

# Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS)

*Categories approved by Recommendation 4.7, as amended by Resolution VIII.13 of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.*

Note for compilers:

1. The RIS should be completed in accordance with the attached *Explanatory Notes and Guidelines for completing the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands*. Compilers are strongly advised to read this guidance before filling in the RIS.

2. Once completed, the RIS (and accompanying map(s)) should be submitted to the Ramsar Bureau. Compilers are strongly urged to provide an electronic (MS Word) copy of the RIS and, where possible, digital copies of maps.

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FOR OFFICE USE ONLY.

DD MM YY

Designation date Site Reference Number

## 1. Name and address of the compiler of this form:

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## 2. Date this sheet was completed/updated:

January 2005

## 3. Country:

Finland

## 4. Name of the Ramsar site:

Bird Wetlands of Lapväärtti

## 5. Map of site included:

Refer to Annex III of the Explanatory Note and Guidelines, for detailed guidance on provision of suitable maps.

### a) hard copy (required for inclusion of site in the Ramsar List):

Yes.

### b) digital (electronic) format (optional):

Yes.

**6. Geographical coordinates** (latitude/longitude):

62° 11' N / 21° 26' E

**7. General location:**

Include in which part of the country and which large administrative region(s), and the location of the nearest large town.

The four separate areas are situated in west-central part of the province of Western Finland, in the city of Kristiinankaupunki, 6–13 km southeast of the city centre. The city (678 sq.km of land) has ca. 8 100 residents.

**8. Elevation:** (average and/or max. & min.)

20–0 m

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

1 224 ha

**10. Overview:**

Provide a short paragraph giving a summary description of the principal ecological characteristics and importance of the wetland.

The wetlands form the most valuable site in Southern Ostrobothnia both for breeding and migrating wetland bird species.

**11. Ramsar Criteria:**

Circle or underline each Criterion applied to the designation of the Ramsar site. See Annex II of the *Explanatory Notes and Guidelines* for the Criteria and guidelines for their application (adopted by Resolution VII.11).

1, 2 & 4, 8

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	3	<u>4</u>	5	6	7	<u>8</u>
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**12. Justification for the application of each Criterion listed in 11. above:**

Provide justification for each Criterion in turn, clearly identifying to which Criterion the justification applies (see Annex II for guidance on acceptable forms of justification).

1) It is a representative example of near-natural wetland types, shallow freshwater lakes and estuarine waters, in the EU Boreal region. In this site the most common types of the EU Habitat Directive are habitats of codes 3150, 3160 and 1130. Marginal ones are 7140, 9050, 9010, 6430.

2) Species of the EU Habitats Directive Annex II occurring at the site are the vascular plant of the knotweed species *Persicaria foliosa* as well as under the Otter (*Lutra lutra*) under the mammals.

About 10 species of the EU Birds Directive Annex I breed in the area, including several pairs of e.g. Slavonian Grebe (*Podiceps auritus*), Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*), Spotted Crake (*Porzana porzana*), Crane (*Grus grus*), Wood Sandpiper (*Tringa glareola*) and Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*). Among these are included

scarce species e.g. Black-throated Diver (*Gavia arctica*), Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*) and Hen Harrier (*C. cyaneus*).

At the national level threatened bird species include Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos minor*) (VU in Finnish Red List). Furthermore the Lapväärtinjoki estuary is an important area False-heath Fritillary (*Melitaea diamina*) (EN in Finnish Red List) with a population of over 200 specimens.

4) The wetlands form the most valuable site in Southern Ostrobothnia both for breeding and migrating wetland bird species and form an important staging area for waterfowl and waders in migration and moulting periods.

The breeding waterfowl includes ca. 300 pairs of 14 species. Härkmerifjärden holds a dense population (25 pairs) of Red-necked Grebes (*Podiceps grisegena*).

The most numerous breeding waterfowl, pairs: Teal (*Anas crecca*) 30–50 (FRS), Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*) 30–50 (FRS), Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) 20–40, Coot (*Fulica atra*) 30, Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*) 25–30 and Red-necked Grebe (*Podiceps grisegena*) 25.

