



# Ramsar Information Sheet

Published on 10 May 2023

Update version, previously published on : 9 March 2018

## Norway

### Balsfjord Wetland System



Designation date	6 August 2002
Site number	1186
Coordinates	69°27'09"N 18°59'30"E
Area	1 795,00 ha

## Color codes

Fields back-shaded in light blue relate to data and information required only for RIS updates.

Note that some fields concerning aspects of Part 3, the Ecological Character Description of the RIS (tinted in purple), are not expected to be completed as part of a standard RIS, but are included for completeness so as to provide the requested consistency between the RIS and the format of a 'full' Ecological Character Description, as adopted in Resolution X.15 (2008). If a Contracting Party does have information available that is relevant to these fields (for example from a national format Ecological Character Description) it may, if it wishes to, include information in these additional fields.

## 1 - Summary

### Summary

Balsfjorden Wetland System consists of three large marine tidal areas located within a fjord with the same name: Sørkjösleira in the inner part of Balsfjorden, Kobbevågen in the outer part and Grindøysundet in the Tromsø strait. At a low tide they reveal large areas of mud- and sandflats, while wet coastal meadows are found between the tidal areas and cultivated land outside the site boundaries. Gallery forests outline the site in some locations. Several rivers and streams discharge into the fjord through the tidal flats within Kobbevågen and Sørkjösleira. Grindøysundet contains some small ponds important for the birdlife.

The fjord has high densities of intertidal invertebrates (notably *Macoma* and *Mytilus*) and fish populations which support large numbers of shorebirds and seabirds. Balsfjorden, and perhaps Sørkjösleira in particular, is important as being one of only two resting sites in northern Norway for large numbers of spring migrant knots, which fly direct to Balsfjord from early spring staging areas in the United Kingdom and the Wadden Sea. They stay in Balsfjord for 2-3 weeks in May, and build up substantial fat reserves, before being believed to fly non-stop to their breeding grounds in Greenland and Arctic Canada. Balsfjord is one of only two fjords in the region used by this population.

The site has also a great importance as a staging, moulting and wintering area for a number of other waterfowl species, including swans, divers, grebes, ducks and waders.

## 2 - Data & location

### 2.1 - Formal data

#### 2.1.1 - Name and address of the compiler of this RIS

##### Responsible compiler

Institution/agency

Postal address

##### National Ramsar Administrative Authority

Postal address

#### 2.1.2 - Period of collection of data and information used to compile the RIS

From year

To year

#### 2.1.3 - Name of the Ramsar Site

Official name (in English, French or Spanish)

#### 2.1.4 - Changes to the boundaries and area of the Site since its designation or earlier update

(Update) A. Changes to Site boundary	Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>
(Update) The boundary has been delineated more accurately	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(Update) The boundary has been extended	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(Update) The boundary has been restricted	<input type="checkbox"/>
(Update) B. Changes to Site area	the area has increased
(Update) The Site area has been calculated more accurately	<input type="checkbox"/>
(Update) The Site has been delineated more accurately	<input type="checkbox"/>
(Update) The Site area has increased because of a boundary extension	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(Update) The Site area has decreased because of a boundary restriction	<input type="checkbox"/>
(Update) For secretariat only: This update is an extension	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### 2.1.5 - Changes to the ecological character of the Site

(Update) 6b i. Has the ecological character of the Ramsar Site (including applicable Criteria) changed since the previous RIS?

(Update) Optional text box to provide further information

There have been a decrease in the migrating population of Red Knots in the area. This is due to the fact that the population of Red Knots have declined in general. The site still supports a variety and high quantity of birds each year that for now we do not consider the ecological character of the site changed.

## 2.2 - Site location

### 2.2.1 - Defining the Site boundaries

#### b) Digital map/image

<4 file(s) uploaded>

Former maps

#### Boundaries description

### 2.2.2 - General location

a) In which large administrative region does the site lie?

b) What is the nearest town or population centre?

