

# Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS) – 2009-2012 version

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**1. Name and address of the compiler of this form:**

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Designation date

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Site Reference Number

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**2. Date this sheet was completed/updated:**

September 2013

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**3. Country:**

the Netherlands

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

Oostvaardersplassen

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**5. Designation of new Ramsar site or update of existing site:**

This RIS is for:

- a) Designation of a new Ramsar site ; or  
b) Updated information on an existing Ramsar site

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**6. For RIS updates only, changes to the site since its designation or earlier update:****a) Site boundary and area**

The Ramsar site boundary and site area are unchanged:

or

**If the site boundary has changed:**

- i) the boundary has been delineated more accurately ; or  
ii) the boundary has been extended ; or  
iii) the boundary has been restricted\*\*

and/or

**If the site area has changed:**

- i) the area has been measured more accurately ; or  
ii) the area has been extended ; or  
iii) the area has been reduced\*\*

**\*\* Important note:** If the boundary and/or area of the designated site is being restricted/reduced, the Contracting Party should have followed the procedures established by the Conference of the Parties in the Annex to COP9 Resolution IX.6 and provided a report in line with paragraph 28 of that Annex, prior to the submission of an updated RIS.

**b) Describe briefly any major changes to the ecological character of the Ramsar site, including in the application of the Criteria, since the previous RIS for the site:**

Nothing particular

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## 7. Map of site:

**a) A map of the site, with clearly delineated boundaries, is included as:**

- i) a hard copy (required for inclusion of site in the Ramsar List):
- ii) an electronic format (e.g. a JPEG or ArcView image)
- iii) a GIS file providing geo-referenced site boundary vectors and attribute tables

**b) Describe briefly the type of boundary delineation applied:**

The Ramsar site Oostvaardersplassen has also been designated as the European Natura 2000-site Oostvaardersplassen. For this RIS-version, the Ramsar site boundary has therefore been adjusted to the Natura 2000-boundary. The dikes with roads to the west (Oostvaardersdijk) and to the north (Knardijk), which are actually no wetland habitats, have been excluded or exclavated from the Ramsar site. As a result the site currently measures 27,8 ha less.

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## 8. Geographical coordinates (latitude/longitude, in degrees and minutes):

52°26'N - 05°21'E

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## 9. General location:

Province of Flevoland, between Lelystad (population 75.778 per 1-1-2013) in the north and Almere (population 195.213 per 1-1-2013) in the south. (Source: CBS, Netherlands Statistics).

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## 10. Elevation: (min & max)

NAP -5 / -3 m

## 11. Area: (in hectares)

5477,4

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## 12. General overview of the site:

An extensive area of shallow lakes, pools, marshes, reedbeds, *Salix* woodland and grassland which has developed on a polder (Zuidelijk Flevoland, reclaimed in 1968), having been spared from cultivation. It is situated south of the city of Lelystad, and adjoins the Markermeer in the north.

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## 13. Ramsar Criteria:

1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 • 7 • 8 • 9

#### 14. Justification for the application of each Criterion listed in 13 above:

The Ramsar site Oostvaardersplassen, has been designated under Natura 2000 as well. Natura 2000 is the centrepiece of EU nature & biodiversity policy. It is an EU-wide network of nature protection areas which aims to assure the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats. It is comprised of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) designated by Member States under the Habitats Directive, and also incorporates Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the Birds Directive. Natura 2000 applies to SACs and SPAs which are divided into biogeographical regions.

The Ramsar site Oostvaardersplassen is designated as a SPA only, and the justification for the application of each Ramsar criterion below, greatly refers to this SPA status.

##### *Justification criterion 1*

The Oostvaardersplassen has been awarded a European Diploma of Protected Areas by the Council of Europe in 1999. This award is a prestigious international award granted since 1965 by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to natural and semi-natural areas and landscapes of exceptional European importance for the preservation of biological, geological and landscape diversity and managed in an exemplary way.

##### *Justification criterion 2*

In January 2013 an Otter (*Lutra lutra*) was observed in the Oostvaardersplassen. A species which is listed on Annex II and IV of the Habitat Directive and which is concerned critically endangered (CR) on the National Red List of Mammals (2009). The site is however particularly important as a SPA for a great number of water birds. The table below shows the Annex I species (BD) for which the site has been designated as a SPA, as well as their current status on the National Red List.