The most numerous staging waterfowl at Lake Härkmerifjärden, single counts in spring, individuals: Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) 500, Teal (*Anas crecca*) 400 (FRS), Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*) 150 (FRS), Coot (*Fulica atra*) 120, Wigeon (*Anas penelope*) 100 (FRS), Goosander (*Mergus merganser*) 80 (FRS), Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*) 70 (BD, FRS). The fields on southern border are used by Bean Goose (*Anser f. fabalis*) 1000–3000 in spring (NT, FRS) and Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*) 50–150 in spring and autumn; geese may also stage at the lake. (Bird lists Status in Finnish Red List, BD=Birds Directive Annex I, FRS= Finland's Responsibility Species)

8) Lapväärtinjoki estuary and Lake Härkmerifjärden are important spawning areas for several fish species.

River Lapväärtinjoki is important spawning ground for River Lamprey (*Lampetra fluviatilis*). The upstream of the river holds one of the few natural and vital populations of Sea Trout (*Salmo trutta m. trutta*) in Finland. The movement of trouts to spawning grounds crosses the estuary.

**13. Biogeography** (required when Criteria 1 and/or 3 and /or certain applications of Criterion 2 are applied to the designation):

Name the relevant biogeographic region that includes the Ramsar site, and identify the biogeographic regionalisation system that has been applied.

**a) biogeographic region:**

Southern boreal forest vegetation zone.

**b) biogeographic regionalisation scheme** (include reference citation):

Etelä-Suomen ja Pohjanmaan metsien suojelun tarve-työryhmä. Puheenjohtaja: Ruuhijärvi, R., Sihteerit: Kuusinen, M., Raunio, A. and Eisto, K. 2000. Metsien suojelun tarve Etelä-Suomessa ja Pohjanmaalla. Etelä-Suomen ja Pohjanmaan

metsien suojelun tarve-työryhmän mietintö. Suomen ympäristö 437. Ympäristöministeriö. Helsinki.

Working group on the need for forest protection in southern Finland and Ostrobothnia. Chairman Ruuhijärvi, R., Secretaries Kuusinen, M., Raunio, A. and Eisto, K. 2000. Forest protection in southern Finland and Ostrobothnia. The Finnish Environment 437. Ministry of the Environment.

#### **14. Physical features of the site:**

Describe, as appropriate, the geology, geomorphology; origins - natural or artificial; hydrology; soil type; water quality; water depth, water permanence; fluctuations in water level; tidal variations; downstream area; general climate, etc.

**Geology:** Geochemically included in Volcanic sedimentary zone of SW Finland. Bedrock is composed mainly of mica gneisses, mica schists and pyroxene granitoid.

**Origins:** Natural

**Soil type:** Mainly silt and clay and glacial ground moraine.

**Water quality:** General quality passable ("General quality" is a complex of different bio-chemical characters used in national evaluation of waters). in Härkmerifjärden and in Lapväärtinjoki Estuary. Eutrophic in Lapväärtinjoki Estuary and in lakes Syndersjön and Blomträsket, mesotrophic in Härkmerifjärden. Härkmerifjärden is dystrophic.

**Depth of water:** Shallow, 1.2 m on average in Härkmerifjärden. Water-level high in spring, because of melting snow.

**Climate:** Duration of growing season ca. 165 days, mean annual temperature ca. +4 °C, mean annual rainfall ca. 550 mm. Ice- and snow-covered normally from mid December to early April. Southern boreal forest vegetation zone.

#### **15. Physical features of the catchment area:**

Describe the surface area, general geology and geomorphological features, general soil types, general land use, and climate (including climate type).

The climate and general geological features are much the same in the catchment areas as in the Ramsar sites. Look partly chapter 14.

#### **16. Hydrological values:**

Describe the functions and values of the wetland in groundwater recharge, flood control, sediment trapping, shoreline stabilization, etc.

None significant.

#### **17. Wetland Types**

##### **a) presence:**

Circle or underline the applicable codes for the wetland types of the Ramsar "Classification System for Wetland Type" present in the Ramsar site. Descriptions of each wetland type code are provided in Annex I of the *Explanatory Notes & Guidelines*.

