



Ramsar Information Sheet

Published on 23 June 2023

Update version, previously published on : 21 December 2017

Norway

Forlandsøyane



Designation date	24 July 1985
Site number	313
Coordinates	78°20'20"N 11°34'19"E
Area	540,00 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

Forlandsøyene is located in the western Svalbard archipelago, south-west of the Forlandet island. The site includes three islands (Nordøya, Midtøya and Sørøya) and a number of skerries (small, rocky islets) together with the surrounding marine area. Sørøya is completely bare, while the remaining two are grass-covered with small ponds. The shorelines are formed by cliffs and sandy beaches. The surrounding sea is shallow and nutrient-rich. The Site supports breeding colonies of several goose species nesting in Svalbard: the pink-footed goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*), the brent goose (and one subspecies) (*Branta bernicla*) and the barnacle goose (*Branta leucopsis*) along with various other species of breeding waterbirds as well as a population of the harbour seal (*Phoca vitulina*). The traditional collection of eider down is permitted occasionally. The Site is part of the Forlandet National Park.

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 No

(Update) B. Changes to Site area No change to area

(Update) For secretariat only: This update is an extension

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? No

2.2 - Site location

2.2.1 - Defining the Site boundaries

b) Digital map/image

<1 file(s) uploaded>

Former maps

Boundaries description

The boundary is the same as the Forlandsøyane Nature Reserve established on July 1th 1973.

The site is composed of three separate islands (Nordøya, Midtøya and Sørøya) and some small skerries. Sea areas in a distance of 300 m from all islands and skerries at lowest tide are enclosed within the site.

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): 540

Area, in hectares (ha) as calculated from GIS boundaries 539.351

2.2.5 - Biogeography

Biogeographic regions

Regionalisation scheme(s)	Biogeographic region
EU biogeographic regionalization	2. Arctic
Other scheme (provide name below)	1. NATZ – northern arctic tundra zone

Other biogeographic regionalisation scheme

1. Zonal division based on the distribution of thermophilous vascular plant species. Vascular plants abundant on Svalbard are divided into five groups based on temperature demands and the distribution of these groups of species have been surveyed in 163 areas (In: Elvebakk, A. (1997): Tundra diversity and ecological characteristics of Svalbard. In: Wiegolaski, F.E. (ed.): Polar and alpine tundra. Ecosystems of the world 3: 347-359. Elsevier.

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 This is a small marine archipelago with shallow waters with numerous skerries and some small islands. It is a typical small archipelago for this biogeographic region.

- Criterion 2 : Rare species and threatened ecological communities

Optional text box to provide further information The site host a breeding location for the threatened Glaucous Gull (Larus hyperboreus, SRL: VU).

- Criterion 3 : Biological diversity

Justification This group of islands and skerries are traditional breeding sites for brent geese, barnacle geese, pink-footed geese and common eider, which are characteristic species for this kind of archipelago in this biogeographic region.

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

Optional text box to provide further information The site supports breeding colonies of all three goose species (and one subspecies) nesting in Svalbard, along with various other species of breeding waterbirds as well as a population of the harbour seal.

- Criterion 6 : >1% waterbird population

Optional text box to provide further information This site host 2.8% of the barnacle geese population for this biogeographic region (Svalbard/South-west Scotland) and 1.4% of the common eider population (Svalbard & Franz Joseph (bre)).

(Population estimates are based on population counts from 1995. However, it is assumed that there has been little change in the population of these species since the last count was performed and that the site regularly hosts more than 1% of the population in this biogeographic region).

