

Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS)

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

2. Date this sheet was completed/updated:

Designated: 12 September 1995 / Updated: May 2005

3. Country:

UK (England)

4. Name of the Ramsar site:

Woodwalton Fen

5. Map of site included:**a) hard copy** (required for inclusion of site in the Ramsar List): *yes* ✓ -or- *no***b) digital (electronic) format** (optional): Yes

6. Geographical coordinates (latitude/longitude):

52° 26' 36'' N

00° 11' 25'' W

7. General location:

Nearest town/city: Peterborough

The site lies 12 km due south of Peterborough.

Administrative region: Cambridgeshire

8. Elevation (average and/or max. & min.) (metres): **9. Area** (hectares): 208

Min. No information available

Max. No information available

Mean No information available

10. Overview:

The site consists of a range of wetland communities, once characteristic of large areas of the East Anglian fens but now restricted to a number of isolated sites. Due to past management the site now has several types of open fen and swamp communities. There is also a relict area of acid peat, some mixed fen and an important network of ditches. The site supports an appreciable assemblage of wetland plants and invertebrates.

11. Ramsar Criteria:

1, 2

12. Justification for the application of each Criterion listed in 11. above:

Ramsar criterion 1

The site is within an area that is one of the remaining parts of East Anglia which has not been drained. The fen is near natural and has developed where peat-digging took place in the 19th century. The site has several types of open fen and swamp communities.

Ramsar criterion 2

The site supports the British Red Data Book endangered fen violet (*Viola persicifolia*); the critically endangered fen wood (*Luzula pallidula*) and the Fen ragwort (*Senecio paludosus*). Woodwalton also supports a large number of wetland invertebrates including 20 British Red Data Book species. Aquatic beetles, flies and moths are particularly well represented.

Secretariat Comment: the scientific names of the 20 British Red Data Book species need to be included in the next update.

13. Biogeography:**a) biogeographic region:**

Atlantic

b) biogeographic regionalisation scheme (include reference citation):

Council Directive 92/43/EEC

14. Physical features of the site:

Soil & geology	acidic, neutral, clay, peat
Geomorphology and landscape	lowland
Nutrient status	no information
pH	acidic, circumneutral
Salinity	fresh
Soil	mainly organic
Water permanence	usually permanent
Summary of main climatic features	Annual averages (Cambridge, 1971–2000) (www.metoffice.com/climate/uk/averages/19712000/sites/cambridge.html) Max. daily temperature: 14.1° C Min. daily temperature: 6.1° C Days of air frost: 41.9 Rainfall: 553.5 mm Hrs. of sunshine: 1501.2

General description of the Physical Features:

No information available

15. Physical features of the catchment area:

No information available

16. Hydrological values:

Flood water storage / desynchronisation of flood peaks

17. Wetland types

Inland wetland

Code	Name	% Area
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U	Peatlands (including peat bogs swamps, fens)	100
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18. General ecological features:

The site was once a raised bog and was dug for peat which removed most of the acidic peat, exposing the underlying fen peat. The open fen and swamp communities present today are, therefore, of several types. A relict area of acid peat holds stands of *Molinia caerulea* with *Calluna vulgaris*, *Myrica gale*, *Potentilla erecta* and *Cladium mariscus*. A further swamp community is dominated by *Calamagrostis epigejos*. Mixed fen covers a significant part of the site. This vegetation community is floristically rich and contains species such as *Thalictrum flavum*, *Iris pseudacorus*, *Poa palustris*, *Luzula pallidula* and *Viola persicifolia*. The network of ditches on the site hold many uncommon British plant species and two meres have been dug which are also valuable for aquatic plants. Further habitats of significance include marshy grassland, birch and alder woodland and fen carr. The carr is varied in composition and contains *Salix* spp., *Prunus spinosa*, *Betula* spp. and *Viburnum opulus*.

19. Noteworthy flora:**Nationally important species occurring on the site.****Higher Plants.***Viola persicifolia**Luzula pallidula***20. Noteworthy fauna:****Species Information****Assemblage.**

The site supports a diverse assemblage of invertebrates including *Perizoma sagittata* and *Chortodes extrema*.

21. Social and cultural values:

Aesthetic

Archaeological/historical site

Non-consumptive recreation

22. Land tenure/ownership:

Ownership category	On-site	Off-site
Private	+	+

23. Current land (including water) use:

Activity	On-site	Off-site
Nature conservation	+	
Research	+	
Permanent pastoral agriculture	+	

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?
Vegetation succession	1		+		+
Drainage/reclamation for agriculture	1			+	+
Eutrophication	1		+	+	

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:

Conservation measure	On-site	Off-site
SSSI / ASSI	+	
NNR	+	
Site management statement/plan implemented	+	
SAC	+	

26. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:

No information available

27. Current scientific research and facilities:

Flora.

Fen violet *Viola persicifolia* species recovery programme.

Fen ragwort *Senecio paludosus* species recovery programme.

Fauna.

Long, and ongoing, history of research and monitoring, e.g. plant and butterfly transects, breeding bird surveys, monitoring of water levels, dyke flora surveys.

28. Current conservation education:

There is an interpretation board on site where leaflets can be obtained. A traditional thatched bungalow is used for meetings, reserve events and visiting school parties. It houses displays illustrating the history and wildlife of the fen.

29. Current recreation and tourism:

Activities, Facilities provided and Seasonality.

There are no public rights of way across the reserve but visitors are allowed access after obtaining a permit from English Nature.

30. Jurisdiction:

Head, Natura 2000 and Ramsar Team, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs,
European Wildlife Division, Zone 1/07, Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol,
BS1 6EB

31. Management authority:

Site Designations Manager, English Nature, Sites and Surveillance Team, Northminster House,
Northminster Road, Peterborough, PE1 1UA, UK

32. Bibliographical references:

Site-relevant references

Duffey, E (1971) The management of Woodwalton Fen: a multidisciplinary approach. In: *The scientific management of animal and plant communities for conservation. The 11th symposium of the British Ecological Society, University of East Anglia, Norwich, 7–9 July, 1970*, ed. by E. Duffey & AS Watt, 581-597. Blackwell Scientific Publications, Oxford

English Nature (2004) *Woodwalton Fen NNR site management plan*. English Nature

Great Fen Project (2003) *Great Fen Project*. Great Fen Project, Sawston. www.greatfen.org.uk

Middle Level Commissioners (1997) *Woodwalton Fen water level management plan*. Middle Level Commissioners

Poore, MED (1953) *The principles of vegetational classification and the ecology of Woodwalton Fen*. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge

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Sheail, J (1976) The land-use history of the Huntingdonshire Fenland, with special reference to the Holme Fen and Woodwalton Fen National Nature Reserves. (Contractor: Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, Huntingdon) *Nature Conservancy Council, CSD Report, No. 81*

Stewart, NF (2004) *Important stonewort areas. An assessment of the best areas for stoneworts in the United Kingdom*. Plantlife International, Salisbury

Webb, M & Pullin, A (1997) The orange argus – a history of the large copper butterfly in Britain. *British Wildlife*, 9(1), 29-37

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