*Species of Annex I of the European Bird Directive for which the site has been designated as a SPA, as well as their status on the National Red List (- = Not Applicable). Year of adoption of the National Red List in parentheses.*

Bird species	Species code	National RL Category
<b>Non-Breeding</b>		
Little Egret <i>Egretta garzetta</i>	A026	-
Great Egret <i>Egretta alba</i>	A027	-
Eurasian Spoonbill <i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	A034	-
Whooper Swan <i>Cygnus cygnus</i>	A038	-
Barnacle Goose <i>Branta leucopsis</i>	A045	-
Smew <i>Mergus albellu</i>	A068	-
<sup>1</sup> White-tailed Sea Eagle <i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>	A075	-
Avocet <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	A132	-
Ruff <i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	A151	-
<b>Breeding</b>		(2004)
Bittern <i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	A021	EN
Little Bittern <i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>	A022	CR
Great Egret <i>Egretta alba</i>	A027	NT
Eurasian Spoonbill <i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	A034	LC
Western Marsh Harrier <i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	A081	LC
Northern Harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i>	A082	NT
Spotted Crake <i>Porzana porzana</i>	A119	VU
Bluethroat <i>Luscinia svecica</i>	A272	LC

<sup>1</sup> After centuries of absence from the Netherlands the first breeding couple of the White-tailed Sea Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla* was observed again in 2006 in the Oostvaardersplassen. The species breeds at the site every year since then. The site has however not been designated as a SPA for breeding Sea Eagles.

### Justification criterion 3

The Oostvaardersplassen is designated as a Natura 2000 site (SPA) and can therefore be considered important for maintaining the biodiversity of the Atlantic biogeographic region. Besides the species mentioned under criterion 2, the site has also been designated as a SPA for a number of bird species that are not on Annex I of the BD. See the table below.

*Bird species (not on Annex I of the BD) for which the site has been designated as a SPA as well as their status on the National Red List (2004).*

Bird species	Species code	National RL Category
<b>Non-Breeding</b>		
White-fronted Goose <i>Anser albifrons</i>	A041	-
Greylag Goose <i>Anser anser</i>	A043	-
Common Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	A048	-
Eurasian Wigeon <i>Anas [Mareca] Penelope</i>	A050	-
Gadwall <i>Anas strepera</i>	A051	-
Common Teal <i>Anas crecca</i>	A052	-
Northern Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i>	A054	-
Northern Shoveler <i>Anas chipeata</i>	A056	-
Common Pochard <i>Aythya ferina</i>	A059	-
Tufted Duck <i>Aythya fuligula</i>	A061	-
Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa</i>	A156	-
<b>Breeding</b>		(2004)
Little Grebe <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	A004	LC
Great Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	A017	LC
Stonechat <i>Saxicola torquata</i>	A276	LC
Wheatear <i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	A277	EN
Savi's Warbler <i>Locustella luscinioides</i>	A292	VU
Sedge Warbler <i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	A295	LC
Great Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	A298	EN

### Justification criterion 4

The site is home to thousands of waterbirds during the critical wintering, migration, breeding and moulting periods (see also criterion 2, 3 and 6). The site among others supports large breeding colonies of Great Cormorant *Palacrocorax carbo*, Great Egret *Egretta alba* and Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*. With tens of thousands of moulting Greylag Geese *Anser anser*, the site can be considered as (one of) the main moulting sites for this species.

### Justification criterion 5

The site regularly supports more than 20,000 wintering waterbirds: the average peak number was 30.887 for the period 2005/2006-2009/2010, which is less than the average peak number of 35.492 for the period 1999/2000-2003/2004 (source: Sovon, Dutch Centre for Field Ornithology).

### Justification criterion 6

Species meeting the 1% threshold (WPE-4, Wetlands International 2006; source: Sovon, Dutch Centre for Field Ornithology). (NB = nonbreeding, BR = breeding period 2006-2010).