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	8								
Others																	
CHORDATA/MAMMALIA	<i>Phoca vitulina</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: It is an important breeding habitat for this species.
Birds																	
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</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 3 & 4: This group of islands and skerries are traditional breeding sites for this species.
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Branta bernicla hrota</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"/>	12				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		6 pairs (1995). No recent estimate exists. Criterion 4: This species breeds annually at Forlandsøyane.
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Branta leucopsis</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	838	1995	1	LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ann. II Berne Convention	419 pairs (1995). No recent estimate exists. Criterion 3 & 4: This group of islands and skerries are traditional breeding sites for this species. Criterion 6: Biogeographic region: Svalbard/South-west Scotland. Corresponds to >1% of the Svalbard population of this species.
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Calidris maritima</i>	<input checked="" 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"/>	Ann. II Berne Convention	Criterion 4: This species breeds annually at Forlandsøyane.
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Gavia stellata</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	10			LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ann. II Berne Convention	5 pairs in 1995. No recent estimate exists. Criterion 4: This species breeds annually at Forlandsøyane.
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Larus hyperboreus</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	151			LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Svalbard Red List: Considered as VU	>50 pairs, 151 ind (1995). No recent estimate exists. Criterion 4: This species breeds annually at Forlandsøyane.
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Larus marinus</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 species breeds annually at Forlandsøyane.
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Phalaropus fulicarius</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"/>	60			LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		60 ind. (1995). No recent estimate exists. Criterion 4: This species breeds annually at Forlandsøyane.
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	800	1995	1.4	NT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		220-650 pairs (1995). No recent estimate exists. Criterion 3 & 4: This location host traditional breeding sites for this species, and is a part of an important feeding and moulting area for common eider. Criterion 6: Biogeographic Region - borealis, Svalbard & Franz Joseph (bre)
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Stercorarius skua</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 species breeds annually at Forlandsøyane.
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	165			LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ann. II Berne Convention	>70 pairs, 165 ind. (1995) Criterion 4: This species breeds annually at Forlandsøyane.

1) Percentage of the total biogeographic population at the site

Capitalized letters shows the species' status on the Svalbard Red List 2021.

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

<no data available>

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

4.1 - Ecological character

Situated in the Arctic and characterized by:

- Archipelago in the coastal zone with rock or sand/gravel dominated shores.
- None or only sparse grass vegetation and some small ponds. All vegetation on the islands is influenced by seawater.
- Drift ice occurs during winter and spring, but the archipelago is normally not icebound.

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		1		Representative
D: Rocky marine shores		2		Representative
E: Sand, shingle or pebble shores		3		Representative

4.3 - Biological components

4.3.1 - Plant species

Other noteworthy plant species

Phylum	Scientific name	Position in range / endemism / other
TRACHEOPHYTA/LILIOPSIDA	<i>Festuca brachyphylla</i>	Svalbard Red List: Considered as LC

Optional text box to provide further information

Capitalized letters shows the species' status on the Svalbard Red List 2021.

4.3.2 - Animal species

<no data available>

4.4 - Physical components

4.4.1 - Climate

Climatic region	Subregion
E: Polar climate with extremely cold winters and summers	ET: Tundra (Polar tundra, no true summer)

The climate is characterised by low temperatures and low precipitation. Average temperature in July is 4,8°C. Annual average temperature is -5,1°C. Annual precipitation is 480 mm. Drift ice occur during winter and spring, but the archipelago is normally not icebound.

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.

Norwegian Sea

4.4.3 - Soil

Mineral

(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 surrounding sea areas are shallow and nutrient rich. The shoreline around the islands consists partly of cliffs, partly of sandy shores. The land areas consist of bare rock and some areas covered with marine deposits.

4.4.4 - Water regime

Water permanence

Presence?	Changes at RIS update
Usually permanent water present	

Source of water that maintains character of the site

Presence?	Predominant water source	Changes at RIS update
Water inputs from precipitation	<input checked="" 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:

All fresh water on the islands originates from precipitation.

Shallow marine waters mostly less than six metres deep at low tide, includes sea bays and straits. There are also some deeper areas.

4.4.5 - Sediment regime

Sediment regime unknown

4.4.6 - Water pH

Unknown

4.4.7 - Water salinity

Fresh (<0.5 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

Please provide further information on dissolved or suspended nutrients (optional):

The surrounding sea areas are shallow and nutrient rich.