2.2.3 - For wetlands on national boundaries only

a) Does the wetland extend onto the territory of one or more other countries? Yes  No

b) Is the site adjacent to another designated Ramsar Site on the territory of another Contracting Party? Yes  No

2.2.4 - Area of the Site

Official area, in hectares (ha):

Area, in hectares (ha) as calculated from GIS boundaries

2.2.5 - Biogeography

Biogeographic regions

Regionalisation scheme(s)	Biogeographic region
EU biogeographic regionalization	Arctic
Other scheme (provide name below)	1- Middle boreal vegetation zone (Kobbevangen borders northern boreal zone), slightly oceanic section (Mb – O1).

Other biogeographic regionalisation scheme

1- Zonal division showing the variation in vegetation from south to north and from the lowlands to the mountains, and sectional graduation showing the variation between the coast and inland (In: Moen, A. 1998. Nasjonalatlas for Norge; vegetasjon. Statens kartverk, Hønefoss).  
 2- Biogeographical regions, Europe 2005, European Environment Agency, (<http://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/figures/biogeographical-regions-europe-2005-with-national-boundaries>)

### 3 - Why is the Site important?

#### 3.1 - Ramsar Criteria and their justification

- Criterion 1: Representative, rare or unique natural or near-natural wetland types

Other reasons

The Site is representative in this region of northern Norway. Fjords with shallow sea bays and large intertidal zones (mudflats and sandflats) occur in particular in the inner parts of the fjords and where rivers discharge into the fjord. Balsfjord is a particularly good example of this type of system in the region, with high densities of intertidal invertebrates (notably *Macoma* and *Mytilus*) and fish populations which support large numbers of shorebirds and seabirds. Sørkjosleira, the nature reserve in the innermost part of the fjord, has international value as stop-over site for large numbers of water birds.

- Criterion 2 : Rare species and threatened ecological communities

Optional text box to provide further information

Sørkjosleira and Kobbevågen hold a small population of Eurasian Otter *Lutra lutra* (Ann. II Berne Convention). Breeding is not known within any of the sites, but is not unlikely. Many other nationally threatened species are using the Balsfjord sites as a staging area in spring and autumn, e.g. large numbers of Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* (VU) (former counts with more than 1000 birds at Sørkjosleira in autumn, now less numerous), and small numbers of Greater Scaup *Aythya marila* (EN), and Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* (CR). Red list categories are given according to the national red list 2021.

- Criterion 3 : Biological diversity

Justification

Balsfjord supports significant numbers and diversity of waterfowl, waders and passerines, particularly in spring, notably being one of only two sites in northern Norway for large numbers of spring migrant Knots *Calidris canutus islandica*. It is also unusual for the region in supporting one of the most northerly breeding populations of Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* in Europe. Balsfjord also supports a very northerly wintering population of Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*, although these occur mostly outside the designated site.

- Criterion 4 : Support during critical life cycle stage or in adverse conditions

Optional text box to provide further information

Balsfjord is critically important for a significant proportion of the Nearctic-breeding population of Knot *Calidris canutus islandica* as a late spring staging and refuelling area. These birds fly direct to Balsfjord from early spring staging areas in the United Kingdom and Wadden Sea. They stay in Balsfjord for 2-3 weeks in May, and build up substantial fat reserves, before being believed to fly non-stop to their breeding grounds in Greenland and arctic Canada. Balsfjord is one of only two fjords in the region used by this population, the other being Porsangerfjord – it is assumed that more birds may use Balsfjord in years when ice extensively covers the feeding areas of Porsangerfjord. Balsfjord also has great importance as a staging, moulting (especially for Eurasian Wigeon *Anas Penelope*) and wintering area for a number of other waterfowl species, including swans, divers, grebes, ducks and waders like Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica* (up to 250 individuals counted in spring), Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus* (more than 200 birds have been counted in spring), and small numbers of Northern Shoveler, Greater Scaup *Aythya marila* (VU), and Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* (EN). More than 30 White-billed Divers can spend the winter in outer parts of Balsfjorden, mainly between Balsnes and Kobbevågen. Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* can reach 5.000 birds at Sørkjosleira and over 1000 birds in Kobbevågen. We also find high numbers of Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*, especially in Grindøysundet the numbers can reach up to 6000 individuals during migration.