Species (UK)	Species	NB / BR	Biographical population	1% threshold	Average number of birds 2006-2010	% at site
Northern Shoveler	<i>Anas chapeata</i>	NB	NW/ Central Europe	400	4653	11.6
Common Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	NB	NW. Europe	5000	5346	1.1
Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>	NB	NW. Europe	600	894	1.5
Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	NB	NW. Europe/ SW. Europe	5000	24856	5.0
Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	NB	NW/ NE. Europe	3500	18693	5.3
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	NB	NW-Europe	12000	12947	1.1
Bittern	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	BR	W. Europe	65	72	1.1
Barnacle Goose	<i>Branta leucopsis</i>	NB	Russia/ Germany/ Netherlands	4200	9232	2.2
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis</i>	BR	Northern/ Central Europe	3900	7836	2.0
Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	NB	Eastern Atlantic	110	436	4.0
Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	BR	Eastern Atlantic	110	441	4.0

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## 15. Biogeography

### a) biogeographic region:

The Ramsar site belongs to the Atlantic biogeographical region.

### b) biogeographic regionalisation scheme (include reference citation):

The bio-geographic regions dataset used, contains the official delineations used in the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and for the EMERALD Network set up under the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention)

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## 16. Physical features of the site:

The Oostvaardersplassen were formed after the reclamation of Zuidelijk Flevoland in 1968 (4 m below sea level). A wet area along the Oostvaardersdijk remained un-used and nature could develop naturally. In 1975 an area of 3600 ha was embanked to prevent the marshland from drying out. Under public pressure the area, enlarged with a drier border area, became a nature reserve. The soil is homogenous and very fertile. Soils with light clay of marine origin are found everywhere within the site.

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## 17. Physical features of the catchment area:

This wetland is part of the catchment area of the river Rhine. The surface area of the catchment is 185.000 km<sup>2</sup>. Geologically and geomorphologically it consists mainly of Quarternary, Paleozoic and Mesozoic sediments and Tertiary mountains. The general soil types are: Alluvial, Brown forest soils and montane soils. The general land use is forestry, pasture farming, arable farming, unproductive land (high mountains). The climates according to Köppen are rainy (Cbf) and montane (EH).

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## 18. Hydrological values:

The hydrological value of the Oostvaardersplassen includes flood control.

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## 19. Wetland Types

### a) presence:

Marine/coastal: A • B • C • D • E • F • G • H • I • J • K • Zk(a)

Inland: L • M • N • O • P • Q • R • Sp • Ss • Tp • Ts • U •  
Va •  
Vt • W • Xf • Xp • Y • Zg • Zk(b)

Human-made: 1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 • 7 • 8 • 9 • Zk(c)

### b) dominance:

Tp 50%; O19%; Xp 8%; 4: Drained grassland/ rough grassy vegetation 20%; Wet grassland 3%.

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## 20. General ecological features:

An extensive area of shallow lakes, pools, marshes, reedbeds, *Salix* woodland and grassland.

For birds the Oostvaardersplassen is the most important clay marsh in the Netherlands. It is a very important breeding area for birds of extensive reed marshes. A large part of the population of species like Great Cormorant, Bittern, Great Egret, Little Egret and Savi's Warbler breed here. For some species the large scale of the site resulted in an important source, from which the rest of the Netherlands (Bleu Throat, Great Egret) or western Europe (Bearded Tit) could be colonized. Rare species occurring here are the Hen Harrier, for which this is the only breeding site besides the Wadden islands, and since 2006 the White-tailed or Sea Eagle.

The site is also very important for migrating birds. Many species of birds of prey, herons, swans, ducks and geese come here to forage and rest. Tens of thousands of Greylag Geese use the Oostvaardersplassen as moulting area.

In the site many grazing animals were introduced: Heck cattle, Konik horses and Red deer. These animals, together with the wintering geese keep large parts of the site open, with exception of some scattered trees. This gave the site also the name "Serengeti of the north".

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## 21. Noteworthy flora:

Nothing particular.

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## 22. Noteworthy fauna:

The species for which the site has been designated under Natura 2000 as well as (other) threatened species of the National Red List have been listed under no. 14. The table below lists some other noteworthy fauna.

A selection of species of the National Red List (RL).

	<b>RL Category (year of adoption)</b>
<b>Fish species</b>	(2004)
Orfe <i>Leuciscus idus</i>	NT
<b>Mammals</b>	(2009)
Beaver <i>Castor fiber</i>	NT

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**23. Social and cultural values:**

**a) Describe if the site has any general social and/or 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:**

See 25. Current land use

**b) Is the site considered of international importance for holding, in addition to relevant ecological values, examples of significant cultural values, whether material or non-material, linked to its origin, conservation and/or ecological functioning?**

No

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**24. Land tenure/ownership:**

**a) within the Ramsar site:**

The site is owned by the State Forestry Service (SBB).

