apply only to activities in relation to mineral exploration. Fixed-wing aircrafts flying more than 500 m above the ground is not regulated.

*In areas designated for eiders and other seaducks all activities need approval in the period 1 Aug. – 30 Sep. (except from some single helicopter flights and navigation with motorised vessels with a maximum speed of 10 knots).

**In areas designated for staging, breeding and moulting geese all activities need approval in the periods 1-20 May, 15-31 May and 15 June – 10 Aug. (except from some single helicopter flights and navigation with motorised vessels with a maximum speed of 10 knots) (Egevang & Boertmann 2001a, Anonymous 2000).

A local legislation prohibits hunting and disturbance of eiders in the interior parts of the fjord, which is outside of the boundaries of the designated Ramsar side

No further protection exists. No management plans exists.

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

No management plan in preparation. However, within a 2-4 year time frame specific conservation measures of this Ramsar area could be expected following a new Nature protection act planned to enter into force in 2002. NERI concludes that there are no serious threats to the site, and a medium level demand for management at this Ramsar site (Egevang & Boertmann, 2001a).

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

NERI has published a status report for this and all other Ramsar areas in Greenland. A field study was done during the summer 2001.

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

None.

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

Some hunting. No tourism activities.

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

The Greenland Home Rule Government. Ministry of Environment and Nature.

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

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30. Bibliographical references: (scientific/technical only)

Danish Report 1996 on the Ramsar Convention, Denmark and Greenland.

Ministry of Environment and Energy, The National Forest and Nature Agency
Ramsar Areas in Greenland.

Department of Environment and Nature, Greenland. Unpublished report 1998.

Anonymous 2000. Rules for fieldwork and reporting regarding mineral resources (excluding hydrocarbons) in Greenland. Government of Greenland, Bureau of Minerals and Petroleum.

Egevang, C. & Boertmann, D. 2001a. The Greenland Ramsar Sites, a status report. - National Environmental Research Institute (NERI), Denmark. NERI Technical Report No. 346, 96 pp.

Egevang, C. & Boertmann, D. 2001b. The Ramsar sites of Disko, West Greenland. A survey in July 2001. National Environmental Research Institute (NERI), Denmark. NERI Technical Report No. 368, 68 pp.

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