Optional text box to provide further information

The Knot population using the fjord in May consistently exceeds 1 % of the bio-geographical population.

Criterion 7 : Significant and representative fish

Justification

The local and separate population of Atlantic herring *Clupea harengus* is totally confined to this area throughout its annual cycle. Whether the population constitutes a separate subspecies or only a population remains to be seen, however studies shows that it is genetically separate from other populations. Normally the entire stock spawns inside the site. The herring population is particularly important for breeding birds in the area, during winter the stock is also preyed upon by Killer Whale *Orcinus orca* (usually at other sites than the Ramsar site).

Criterion 8 : Fish spawning grounds, etc.

Justification

A local separate population of herring spawned only at a limited area of 70.000m<sup>2</sup> inside the site as showed by studies in 1988. Normally the population will use this limited area as a spawning site.

### 3.2 - Plant species whose presence relates to the international importance of the site

<no data available>

### 3.3 - Animal species whose presence relates to the international importance of the site

Phylum	Scientific name	Species qualifies under criterion			Species contributes under criterion				Pop. Size	Period of pop. Est.	% occurrence 1)	IUCN Red List	CITES Appendix I	CMS Appendix I	Other Status	Justification
		2	4	6	9	3	5	7								
<b>Others</b>																
CHORDATA/ MAMMALIA	<i>Lutra lutra</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				NT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Annex II, Bern Convention	Criterion 4: This species breeds in all three sub-sites.
<b>Fish, Mollusc and Crustacea</b>																
CHORDATA/ ACTINOPTERYGII	<i>Clupea harengus</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Criterion 8: A local separate population of herring spawned only in a limited area of 70.000m <sup>2</sup> inside the site as showed by studies in 1988. The population numbers ca. 3 millions spawning individuals.
<b>Birds</b>																
CHORDATA/ AVES	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	National red list status: VU	Criterion 4: This rare species breeds in small numbers in the area.
CHORDATA/ AVES	<i>Anas penelope</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Criterion 4: Important feeding/moulting area for this species. 580 individuals counted in 2013
CHORDATA/ AVES	<i>Aythya marila</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	National red list status: EN	Criterion 4: this species use the small ponds in Grindøysundet as staging area in spring and autumn
CHORDATA/ AVES	<i>Calidris canutus islandica</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Criterion 3: Balsfjord is one of only two sites in northern Norway for large numbers of spring migrant Knots. However, the number of birds resting here have been decreasing in the last years.

Phylum	Scientific name	Species qualifies under criterion				Species contributes under criterion				Pop. Size	Period of pop. Est.	% occurrence 1)	IUCN Red List	CITES Appendix I	CMS Appendix I	Other Status	Justification
		2	4	6	9	3	5	7	8								
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Calidris maritima</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Annex II, Bern Convention	Criterion 3: Balsfjord supports a very northerly wintering population of Purple Sandpiper <i>Calidris maritima</i> , although these occur mostly outside the two designated areas. Criterion 4: Balsfjord also has importance as a staging and wintering area.
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				VU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Criterion 4: Important wintering area for this species.
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Gavia adamsii</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				NT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	National red list status: VU	Criterion 4: Wintering site for this species.
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Gavia arctica</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Criterion 4: This is an important wintering site for this species.
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				NT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Criterion 4: Important breeding site for this species.
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				NT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	National red list status: CR	Criterion 3: Balsfjord supports a significant diversity of waterbirds, including rare species like the Black-tailed Godwit Criterion 4: Balsfjord has importance as a staging and wintering area for this species.
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Melanitta fusca</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				VU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	National red list status: VU	Criterion 4: Important wintering area for this species.
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	National red list status: VU	Criterion 4: Breeding site for this species.
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Criterion 4: Important staging area for this species.
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Podiceps auritus</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				VU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	National red list status: VU	Criterion 4: Important staging area for this species.
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Annex II, Bern Convention	Criterion 3: one of the most northerly breeding populations of Shelduck in Europe. Criterion 4: Balsfjord also has importance as a staging and wintering area for this species.