**b) in the surrounding area:**

Surrounding area: the water (Markermeer) is state owned, on land several private owners.

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

**a) within the Ramsar site:**

Walking and non-motorised vehicles <5%, water management >95%.

**b) in the surroundings/catchment:**

Industrial areas, railways.

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**26. Factors (past, present or potential) adversely affecting the site's ecological character, including changes in land (including water) use and development projects:**

**a) within the Ramsar site:**(A = serious threat covering large part of the area; B = moderate threat or local threat; C = minor threat):

Natural events (B - natural succession); Recreation/ tourism (C - ice skating); Other (B - botulism).

**b) in the surrounding area:**

Disturbance to birds (C - extension of airport Lelystad)

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**27. Conservation measures taken:**

**a) List national and/or international category and legal status of protected areas, including boundary relationships with the Ramsar site:**

- Special Protection Area (Birds Directive 79/409/EEC, 1989)
- Natura 2000-site.

**b) If appropriate, list the IUCN (1994) protected areas category/ies which apply to the site:**

Ia ; Ib ; II ; III ; IV ; V ; VI

**c) Does an officially approved management plan exist; and is it being implemented?:**

The Ramsar site matches 100% with the designation for Natura 2000.

The process for the Natura 2000-management plan has been started.

**d) Describe any other current management practices:**

Nothing particular

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**28. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:**

Plans exist to enlarge the area through connection with the forest of the Hollandse Hout (approx. 1500 ha). The plan for a 2 km wide corridor from the Oostvaardersplassen to the approx. 4000 ha of the Horsterwold, was disapproved in 2012 by the national government.

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

Ongoing biodiversity monitoring is one of the obligatory activities in relation to the designated Natura 2000-species.

Main ecosystem research is nowadays carried out by the University of Groningen and by Alterra, Research Institute within the Wageningen University and Research Centre.

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**30. Current communications, education and public awareness (CEPA) activities related to or benefiting the site:**

Visitors centre of the State Forestry Service, excursions, hide, information booklet.

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**31. Current recreation and tourism:**

The grazing animals, the wintering birds and the White-tailed Eagle form a nature tourist attraction. There is an information centre and there are several hides and shields for watching the birds and animals.

See 25. Current land use. Approximately 200,000 visitors a year.

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**32. Jurisdiction:**

Municipality Lelystad; Functional jurisdiction (conservation purposes): Ministry of Economic Affairs.

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**33. Management authority:**

Staatsbosbeheer, P.O. Box 1300, 3970 BH Driebergen, the Netherlands, tel. +31 (0)30-6926111.

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**34. Bibliographical references:**

The number of scientific/technical references is too extended to list here. For a complete list please surf to the publication lists of the research institutes on the internet. For an arbitrary selection see below:

- BirdLife International, 2004. Birds in Europe, population estimates, trends and conservation status. Cambridge, UK: BirdLife International. (BirdLife Conservation Series No. 12).
- Hornman, M., Hustings, F., Koffijberg, K., Kleefstra, R., Klaassen, O., van Winden, E., SOVON Ganzen- en Zwanenwerkgroep & L. Soldaat, 2012. Watervogels in Nederland 2009/2010. SOVON-rapport 2012/02, Waterdienst-rapport 12.06. SOVON Vogelonderzoek Nederland, Nijmegen.
- Janssen, John, A.M. & Joop, H.J. Schaminée, 2009. Europese Natuur in Nederland. Zee en kust Natura 2000-gebieden. KNNV-Uitgeverij. 296p.
- Ministerie van LNV, 2009. Besluit Natura 2000-gebied Oostvaardersplassen..
- Van Roomen M.W.J, Boele A., van der Weide M.J.T., van Winden E.A.J, Zoetebier D. 2000. Belangrijke vogelgebieden in Nederland, 1993-97. Actueel overzicht van Europese vogelwaarden in aangewezen en aan te wijzen speciale beschermingszones en andere



belangrijke gebieden. SOVON-informatierapport 2000/01. SOVON Vogelonderzoek  
Nederland, Beek-Ubbergen.

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