

# 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 Secretariat. 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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**1. Name and address of the compiler of this form:****Joint Nature Conservation Committee**

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Designation date

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Site Reference Number

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

9 March 2006

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**3. Country:**

UK (Scotland)

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**4. Name of the Ramsar site:**

Loch of Skene

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**5. Map of site included:**Refer to Annex III of the *Explanatory Notes and Guidelines*, for detailed guidance on provision of suitable maps.**a) hard copy** (required for inclusion of site in the Ramsar List): *yes* ✓ -or- *no***b) digital (electronic) format** (optional): Yes

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

57 09 30 N

02 21 30 W

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**7. General location:**

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

Nearest town/city: Aberdeen

13 km west of Aberdeen.

**Administrative region:** Aberdeenshire

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**8. Elevation** (average and/or max. & min.) (metres): **9. Area** (hectares): 120.9

Min. 83

Max. 83

Mean 83

**10. Overview:**

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

Loch of Skene is a eutrophic lowland loch which supports an internationally important population of roosting Icelandic greylag geese *Anser anser*, and nationally important populations of other wintering and breeding waterfowl.

**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).

**6**

**Secretariat comment: The RIS provides information requiring the application of Criterion 4. This needs to be included in the next update.**

**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).

**Ramsar criterion 6 – species/populations occurring at levels of international importance.**

**Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation):****Species with peak counts in winter:**

Greylag goose , *Anser anser anser*, Iceland/UK, 9947 individuals, representing an average of 10% of the population (5 year peak mean for 1996/7-2000/01)  
Ireland

**Species/populations identified subsequent to designation****Species with peak counts in winter:**

Pink-footed goose , *Anser brachyrhynchus*, 3494 individuals, representing an average of 1.4% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)  
Greenland, Iceland/UK

Contemporary data and information on waterbird trends at this site and their regional (sub-national) and national contexts can be found in the Wetland Bird Survey report, which is updated annually. See [www.bto.org/survey/webs/webs-alerts-index.htm](http://www.bto.org/survey/webs/webs-alerts-index.htm).

**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:**

Atlantic

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

Council Directive 92/43/EEC

**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.

Soil & geology	nutrient-rich
Geomorphology and landscape	lowland
Nutrient status	eutrophic

pH	no information
Salinity	fresh
Soil	mainly mineral
Water permanence	usually permanent
Summary of main climatic features	Annual averages (Craibstone, 1971–2000) ( <a href="http://www.metoffice.com/climate/uk/averages/19712000/sites/craibstone.html">www.metoffice.com/climate/uk/averages/19712000/sites/craibstone.html</a> ) Max. daily temperature: 11.2° C Min. daily temperature: 4.6° C Days of air frost: 53.6 Rainfall: 816.3 mm Hrs. of sunshine: 1409.0

**General description of the Physical Features:**

Loch of Skene is a shallow (<2 m deep) eutrophic lowland loch surrounded by fringing reedbeds and birch-willow carr.

**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).

Loch of Skene is a shallow (<2 m deep) eutrophic lowland loch surrounded by fringing reedbeds and birch-willow carr.

**16. Hydrological values:**

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

Flood water storage / desynchronisation of flood peaks

**17. Wetland types**

Inland wetland

Code	Name	% Area
O	Freshwater lakes: permanent	87.6
Tp	Freshwater marshes / pools: permanent	5.8
Other	Other	4.1
Xf	Freshwater, tree-dominated wetlands	2.5

**18. General ecological features:**

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

The macrophyte flora of the Loch of Skene has been somewhat depleted by a growth of algae but the deeper water still retains a dense and diverse macrophyte community, mainly of *Potamogeton* species and *Elodea canadensis*. A number of local species are represented including *Potamogeton friesii* and *Callitriche hermaphroditica* (both formerly nationally scarce). *Eleocharis acicularis* (also formerly nationally scarce) is locally abundant on the muddy flats. Several other local or rare species have been recorded in the past including *Apium inundatum*, *Catabrosa aquatica*, *Lobelia dortmanna* and *Utricularia minor*. The loch is fringed by various swamp communities (NVC types S9a, S19a, and S14a) and tall herb fen (S28) and there is also birch-willow carr. The site also supports two nationally scarce orchid species: *Corallorhiza trifida* and *Goodyera repens* (the latter in pine woodland).