1) Percentage of the total biogeographic population at the site

*Clupea harengus*, justification for criterion 7: The local and separate population of Herring *Clupea harengus* is totally confined to this area throughout its annual cycle. Whether the population constitutes a separate subspecies or only a population remains to be seen, however studies show that it is genetically separate from other populations. Normally the entire stock spawns inside the site. The herring population is particularly important for breeding birds in the area, during winter the stock is also preyed upon by Killer Whale *Orcinus orca* (usually at other sites than the Ramsar site).

**Molluscs:**  
A high production of mollusks (especially *Macoma* and *Mytilus*) is the main attraction for the migratory birds. The tiny mollusks numbers millions pr. m<sup>2</sup>.

### 3.4 - Ecological communities whose presence relates to the international importance of the site

Name of ecological community	Community qualifies under Criterion 2?	Description	Justification
Tidal meadow	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Considered as VU on the national red list of nature types (2018)
Alluvial forest	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Considered as VU on the national red list of nature types (2018)
Boreal heath	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Considered as VU on the national red list of nature types (2018)

[Optional text box to provide further information](#)

Eelgrass meadows: Eelgrass Meadows is Associated With a high biodiversity. This is an important nursing ground and Source of Food for various species of Fish.

Mud- and sandflats: These areas support large numbers of migrant waterbirds, such as the Red Knot.



## 4 - What is the Site like? (Ecological character description)

### 4.1 - Ecological character

Situated in the northern boreal zone, characterized by: Coastal forests of *Betula pubescens* and *Alnus incana*. Besides the dominant ecological feature of extensive mudflats, smaller areas of wet meadows occur along the shorelines. The extensive mudflats that support high densities of invertebrates like mussels, is important to large numbers of different waterbirds and waders in critical stages of their life cycle.

The shorelines and wet meadows have been mapped and six different plant communities have been described all quite typical for the northern regions and mostly dependent/influenced by salt or brackish waters. *Zostera* spp and *Najas* spp beds in the shallow waters, wet and salt influenced foreshores with eg *Puccinella* spp, and salt tolerant *Carex subspatheacea* meadows is a dominant feature and biogeographically typical.

Sørkjosleira is characterized by brackish waters and a high production of molluscs. At Kobbevågen a small mire constitutes part of the protected site.

Gallery forests (*Betula*, *Alnus* and *Salix*) occur along rivers and shorelines. They are not extensive, but an important feature for flora and fauna.

### 4.2 - What wetland type(s) are in the site?

#### Marine or coastal wetlands

Wetland types (code and name)	Local name	Ranking of extent (1: greatest - 4: least)	Area (ha) of wetland type	Justification of Criterion 1
A: Permanent shallow marine waters		2		
G: Intertidal mud, sand or salt flats		1		Representative

#### Inland wetlands

Wetland types (code and name)	Local name	Ranking of extent (1: greatest - 4: least)	Area (ha) of wetland type	Justification of Criterion 1
Fresh water > Marshes on inorganic soils >> Ts: Seasonal/ intermittent freshwater marshes/ pools on inorganic soils		3		
Fresh water > Marshes on peat soils >> U: Permanent Non-forested peatlands				
Fresh water > Marshes on inorganic soils >> Xf: Freshwater, tree-dominated wetlands		4		

### 4.3 - Biological components

#### 4.3.1 - Plant species

##### Other noteworthy plant species

Phylum	Scientific name	Position in range / endemism / other
TRACHEOPHYTA/LILIOPSIDA	<i>Najas affinis</i>	
TRACHEOPHYTA/LILIOPSIDA	<i>Puccinellia maritima</i>	
TRACHEOPHYTA/LILIOPSIDA	<i>Ruppia maritima</i>	

##### Optional text box to provide further information

Gallery forests (*Betula*, *Alnus* and *Salix*) occur along rivers and shorelines, although not extensive, it is an important feature for flora and fauna.

