

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:

Kitsissunnguit (Grønne Ejland)

International No. 384

National No. 4

4. Geographical coordinates:

68°50' 51°56'W

5. Altitude: (min. & max.) 0-25 m

6. Area: 6.910 hectares

7. Overview:

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

Terrestrial/marine habitat area: 12/88%

A group of low and more or less level islands of different sizes with generally rocky shorelines. Pocket beaches and salt-water lagoons are found as well as some shallow bays. On the four larger islands (Angissat, Innarsuatsiaaq, Basisø and Niaqornoq) there are some ponds and fens. The marine area north of the islands is rather shallow.

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_u ! 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: A, D, E, Tp, J.

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

<input type="checkbox"/> 1	2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	7	8
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Please specify the most significant criterion applicable to the site:

3

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:

Inge Thaulow, Ministry of Environment and Nature, Greenland Home Rule Government, P.O. Box 1614, DK-3900 Nuuk, Greenland. Ph.: + 299 34 67 18, fax + 299 32 52 86, e-mail: inth@gh.gl

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. For the many wetlands on the islands.

3. For the many different species of waterbirds occurring on the islands. The site is probably the area with highest bird species diversity in the country.

4. For the colonies of breeding waterbirds.

6. For the number of Arctic terns (*Sterna paradisaea*) utilising the area . *In 1950 10% of the global population and 2,5% of the global population in 1980 utilised the area (before the designation of the area in 1988). This criterion has not been met in recent years.*

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

The site is located in the southern part of Disco Bay within 1-2 hours sailing from the major town Aasiaat. The islands is on the sailing route between Aasiaat and the two other major towns in the area: Ilulissat and Qasigiannguit. The site is divided between the municipalities of Aasiaat and Qasigiannguit.

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. *No more information available.*

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

No information available.

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

The site is a group of low and more or less level islands. The coasts are generally rocky, but pocket beaches and lagoons are found here and there as well as some bays. On the four larger islands there are some ponds and fens (Egevang and Boertmann 2001).

17. Noteworthy flora: (indicating, e.g., which species/communities are unique, rare, endangered or biogeographically important, etc)
No detailed information available for R.I.S. at this point.

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

A significant proportion of the North Atlantic population of Arctic tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) breeds (or bred) within this Ramsar site (10% of the global population in 1950 and 2,5% of the global population in 1980). The tern colony was probably the largest ever recorded in the World.

In addition the islands are staging area for several species of shorebirds in both spring and autumn. The area is a popular hunting and fishing ground that is reflecting its biological importance as an important area for fish, birds, and marine mammals (seals).

Due to Greenlandic conditions the site holds many breeding pairs of the Red-necked phalarope (*Phalaropus lobatus*) (56-100 breeding pairs in 1990,1996), Red phalarope (*P. fulicarius*) (15 breeding pairs in 1996) and Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*)(200 birds in 1996) (Egevang & Boertmann 2001b).

The site also contains the Little auk (*Alle alle*) (235 birds in 2000). This is unique due to the geographic distribution of the species.

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

The site is located close to the major human settlement in the southern Disco Bay and is on the major sailing route between 3 major towns (see point 13). It is a popular hunting and fishing area, both for leisure and the professional hunters. The municipalities has established two "hunting huts" on the island which can be used free of charge. This site and the other islands of the area are a popular area for collecting tern eggs for consume.

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 19.

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 of 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 especially after the introduction of the outboard motor fifty years ago, the otherwise remote islands have been accessible which have caused increased eggging, hunting and fishing on and around the islands. The heavy decline in the population of arctic tern took place before the designation of the site in 1988.

(a) and (b) present:

The same as in the past. However one factor affecting the sites ecological character is eggging and disturbance due to this activity. The high number of visitors during spring means that even though the islands are uninhabited the almost continuously presence of people cause significant disturbance to the breeding birds.

(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 area is partially conserved since the two small islands “Saattuarsuit” are breeding bird reserve where sailing and activities on-shore is prohibited in the main breeding season from 1 May to 31 August, and it is prohibited to come closer than 500 meters (Egevang & Boertmann 2001, Anonymous 2001). This protection covers only a fraction (1.8%) of the area of the complete Ramsar site.

The seabird breeding colonies* are designated as “Areas important to wildlife” 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 an area within 200 m from the colony, activities need approval in the period 1 June- 15 Sept. However navigating does not need any approval. Staying in the colony is not permitted (Egevang & Boertmann 2001, Anonymous 2000).

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. The National Environmental Research Institute (NERI) recommends that a monitoring programme is urgently necessary with a 3-5 years interval at this site. In addition, NERI concludes that there is a “high demand of management” due to “high conflict potential” between human activities and conservation (Egevang & Boertmann 2001).

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 (Egevang & Boertmann, 2001). In 1996 the National Institute for Natural Resources of Greenland did a field study on the islands focusing on the Arctic terns. The Ministry of Environment and Energy inspected the islands in June 2000. The municipality of Asiaat has in 2001 expressed interest in further conservation of the site. A field study focusing on the Arctic terns is planned in summer 2002.

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

In June 2000 the Ministry of Environment and Nature organised information meetings with local populations to inform about bird protection legislation.

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

Some hunting and fishing. 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)

Ministry of Environment and Nature, Greenland Home Rule Government, P.O. Box 1614, DK-3900

Nuuk, Greenland. Ph.: + 299 34 67 01, fax + 299 32 52 86

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.

Anonymous 2001. Hjemmestyrets bekendtgørelse nr. 38 af 6. december 2001 om beskyttelse af Fugle. Grønlands Hjemmestyre.

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

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@hq.iucn.org