**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.*

**Nationally important species occurring on the site.****Higher Plants.**

*Corallorhiza trifida*

**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.*

**Birds****Species Information**

None reported

**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.

Aesthetic

Non-consumptive recreation

Scientific research

Sport fishing

Sport hunting

**22. Land tenure/ownership:**

Ownership category	On-site	Off-site
Private	+	+

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

Activity	On-site	Off-site
Nature conservation	+	
Recreation	+	
Current scientific research	+	
Commercial forestry		+
Fishing: recreational/sport	+	
Arable agriculture (unspecified)		+
Permanent pastoral agriculture		+
Sewage treatment/disposal		+
Urban development		+
Horticulture (incl. market gardening)		+

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

*Explanation of reporting category:*

1. *Those factors that are still operating, but it is unclear if they are under control, as there is a lag in showing the management or regulatory regime to be successful.*
2. *Those factors that are not currently being managed, or where the regulatory regime appears to have been ineffective so far.*

*NA = Not Applicable because no factors have been reported.*

Adverse Factor Category	Reporting Category	Description of the problem (Newly reported Factors only)	On-Site	Off-Site	Major Impact?
No factors reported	NA				

For category 2 factors only.

What measures have been taken / are planned / regulatory processes invoked, to mitigate the effect of these factors?

Is the site subject to adverse ecological change? NO

**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.

Conservation measure	On-site	Off-site
Site/ Area of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI/ASSI)	+	
Special Protection Area (SPA)	+	
Site management statement/plan implemented	+	

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

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

No information available

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

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

**Fauna.**

Numbers of migratory and wintering wildfowl and waders are monitored annually as part of the national Wetland Birds Survey (WeBS) organised by the British Trust for Ornithology, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

**28. Current conservation education:**

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

None reported

### 29. Current recreation and tourism:

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

#### Activities, Facilities provided and Seasonality.

The loch is also used for sailing (up to 30 boats in the summer) and sport angling.

The terrestrial margins of the loch are used for occasional shooting of wildfowl (and pest) species.

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### 30. Jurisdiction:

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

Scottish Executive, Environment and Rural Affairs Department

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### 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.

Scottish Natural Heritage, 2 Anderson Place, Edinburgh, EH6 5NP

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### 32. Bibliographical references:

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

#### Site-relevant references

Bell, MV, Dunbar, J & Parking, J (1988) Numbers of wintering pink-footed and greylag geese in north-east Scotland 1950–1986. *Scottish Birds*, **15**(1), 49-60

Bell, MV & Riddoch, JF (1988) Wintering wildfowl at Loch of Skene. *North-East Scotland Bird Report*, **1988**, 49-55

Buckland, ST, Bell, MV & Picozzi, N (eds.) (1990) *The birds of north-east Scotland*. North-East Scotland Bird Club, Aberdeen

Musgrove, AJ, Pollitt, MS, Hall, C, Hearn, RD, Holloway, SJ, Marshall, PE, Robinson, JA & Cranswick, PA (2001) *The Wetland Bird Survey 1999–2000: wildfowl and wader counts*. British Trust for Ornithology, Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds & Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Slimbridge.  
[www.wwt.org.uk/publications/default.asp?PubID=14](http://www.wwt.org.uk/publications/default.asp?PubID=14)

Own, R (1983) *Causes and effects of nuisance populations of phytoplankton in the Loch of Skene, Aberdeenshire*. North East River Purification Board report

Stroud, DA, Chambers, D, Cook, S, Buxton, N, Fraser, B, Clement, P, Lewis, P, McLean, I, Baker, H & Whitehead, S (eds.) (2001) *The UK SPA network: its scope and content*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough (3 vols.)  
[www.jncc.gov.uk/UKSPA/default.htm](http://www.jncc.gov.uk/UKSPA/default.htm)

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