**Marine/coastal:** K, F

A	B	C	D	E	<u>F</u>	G	H	I	J	<u>K</u>	Zk(a)
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**Inland:** O, Ts, W & Xp

L	M	N	<u>Q</u>	P	Q	R	Sp	Ss	Tp	<u>Ts</u>	U	Va	Vt	<u>W</u>	Xf	<u>Xp</u>	Y	Zg	Zk(b)
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**Human-made:**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Zk(c)
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**b) dominance:**

List the wetland types identified in a) above in order of their dominance (by area) in the Ramsar site, starting with the wetland type with the largest area.

K – Coastal freshwater lagoons

F – Estuarine waters

O – Permanent freshwater lakes

Ts – Seasonally flooded meadows and sedge marshes

W – Shrub-dominated wetlands

Xp – Forested peatlands

**18. General ecological features:**

Provide further description, as appropriate, of the main habitats, vegetation types, plant and animal communities present in the Ramsar site.

Härkmerifjärden covers 651 ha, Lapväärtinjoki estuary 307 ha, Blomträsket 178 ha and Syndersjön 88 ha. The area includes ca. 870 ha of water. Härkmerifjärden is a former sea bay, connected to the sea through a small brook. The growths of sedges (*Carex* spp.), Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) and Common Club-rush (*Schoenoplectus lacustris*) are extensive. The vegetation is representative and a few plant species typical of brackish water still occur in the lake. Two flood meadows are still being grazed. The shores are surrounded with forests of Spruce (*Picea abies*) and Grey Alder (*Alnus incana*).

The vegetation of Lake Syndersjön is characterized by dense growths of Common Club-rush and Water Horsetail (*Equisetum fluviatile*). The vegetation of Blomträsket is rich and varied. Common Club-rush, Water Horsetail and water-lilies (*Nymphaea alba* & *Nuphar lutea*) dominate in the northern part, and in certain areas there are extensive growths of Common Reed and Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*). The lakes are surrounded by forests.

River Lapväärtinjoki discharges into a long and narrow sea bay. The estuary is characterized by extensive and uniform growths of Common Reed, Water Horsetail, sedges and willows (*Salix* spp.). The shores are surrounded by deciduous and mixed forests and agricultural land in the northern part.

**19. Noteworthy flora:**

Provide additional information on particular species and why they are noteworthy (expanding as necessary on information provided in 12. Justification for the application of the Criteria) indicating, e.g., which species/communities are unique, rare, endangered or biogeographically important, etc. **Do not include here taxonomic lists of species present - these may be supplied as supplementary information to the RIS.**

Vascular plants of the EU Habitats Directive Annex II include knotweed species *Persicaria foliosa* (NT in Finnish Red List). Flora of Lake Blomträsket includes several demanding species, such as Cyperus Sedge (*Carex pseudocyperus*).

## **20. Noteworthy fauna:**

Provide additional information on particular species and why they are noteworthy (expanding as necessary on information provided in 12. Justification for the application of the Criteria) indicating, e.g., which species/communities are unique, rare, endangered or biogeographically important, etc., including count data. ***Do not include here taxonomic lists of species present - these may be supplied as supplementary information to the RIS.***

Threatened bird species include Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos minor*) (VU in Finnish Red List). Ca. 10 species of the EU Birds Directive Annex I breed in the area, including several pairs of e.g. Slavonian Grebe (*Podiceps auritus*), Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*), Spotted Crake (*Porzana porzana*), Crane (*Grus grus*), Wood Sandpiper (*Tringa glareola*) and Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*). Scarce species include e.g. Black-throated Diver (*Gavia arctica*), Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*) and Hen Harrier (*C. cyaneus*). The breeding waterfowl includes ca. 300 pairs of 14 species. Härkmerifjärden holds a dense population (25 pairs) of Red-necked Grebes (*Podiceps grisegena*). The wetlands form an important staging area for waterfowl and waders in migration and moulting periods.

Lapväärtinjoki estuary is an important area False-heath Fritillary (*Melitaea diamina*) (EN in Finnish Red List) with a population of over 200 specimens. Lapväärtinjoki estuary and Lake Härkmerifjärden are important spawning areas for several fish species. Mammals of the EU Habitats Directive Annex II include Otter (*Lutra lutra*).

