

Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands

Categories approved by Recommendation 4.7 of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

NOTE: It is important that you read the accompanying *Explanatory Note and Guidelines* document before completing this form.

1. Date this sheet was completed/updated:

10th February, 1999

Date of designation 11/05/1999 (date of announcement, COP7)
FOR OFFICE USE ONLY.

DD	MM	YY
11	05	99

Designation date

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Site Reference Number

2. Country:

Bermuda (U.K.O.T.)

3. Name of wetland: SPITTAL POND

4. Geographical coordinates: 32°18'N 64°43'W

5. Altitude: (average and/or max. & min.) 0.1m - 4.0m

6. Area: (in hectares) 9.527 hectares

7. Overview: (general summary, in two or three sentences, of the wetland's principal characteristics)

The only Bermuda example of a non-tidal permanent shallow brackish lagoon with fringing mudflats and salt marshes: subject to periodic sea flooding with mudflats exposed at low water levels. The most important wetland for wintering waterfowl.

8. Wetland Type (please circle the applicable codes for wetland types as listed in Annex I of the *Explanatory Note and Guidelines* document.)

marine-coastal: A · B · C · D · E · F · G · H · I · (J) · K

inland: L · M · N · O · P · Q · R · Sp · Ss · Tp · Ts
· U · Va · Vt · W · Xf · Xp · Y · Zg · Zk

man-made: 1 · (2) · 3 · 4 · 5 · 6 · 7 · 8 · 9

Please now rank these wetland types by listing them from the most to the least dominant:

9. Ramsar Criteria: (please circle the applicable criteria; see point 12. next page.)

(1a) · 1b · 1c · (1d) | 2a · 2b · 2c · 2d | 3a · (3b) · 3c | 4a · 4b

Please specify the most significant criterion applicable to the site: 1a

10. Map of site included? Please tick *yes* -or- *no*

(Please refer to the *Explanatory Note and Guidelines* document for information regarding desirable map traits).

11. Name and address of the compiler of this form:

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BERMUDA

12. **Justification of the criteria selected under point 9:**

This is Bermuda's only example of a non-tidal permanent brackish lagoon. It is the most important wetland for wintering waterfowl and transient shorebirds

13. **General location:**

Located on South Shore, Smith's Parish, Bermuda. 6 km east of Hamilton.

14. **Physical features:**

A permanent shallow brackish lagoon with fringing mudflats and salt marshes bordering the coast. The water level fluctuates by about 75cm with rainfall and periodic flooding from the sea, and mudflats are exposed at low water levels. Two small freshwater ponds were excavated in 1966. The coastal cliffs support a nesting population of White-tailed tropicbirds *Phaethon lepturus catesbyi*.

15. **Hydrological values:**

None.

16. **Ecological features:**

An extremely nutrient rich but unstable community with wide fluctuations in salinity – low species diversity in the pond but very high productivity in boom and bust cycles.

17. **Noteworthy flora:**

Submerged beds of *Ruppia maritima* and fringing *Paspalum vaginatum*.

18. **Noteworthy fauna:**

The pond is a major refuge for passage shorebirds, notably species of *Tringa*, *Limnodromus* and *Calidris*. It is of principal importance as a wintering area for Most species of North American Heron, Egrets, Ducks Coot and Moorhen. Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps*, Little Blue Heron *Egretta caerulea*, Louisiana (Tri-colored) Heron, *E. tricolor*, Snowy Egret *E. thula*, Great Egret *Casmerodius albus*, American Black Duck *Anas rubripes*, Teal *A. crecca*, American Widgeon *A. americana*, Blue-winged Teal *A. discors*, Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*, Lesser Scaup *A. affinis* and American Coot *Fulica americana*. The eel *Anguilla anguilla* is common, *Mugil* sp. occasionally become established. *Gambusia holbrooki* is abundant serving both as mosquito control and food for herons.

19. **Social and cultural values:**

An important passive recreational (walking) area for locals and tourists.
Regularly used for educational and recreational tours.

20. **Land tenure/Ownership of:**

The Bermuda National Trust (since 1954)
Surrounding area owned by the Government of Bermuda

21. **Current land use:**

Managed mainly as a limited access Nature Reserve, but a small dairy farm occupies the north western boundary. A perimeter nature trail is used for passive recreation (walking and bird watching).

22. **Factors adversely affecting the sites ecological character:**

Some eutrophication as a result of runoff from adjacent dairy farm. Occasional occurrences of botulism in the summer. Domestic Pigeons from the dairy farm nest in the coastal cliffs competing with nesting Tropicbirds.

23. **Conservation measures taken:**

Declared inalienable as a nature reserve under The Bermuda National Trust Act.
Designated a nature reserve under The Protection of Birds Act, 1975 surrounding areas. Scheduled as a nature reserve by The Bermuda National Parks Act, 1986.

24. **Conservation measures proposed:**

None

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

No facilities. Martin Thomas has conducted limnological study of the pond.
Migrating and wintering birds have been monitored and recorded since 1950.

26. **Current conservation education:**

Regular field trips for conservation groups and schools.

27. **Current recreation and tourism:**

Used for bird watching and walking by locals and tourists.

28. **Jurisdiction:**

- a) Territorial – Government of Bermuda
 - b) Functional – The Bermuda National Trust and conservation section of Parks.
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29. **Management authority:**

The Bermuda National Trust
P.O. Box HM 61
Hamilton HM AX
Bermuda

30. **Bibliographical references:**

Scott, D.A. and Carbonell, M., Compilers. 1986. A Directory of Neotropical Wetlands. IUCN Cambridge and IWRB Slimbridge.
