

# 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:**

Designated: 31 December 1998 / updated 12 May 2005

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**3. Country:**

UK (Northern Ireland)

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

Garron Plateau

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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):

55 00 10 N                      06 03 40 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: Carnlough.

The site is situated in County Antrim in the north-east of Northern Ireland immediately north-west of Carnlough. It forms part of a large upland block extending to the coast between the valleys of Glencloy and Glengariff.

**Administrative region:** Antrim; Ballymena; Larne; Moyle

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**8. Elevation** (average and/or max. & min.) (metres):    **9. Area** (hectares): 4650.07

Min.    0  
Max.    0  
Mean    0

**10. Overview:**

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

Garron Plateau is situated in Antrim in the north-east of Northern Ireland. The Garron Plateau is the largest area of intact blanket bog in Northern Ireland. The peatland complex is comprised of a series of raised and flushed peat bog units, and a number of oligotrophic/ mesotrophic water bodies, all within the enveloping blanket bog peat mantle. The peatland supports a number of rare and notable plant and animal species and diverse upland bird population.

**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**

**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 1

The site is a large and relatively intact example of a blanket bog and one of the best examples of this habitat in the UK. It also contains nationally important examples of transitional and alkaline fen and oligotrophic/mesotrophic lakes.

Ramsar criterion 2

Supports at least six species listed in the Irish Red Data Book-Vascular Plants and up to five species of birds (one of which breeds in nationally important numbers) which are listed in the Irish Red Data Book.

**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, basic, neutral, peat, nutrient-poor, basalt
Geomorphology and landscape	upland, hilly
Nutrient status	mesotrophic, oligotrophic
pH	acidic, alkaline, strongly acidic
Salinity	fresh
Soil	mainly organic
Water permanence	usually permanent

Summary of main climatic features	Annual averages (Aldergrove, 1971–2000) ( <a href="http://www.metoffice.com/climate/uk/averages/19712000/sites/aldergrove.html">www.metoffice.com/climate/uk/averages/19712000/sites/aldergrove.html</a> ) 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:**

Garron is the most extensive area of intact upland blanket bogs in Northern Ireland. The peatland complex is composed of a series of raised and flushed peat bog units and a number of oligotrophic lakes. There are large areas of well-developed bog microtopography. Where the peats are thinner, localised flushing by mineral-enriched water results in the formation of alkaline fen vegetation.

**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).

Garron is the most extensive area of intact upland blanket bogs in Northern Ireland. The peatland complex is composed of a series of raised and flushed peat bog units and a number of oligotrophic lakes. There are large areas of well-developed bog microtopography. Where the peats are thinner, localised flushing by mineral-enriched water results in the formation of alkaline fen vegetation.

**16. Hydrological values:**

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

Water supply

**17. Wetland types**

Inland wetland

Code	Name	% Area
O	Freshwater lakes: permanent	1
U	Peatlands (including peat bogs swamps, fens)	70
Other	Other	29

**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 blanket bog exhibits a number of notable features such as extensive areas with hummock and lawn, and well-developed pool complexes and areas of quaking bogs and saddle mires. There are also areas of eroding peat. Bog vegetation is characterised by *Sphagnum* mosses notably *Sphagnum imbricatum* and *Sphagnum fuscum*. Vegetation on deeper waterlogged peat is characterised by the prominence of cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix*, bog asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum* and common cottongrass *Eriophorum angustifolium*. On the more freely-draining slopes heather *Calluna vulgaris*, crowberry *Empetrum nigrum*, and hare's-tail cotton-grass *Eriophorum vaginatum* are dominant.

The area has well-developed flushes. The base-rich flushes characterised by black bog-rush *Schoenus nigricans*, sedges *Carex* spp. and brown mosses such as *Drepanocladus* spp. and *Calliergon* spp. A number of rare vascular plants are associated with this habitat.

Several types of upland and base-poor lakes occur on the plateau. The most common lake types are characterised either by the association of yellow waterlily *Nuphar lutea* with white water-lily *Nymphaea alba* or by an association in which water lobelia *Lobelia dortmanna* is prominent. Loughnatrosk is a mid-altitude lake which contains the rare opposite-leaved pondweed *Groenlandia*

*densa*. The marginal lake vegetation around most of the lakes tends to be sparse, consisting of a scattered swamp and poor acid fen fringe.

**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.**

*Dactylorhiza traunsteineri*, *Hammarbya paludosa*, *Carex pauciflora*, *Carex magellanica*,  
*Groenlandia densa*.

**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 currently occurring at levels of national importance:**

**Species regularly supported during the breeding season:**

European golden plover , *Pluvialis apricaria* 12 pairs, representing an average of 3% of the all-Ireland population (Source period not collated)  
*apricaria*, Britain/Ireland/Denmark/Germany

**Species Information**

**Assemblage.**

The site supports a diverse assemblage of breeding birds, including:  
*Lagopus lagopus*, *Pluvalis apricaria*, *Calidris alpina*, *Falco columbarius* and *Circus cyaneus*.

**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
- Livestock grazing
- Non-consumptive recreation
- Sport fishing
- Tourism

**22. Land tenure/ownership:**

Ownership category	On-site	Off-site
Private	+	+
Public/communal	+	+

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

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

**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)	+	
Management agreement	+	
Site management statement/plan implemented	+	
Area of Outstanding National Beauty (AONB)	+	
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 site is regularly monitored.

The status of the yellow marsh saxifrage *Saxifraga hirculus* was assessed in 1995.

Preliminary trials on monitoring blanket bog vegetation were held 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.

The Ulster Way crosses the site.

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**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

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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.

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

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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**

- 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
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[www.jncc.gov.uk/SACselection](http://www.jncc.gov.uk/SACselection)
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- Steele, D, Knight, G & Mellon, C (1997) *Antrim Hills Breeding Bird Survey 1997*. Unpublished report. RSPB
- 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.)  
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- Wolfe-Murphy, SA, Lawrie, EW, Smith, SJ & Gibson, CE (1993) *Northern Ireland Lakes Survey*. Unpublished report to Northern Ireland Department of Environment, Countryside and Wildlife, Belfast
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