

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.

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:

12.05.2005

3. Country:

UK (Northern Ireland)

4. Name of the Ramsar site:

Ballynahone Bog

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):

54 49 25 N 06 39 40 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: Maghera.

Ballynahone Bog is situated in County Londonderry in the centre of Northern Ireland about 3 km south of Maghera. It is situated on low-lying ground immediately north of the Moyola River about 14 km from its mouth at Lough Neagh.

Administrative region: Northern Ireland

8. Elevation (average and/or max. & min.) (metres): **9. Area** (hectares): 243.24

Min. 0
Max. 0
Mean 257

10. Overview:

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

Ballynahone Bog is one of the largest lowland raised bogs in Northern Ireland. The raised bog which covers most of the site exhibits the full range of characteristic vegetation and structural features associated with this type of habitat such as bog pools and hummocks. The raised bog dome is surrounded by cut-over bog with poor fen and birch woodland. The bog vegetation is characterised by a high percentage cover of *Sphagnum* mosses, ericoid dwarf-shrubs such as cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix* and heather *Calluna vulgaris*, and other associated species such as hare's-tail cottongrass *Eriophorum vaginatum*, common cottongrass *Eriophorum angustifolium*, deergrass *Trichophorum cespitosum* and sundew species *Drosera* spp.

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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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 1

The site is a large and relatively intact example of a lowland raised bog and one of the best examples of this habitat in the UK.

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	acidic, peat, nutrient-poor, basalt
Geomorphology and landscape	lowland
Nutrient status	no information
pH	acidic, strongly acidic
Salinity	fresh
Soil	mainly organic
Water permanence	usually permanent

Summary of main climatic features	Annual averages (Aldergrove, 1971–2000) (www.metoffice.com/climate/uk/averages/19712000/sites/aldergrove.html) Max. daily temperature: 12.5° C Min. daily temperature: 5.8° C Days of air frost: 39.1 Rainfall: 862.4 mm Hrs. of sunshine: 1313.7
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General description of the Physical Features:

Ballynahone is one of the two largest intact active raised bogs in Northern Ireland with hummock and hollow pool complexes. Recently-constructed surface drains have been filled and the site is recovering.

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).

Ballynahone is one of the two largest intact active raised bogs in Northern Ireland with hummock and hollow pool complexes. Recently-constructed surface drains have been filled and the site is recovering.

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

Code	Name	% Area
U	Peatlands (including peat bogs swamps, fens)	75
Xp	Forested peatland	25

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 classic domed profile of the deep peat exhibits a wide range of characteristic vegetation and structural features, with pool, hummock and lawn complexes. The bog vegetation is characterised by a high percentage cover of *Sphagnum* mosses, ericoid dwarf-shrubs and other associated species.

On the greater part of the bog plain the prominent species include heather *Calluna vulgaris*, cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix*, hare's-tail cottongrass *Eriophorum vaginatum*, common cottongrass *Eriophorum angustifolium*, and deergrass *Trichophorum cespitosum*. Additional species which are also well represented within the sward include bog asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum* and white beak-sedge *Rhynchospora alba*, with occasional patches of bog-myrtle *Myrica gale* also occurring. *Sphagnum* mosses generally form scattered hummocks throughout the area.

Flat, waterlogged 'lawns' alongside pools are characterised by the prominence of such species as cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix*, bog asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum*, white beak-sedge *Rhynchospora alba* and common cottongrass *Eriophorum angustifolium*, over a *Sphagnum* moss carpet dominated by *S. papillosum* and *S. magellanicum*. The abundance of cranberry *Vaccinium oxycoccos* in these areas is also notable. Typically, the pools are dominated by *Sphagnum cuspidatum*, with bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata* abundant in a number of them. Lesser bladderwort *Utricularia minor* and great

sundew *Drosera longifolia* are also frequent in some pools with the nationally rare *Sphagnum pulchrum* often occurring around the edges. Within the pool system, the main hummock-forming moss is *Sphagnum magellanicum* with *S. papillosum* and *S. subnitens* frequent. The liverwort *Pleurozia purpurea*, a species generally associated with more oceanic areas to the west, is also found occasionally.

The lagg surrounding the lowland raised bog has been extensively cut for turf, creating a mosaic of habitats which are dependent on peat depth and age of cutting. Vegetation communities vary from 'poor' fen, through purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* grassland and heath, to extensive areas of scrub and young woodland, mainly dominated by downy birch *Betula pubescens*.

The peatland species occurring on the site include a number of scarce species typical of lowland raised bogs such as the bog-rosemary *Andromeda polifolia* and invertebrates such as the large heath butterfly *Coenonympha tullia*.

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.

Andromeda polifolia.

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.*

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.

No special values known

22. Land tenure/ownership:

Ownership category	On-site	Off-site
National/Crown Estate	+	
Private	+	+

23. Current land (including water) use:

Activity	On-site	Off-site
Nature conservation	+	
Rough or shifting grazing		+
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				

<p>For category 2 factors only. What measures have been taken / are planned / regulatory processes invoked, to mitigate the effect of these factors?</p>
<p>Is the site subject to adverse ecological change? NO</p>

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)	+	
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	+	
Management agreement	+	
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.

The site was subject to detailed habitat and species surveys prior to its designation as an ASSI.

The integrity of the site is regularly monitored.

A basin profiling and hydrological survey was carried out in 1996.

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.

Department of the Environment (Northern Ireland), Environment and Heritage Service,
Commonwealth House, Castle Street, Belfast, Northern Ireland, BT1 1GU

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.

Department of the Environment (Northern Ireland), Environment and Heritage Service,
Commonwealth House, Castle Street, Belfast, Northern Ireland, BT1 1GU

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

- Corbett, P. McM & Seymour, GR (1997) The conservation of peatland in Northern Ireland. In: *Conserving peatlands*, ed. by L Parkyn, RE Stoneman & HAP Ingram. CAB International, Wallingford, for Scottish Wildlife Trust
- Environment and Heritage Service (1986) *Site survey notes for Ballynahone Bog*. Unpublished, Environment and Heritage Service, Belfast.
- Environment and Heritage Service (1994) *ASSI Pilot Monitoring Ballynahone Bog Field Assessment, 1994*. Unpublished, Environment and Heritage Service, Belfast.
- Frazer, JS, Cruickshank, MM & Tomlinson, RW (1988) *Northern Ireland Peatland Survey*. Unpublished report to Department of the Environment (Northern Ireland), Countryside and Wildlife Branch, Belfast
- Grant, M, Tomlinson, RW & Harvey, J (1997) *Hydrological monitoring for peatlands*. Queens University of Belfast, School of Geosciences, report to Department of the Environment (Northern Ireland), Belfast
- Leach, SJ & Corbett, P. McM (1987) A preliminary survey of raised bogs in Northern Ireland. *Glasra*, **10**, 57-73
- McLeod, CR, Yeo, M, Brown, AE, Burn, AJ, Hopkins, JJ & Way, SF (eds.) (2004) *The Habitats Directive: selection of Special Areas of Conservation in the UK*. 2nd edn. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough. www.jncc.gov.uk/SACselection
- Milton, EJ, Hughes, PD, Anderson, K, Schulz, J, Lindsay, R, Kelday, SB & Hill, CT (2005) Remote sensing of bog surfaces. *JNCC Report*, No. **366** www.jncc.gov.uk/page-3505
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