#### 4.3.2 - Animal species

##### Other noteworthy animal species

Phylum	Scientific name	Pop. size	Period of pop. est.	% occurrence	Position in range /endemism/other
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Falco columbarius</i>				Grindøysundet: hunting site for this species
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>				Grindøysundet: hunting site for this species
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>				Grindøysundet: hunting site for this species
CHORDATA/MAMMALIA	<i>Orcinus orca</i>				Regularly seen in the inner part of Balsfjord, preying upon the local Herring Clupea harengus stock.
CHORDATA/MAMMALIA	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>				Regularly seen in the fjord, feeding on stocks of herring and capelin.
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>				Grindøysundet: About 200 pairs breed on the island Grindøya each year
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Somateria spectabilis</i>				Grindøysundet: important winter area for this species
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>				
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>				
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Gavia stellata</i>				

## 4.4 - Physical components

### 4.4.1 - Climate

Climatic region	Subregion
D: Moist Mid-Latitude climate with cold winters	Dfc: Subarctic (Severe winter, no dry season, cool summer)

The climate is coastal and northern, with relatively warm and short summers, long, but relatively mild winters in coastal areas. Annual precipitation is >1000mm.

### 4.4.2 - Geomorphic setting

a) Minimum elevation above sea level (in metres)

a) Maximum elevation above sea level (in metres)

- Entire river basin
- Upper part of river basin
- Middle part of river basin
- Lower part of river basin
- More than one river basin
- Not in river basin
- Coastal

Please name the river basin or basins. If the site lies in a sub-basin, please also name the larger river basin. For a coastal/marine site, please name the sea or ocean.

Sørkjøleira: Three watercourses and some smaller creeks enter the site. By full ebb the mudflats stretches 700m out.

Kobbevågen: Two larger rivers enter the site. Some places the mudflats are replaced by harder surfaces.

Grindøysundet: part of the Tromsø strait and Malangen fjord system

Norwegian Sea

### 4.4.3 - Soil

Mineral

(Update) Changes at RIS update No change  Increase  Decrease  Unknown

Organic

(Update) Changes at RIS update No change  Increase  Decrease  Unknown

No available information

Are soil types subject to change as a result of changing hydrological conditions (e.g., increased salinity or acidification)? Yes  No

Please provide further information on the soil (optional)

The intertidal mudflats typically consists of moraine deposits and deposits from watercourses.

#### 4.4.4 - Water regime

Water permanence

Presence?	Changes at RIS update
Usually permanent water present	
Usually seasonal, ephemeral or intermittent water present	

Source of water that maintains character of the site

Presence?	Predominant water source	Changes at RIS update
Water inputs from surface water	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change
Marine water	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change

Water destination

Presence?	Changes at RIS update
Marine	No change

Stability of water regime

Presence?	Changes at RIS update
Water levels fluctuating (including tidal)	No change

Please add any comments on the water regime and its determinants (if relevant). Use this box to explain sites with complex hydrology.

Sørkjosleira: Three watercourses and some smaller creeks enter the site. By full ebb the mudflats stretches 700m out.  
Kobbevågen: Two larger rivers enter the site. Some places the mudflats are replaced by harder surfaces.