## **21. Social and cultural values:**

e.g., fisheries production, forestry, religious importance, archaeological sites, social relations with the wetland, etc. Distinguish between historical/archaeological/religious significance and current socio-economic values.

Härkmerifjärden is a part of a nationally important landscape area, which is not an official protection status.

## **22. Land tenure/ownership:**

(a) within the Ramsar site:

Private-owned (1 % state-owned).

(b) in the surrounding area:

Private-owned.

## **23. Current land (including water) use:**

(a) within the Ramsar site:

Fishing to some extent.

(b) in the surroundings/catchment:

Forestry and agriculture are carried out in the surroundings.

**24. Factors (past, present or potential) adversely affecting the site's ecological character, including changes in land (including water) use and development projects:**

Lakes are in the process of overgrowing. Härkmerifjärden is very sensitive to the increasing acidity, and a few mass destructions of fishes have occurred. A few holiday cottages and a boat harbour have been constructed on the shores. Building of holiday cottages has increased at the estuary of River Lapväärtinjoki and ditching carried out in the early 1990s has drained the area considerably. American Mink (*Mustela vison*) and Raccoon Dog (*Nyctereutes procyonoides*) may cause damage to the breeding of birds.

**25. Conservation measures taken:**

List national category and legal status of protected areas, including boundary relationships with the Ramsar site; management practices; whether an officially approved management plan exists and whether it is being implemented.

The site is included in the Natura 2000 Network, designated both as SPA and SCI, and in the Waterfowl Habitats Conservation Programme. Water-level of Lake Blomträsket was raised by 0.5–1 m in the 1990s. Raising of water-level was recommended by both the landowners and the environmental authorities, e.g. to make better conditions for waterfowl. (Illegal lowering of water-level had been carried out a little earlier).

**26. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:**

e.g. management plan in preparation; official proposal as a legally protected area, etc.

Conservation of the Natura 2000 site will be carried out under the Nature Conservation Act, Water Act and Land Use and Building Act.

**27. Current scientific research and facilities:**

e.g., details of current research projects, including biodiversity monitoring; existence of a field research station, etc.

The bird fauna and flora of the areas was studied in the 1970s and in 1994–96. The fish fauna was studied in the 1980s.

**28. Current conservation education:**

e.g. visitors' centre, observation hides and nature trails, information booklets, facilities for school visits, etc.

None significant.

**29. Current recreation and tourism:**

State if the wetland is used for recreation/tourism; indicate type(s) and their frequency/intensity.

A bird-watching tower has been constructed at Blomträsket.

### **30. Jurisdiction:**

Include territorial, e.g. state/region, and functional/sectoral, e.g. Dept of Agriculture/Dept. of Environment, etc.

**a)** West Finland Regional Environment Centre, **b)** Ministry of the Environment.

### **31. Management authority:**

Provide the name and address of the local office(s) of the agency(ies) or organisation(s) directly responsible for managing the wetland. Wherever possible provide also the title and/or name of the person or persons in this office with responsibility for the wetland.

West Finland Regional Environment Centre, PO Box 262, FIN-65101 Vaasa, Finland.

Mr. Harri Hongell

Harri.Hongell@ymparisto.fi

### **32. Bibliographical references:**

scientific/technical references only. If biogeographic regionalisation scheme applied (see 13 above), list full reference citation for the scheme.

Rassi, P., Alanen, A., Kanerva, T. & Mannerkoski, I. (eds.) 2001: The 2000 Red List of Finnish Species. Ministry of the Environment & Finnish Environment Institute, Helsinki.

Byholm, P. & Byholm, L. 1996. Saaristoinventointi Kristiinankaupungissa. Suupohjan Kirjapaino.

Leivo, M. 2000. Suomen kansainvälisesti tärkeät lintualueet. Linnut-vuosikirja 1999. (English summary: Important Bird Areas in Finland).

Leivo, M., Asanti, T., Koskimies, P., Lammi, E., Lampolahti, J., Mikkola-Roos, M. & Virolainen, E. 2002. Suomen tärkeät lintualueet FINIBA. BirdLife Suomen julkaisuja 4, Suomen graafiset palvelut, Kuopio.

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