

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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Designation date

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Site Reference Number

2. Date this sheet was completed/updated:

Designated: 11 August 1997 / updated 12 May 2005

3. Country:

UK (Scotland)

4. Name of the Ramsar site:

East Sanday Coast

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

6. Geographical coordinates (latitude/longitude):

59 16 00 N

02 34 00 W

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: Kirkwall

The site lies on the island of Sanday, Orkney, in the north of Scotland.

Administrative region: Orkney Islands

8. Elevation (average and/or max. & min.) (metres): **9. Area** (hectares): 1514.88

Min. -1

Max. 3

Mean 0

10. Overview:

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

A 55 km stretch of coast on the island of Sanday, Orkney. The coastline consists of rocky and sandy sections and is notable for its presence of sand dune and machair habitats, rare outside the Hebrides, as well as extensive intertidal flats and saltmarsh. The site is further characterised by a series of tombolos, bars, spits and shingle ridges. The coastline supports internationally important populations of wintering waders.

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).

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Secretariat comment: The RIS provides information requiring the application of Criteria 2 and 4. These need 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:

Purple sandpiper , <i>Calidris maritima maritima</i> , E Atlantic (w)	840 individuals, representing an average of 1.1% of the flyway population (winter peak means)
Ruddy turnstone , <i>Arenaria interpres interpres</i> , NE Canada, Greenland (br), Coastal W Europe & NW Africa (w)	1400 individuals, representing an average of 1.4% of the flyway population (Three year peak mean, 1991/2-1993/4)

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.

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	sand, sedimentary, sandstone, sandstone/mudstone, shingle, boulder
Geomorphology and landscape	coastal, subtidal rock (including rocky reefs), shingle bar, intertidal sediments (including sandflat/mudflat), open coast (including bay), islands, pools, intertidal rock
Nutrient status	no information
pH	no information
Salinity	saline / euhaline
Soil	mainly mineral
Water permanence	usually permanent
Summary of main climatic features	Annual averages (Kirkwall, 1971–2000) (www.metoffice.com/climate/uk/averages/19712000/sites/kirkwall.html) Max. daily temperature: 10.5° C Min. daily temperature: 5.3° C Days of air frost: 28.9 Rainfall: 1029.4 mm Hrs. of sunshine: 1139.7

General description of the Physical Features:

East Sanday Coast comprises a 55 km stretch of coast, consisting of both rocky and sandy sections. It is notable for the presence of sand dune and machair habitats, rare outside the Hebrides, as well as extensive intertidal flats and saltmarsh. The site is further characterised by a series of tombolos, bars, spits and shingle ridges.

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).

East Sanday Coast comprises a 55 km stretch of coast, consisting of both rocky and sandy sections. It is notable for the presence of sand dune and machair habitats, rare outside the Hebrides, as well as extensive intertidal flats and saltmarsh. The site is further characterised by a series of tombolos, bars, spits and shingle ridges.

16. Hydrological values:

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

No special values known

17. Wetland types

Inland wetland, Marine/coastal wetland

Code	Name	% Area
D	Rocky shores	25.3
E	Sand / shingle shores (including dune systems)	39.6
G	Tidal flats	31.6
H	Salt marshes	0.8
Tp	Freshwater marshes / pools: permanent	0.5
Other	Other	2.2

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 majority of the East Sanday Coast site is intertidal and is composed of alternating stretches of Old Red Sandstone (typically covered in fucoial algae) and areas where the bedrock is covered with

shingle, mud or sand. There are good examples of storm beaches at Tofts Ness and Whitemill Bay, while extensive intertidal sandy and muddy areas are present at Otterswick, Cata Sand and Little Sea, and long sandy beaches at Bay of Sandquoy, Scuthvie Bay and Bay of Lopness. Start Point is a tidal island.

The terrestrial vegetation shows heavy marine and blown sand influences. The most frequent communities found are rank, species-poor dune grassland and coastal grassland, both dominated by red fescue *Festuca rubra*. Smaller areas of wet dwarf shrub heath, marshy grassland, saltmarsh, machair and open dune communities are also present, and there is good development of strandline vegetation in many areas. Several notable plant species occur on the site.

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.*

Assemblage

This site is internationally important because it supports the following Habitats Directive Annex I feature:

H1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide

Nationally important species occurring on the site.

Higher Plants.

Rorippa islandica, Mertensia maritima, Carex maritima

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 currently occurring at levels of national importance:

Species regularly supported during the breeding season:

Great black-backed gull , <i>Larus marinus</i> , NE Atlantic	220 apparently occupied nests, representing an average of 1.2% of the GB population (Seabird 2000 Census)
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Species with peak counts in winter:

Ringed plover , <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> , Europe/Northwest Africa	360 individuals, representing an average of 1.1% of the GB population (peak means 1991/2-1993/4)
Sanderling , <i>Calidris alba</i> , Eastern Atlantic	390 individuals, representing an average of 1.9% of the GB population (peak means 1991/2-1993/4)
Bar-tailed godwit , <i>Limosa lapponica lapponica</i> , W Palearctic	600 individuals, representing an average of 0.9% of the GB population (winter peak mean (1991/2-1993/4))

Species Information

Species occurring at levels of international importance.

Mammals.

S1365 *Phoca vitulina* Common seal (Habitats Directive Annex II species)

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
- Archaeological/historical site
- Environmental education/ interpretation
- Subsistence fishing
- Tourism
- Traditional cultural

22. Land tenure/ownership:

Ownership category	On-site	Off-site
Local authority, municipality etc.		+
National/Crown Estate		+
Private	+	

23. Current land (including water) use:

Activity	On-site	Off-site
Nature conservation	+	+
Tourism	+	+
Recreation	+	+
Collection of non-timber natural products: commercial	+	
Fishing: (unspecified)		+
Gathering of shellfish	+	
Arable agriculture (unspecified)		+
Grazing (unspecified)		+
Hay meadows		+
Mineral exploration (excl. hydrocarbons)	+	+

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
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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	+	
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	+	

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.

Completed.

Waders: Winter wader surveys: 1993 and 1994.

Common seals: Breeding survey: July 1998.

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.

None reported

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

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

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

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