#### 4.4.5 - Sediment regime

Sediment regime unknown

<no data available>

#### 4.4.6 - Water pH

Unknown

<no data available>

#### 4.4.7 - Water salinity

Fresh (<0.5 g/l)

(Update) Changes at RIS update No change  Increase  Decrease  Unknown

Mixohaline (brackish)/Mixosaline (0.5-30 g/l)

(Update) Changes at RIS update No change  Increase  Decrease  Unknown

Euhaline/Eusaline (30-40 g/l)

(Update) Changes at RIS update No change  Increase  Decrease  Unknown

Unknown

#### 4.4.8 - Dissolved or suspended nutrients in water

Unknown

<no data available>

#### 4.4.9 - Features of the surrounding area which may affect the Site

Please describe whether, and if so how, the landscape and ecological characteristics in the area surrounding the Ramsar Site differ from the i) broadly similar  ii) significantly different  site itself:

Surrounding area has greater urbanisation or development

Surrounding area has higher human population density

Surrounding area has more intensive agricultural use

Surrounding area has significantly different land cover or habitat types

### 4.5 - Ecosystem services

#### 4.5.1 - Ecosystem services/benefits

##### Provisioning Services

Ecosystem service	Examples	Importance/Extent/Significance
Wetland non-food products	Livestock fodder	Medium

##### Regulating Services

Ecosystem service	Examples	Importance/Extent/Significance
Hazard reduction	Coastal shoreline and river bank stabilization and storm protection	Medium

##### Cultural Services

Ecosystem service	Examples	Importance/Extent/Significance
Recreation and tourism	Picnics, outings, touring	Medium
Recreation and tourism	Water sports and activities	Medium
Scientific and educational	Major scientific study site	Medium
Scientific and educational	Long-term monitoring site	Medium

##### Supporting Services

Ecosystem service	Examples	Importance/Extent/Significance
Soil formation	Sediment retention	Medium
Nutrient cycling	Carbon storage/sequestration	Low

Other ecosystem service(s) not included above:

Some grazing of the wet meadows by husbandry, gravel digging for local use occurs, some leisure activities as horse-riding and swimming also occur. In general little impact and low traffic.

No facilities erected. High international interest in research on the migration of waders in the area, cf. a number of publications. The birds in the area are annually monitored and research on birds by Norwegian Institute for Nature Research continues.

Have studies or assessments been made of the economic valuation of ecosystem services provided by this Ramsar Site? Yes  No  Unknown

#### 4.5.2 - Social and cultural values

i) the site provides a model of wetland wise use, demonstrating the application of traditional knowledge and methods of management and use that maintain the ecological character of the wetland

ii) the site has exceptional cultural traditions or records of former civilizations that have influenced the ecological character of the wetland

iii) the ecological character of the wetland depends on its interaction with local communities or indigenous peoples

iv) relevant non-material values such as sacred sites are present and their existence is strongly linked with the maintenance of the ecological character of the wetland

<no data available>

### 4.6 - Ecological processes

<no data available>

## 5 - How is the Site managed? (Conservation and management)

### 5.1 - Land tenure and responsibilities (Managers)

#### 5.1.1 - Land tenure/ownership

##### Private ownership

Category	Within the Ramsar Site	In the surrounding area
Other types of private/individual owner(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Provide further information on the land tenure / ownership regime (optional):

Within the site: Private  
In the surrounding area: Private

#### 5.1.2 - Management authority

Please list the local office / offices of any agency or organization responsible for managing the site:

County Governor of Troms and Finnmark

Postal address:

Statsforvalteren i Troms og Finnmark,  
Pb. 700  
N-9815 VADSØ

E-mail address:

sffpost@statsforvalteren.no

## 5.2 - Ecological character threats and responses (Management)

### 5.2.1 - Factors (actual or likely) adversely affecting the Site's ecological character

Please describe any other threats (optional):

at the site: Little impact today  
around the site: Little impact today.

#### 5.2.2 - Legal conservation status

##### National legal designations

Designation type	Name of area	Online information url	Overlap with Ramsar Site
Nature Reserve	Balsfjord Wetland System		whole

#### 5.2.3 - IUCN protected areas categories (2008)

- Ia Strict Nature Reserve
- Ib Wilderness Area: protected area managed mainly for wilderness protection
- II National Park: protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation
- III Natural Monument: protected area managed mainly for conservation of specific natural features
- IV Habitat/Species Management Area: protected area managed mainly for conservation through management intervention
- V Protected Landscape/Seascape: protected area managed mainly for landscape/seascape conservation and recreation
- VI Managed Resource Protected Area: protected area managed mainly for the sustainable use of natural ecosystems

<no data available>

#### 5.2.4 - Key conservation measures

##### Legal protection

Measures	Status
Legal protection	Implemented

### 5.2.5 - Management planning

Is there a site-specific management plan for the site? No

Has a management effectiveness assessment been undertaken for the site? Yes  No

If the site is a formal transboundary site as indicated in section Data and location > Site location, are there shared management planning processes with another Contracting Party? Yes  No

Please indicate if a Ramsar centre, other educational or visitor facility, or an educational or visitor programme is associated with the site:

Posters have been erected in both areas, no other educational facilities have yet been produced.  
There is also a comprehensive book on the Balsfjord Wetland System.

### 5.2.6 - Planning for restoration

Is there a site-specific restoration plan? Please select a value

### 5.2.7 - Monitoring implemented or proposed

Monitoring	Status
Birds	Implemented

No facilities erected. High international interest in research on the migration of waders in the area, cf. a number of publications. The birds in the area are annually monitored and research on birds by Norwegian Institute for Nature Research continues.

## 6 - Additional material

### 6.1 - Additional reports and documents

#### 6.1.1 - Bibliographical references

**Botany:**

Fjelland, M., Elven, R. & Johansen, V. 1983. Botaniske verneverdier på havstrand i troms. Miljøverndepartementet. Rapport T-551. 291pp. (in Norwegian - on marine wet meadows and botanical values).

**Birds:**

Davidson, N.C. & Evans, P.R. 1986. The ecology of migrant knots in North Norway during May 1985. Report SRG86/1, Shorebird Research Group, University of Durham.

Strann, K.B. 1990. The status of breeding Shelducks *Tadorna tadorna* in North Norway. Fauna norv. Ser. C. Cinclus 14:1-5.

Strann, K.B. 1992. Numbers and distribution of Knot *Calidris canutus islandica* during spring migration in North Norway 1983-1989. Wader Study Group Bull. 64, Suppl.: 121-125.

Summers, R.W., Strann, K.B., Rae, R. & Heggås, J. 1990. Wintering Purple Sandpipers *Calidris maritima* in Troms county, northern Norway. Ornis cand. 21:248-254.

**Fish:**

Lurås, I.J. 1994. Gytebiologi hos Balsfjordsild og betydningen av gytebiotopens sammensetning for eggenes fordeling og tetthet.

Hovedfagsoppgave i marin økologi. Norges fiskerihøgskole, Universitetet i Tromsø. (in Norwegian - on the local population of Balsfjordherring)

**Invertebrates:**

Oug, E. 1999. Polychaetes from intertidal rocky and sedimentary habitats in the region of Tromsø, northern Norway. Norwegian Institute for Water Research. Short note.

Study on the distribution and densities of *Mytilus* and *Macoma* molluscs.

Artsdatabanken (2021, 24. november). Norsk rødliste for arter 2021. <https://www.artsdatabanken.no/lister/rodlisteforarter/2021>

Moen, A. 1998. National Atlas of Norway: Vegetation. Norwegian Mapping Authority, Hønefoss Wartena, E.M.M. 1998.

#### 6.1.2 - Additional reports and documents

i. taxonomic lists of plant and animal species occurring in the site (see section 4.3)

<no file available>

ii. a detailed Ecological Character Description (ECD) (in a national format)

<no file available>

iii. a description of the site in a national or regional wetland inventory

<no file available>

iv. relevant Article 3.2 reports

<no file available>

v. site management plan

<no file available>

vi. other published literature

<no file available>

<no data available>

#### 6.1.3 - Photograph(s) of the Site

Please provide at least one photograph of the site:



Balsfjord ( Gunnar Kjærstad, 04-06-2017 )



Balsfjord ( Gunnar Kjærstad, 04-06-2017 )

#### 6.1.4 - Designation letter and related data

Designation letter

<1 file(s) uploaded>

Date of Designation