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 site itself: i) broadly similar ii) significantly different

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

Please describe other ways in which the surrounding area is different:

No human activity except for ships passing Forlandet Island.

4.5 - Ecosystem services

4.5.1 - Ecosystem services/benefits

Provisioning Services

Ecosystem service	Examples	Importance/Extent/Significance
Food for humans	Sustenance for humans (e.g., fish, molluscs, grains)	Medium
Wetland non-food products	Other	Medium

Cultural Services

Ecosystem service	Examples	Importance/Extent/Significance
Scientific and educational	Long-term monitoring site	Low

Other ecosystem service(s) not included above:

Harvest of eggs and eider down have been performed with various intensity in Svalbard from the 18th century and until today. Trappers using Forlandet Island as hunting grounds have also collected eggs and eider down in this archipelago in the past. Collecting of eider down is still practiced.

Little research and biodiversity monitoring have been conducted in the area. There are no field research stations in this part of Svalbard.

There is no use of the Ramsar site for recreation/tourism. The regulations for the nature reserve ban visits from May 15th to August 15th because of the birds breeding season.

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

Public ownership

Category	Within the Ramsar Site	In the surrounding area
National/Federal government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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

Within the Ramsar site: State owned (100%)

In the surrounding area: State owned (100%)

5.1.2 - Management authority

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

Governor of Svalbard

Postal address:

Sysseimesteren på Svalbard
Pb 633
N-9171 Longyearbyen

E-mail address:

firmapost@sysseimesteren.no

5.2 - Ecological character threats and responses (Management)

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

Human settlements (non agricultural)

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	Changes	In the surrounding area	Changes
Unspecified development	Medium impact	Medium impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change
Commercial and industrial areas	Medium impact	Medium impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change

Energy production and mining

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	Changes	In the surrounding area	Changes
Oil and gas drilling		Medium impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change

Human intrusions and disturbance

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	Changes	In the surrounding area	Changes
Recreational and tourism activities	Medium impact	Medium impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change

Pollution

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	Changes	In the surrounding area	Changes
Industrial and military effluents			<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Unspecified			<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Please describe any other threats (optional):

In the surrounding area:
Increasing tourism, oil spill from ships and oil/gas development projects in this part of the Arctic is a possible threat.

5.2.2 - Legal conservation status

National legal designations

Designation type	Name of area	Online information url	Overlap with Ramsar Site
National Park	Forlandet		partly
Nature Reserve	Forlandsøyane		whole
bird sanctuary	Forlandsøyane		whole

Non-statutory designations

Designation type	Name of area	Online information url	Overlap with Ramsar Site
Important Bird Area	Forlandet National Park		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

5.2.4 - Key conservation measures

Legal protection

Measures	Status
Legal protection	Implemented

Other:

There is an ambition to present a management plan in near future.

The nature reserve lies within Forlandet National Park (established in 1973) where hunting of all birds and mammals are permanently prohibited.

5.2.5 - Management planning

- Is there a site-specific management plan for the site? In preparation
- 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:

No such activities have been conducted, mainly because of the remoteness of the area and difficult access.

5.2.6 - Planning for restoration

Is there a site-specific restoration plan? No need identified

5.2.7 - Monitoring implemented or proposed

Monitoring	Status
Plant community	Implemented
Animal community	Implemented

Little research and biodiversity monitoring have been conducted in the area. There are no field research stations in this part of Svalbard.

6 - Additional material

6.1 - Additional reports and documents

6.1.1 - Bibliographical references

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

Bangjord, G. (ed.) 1997. Pattedyr- og fugleregistreringer på Svalbard i 1995. Norsk Polarinstitutt. Rapportserie Nr. 99 – Oslo 1997 (in Norwegian). In Norwegian – Survey of mammals and birds on Svalbard 1995.

The Governor of Svalbard – unpublished material from a survey in 1992.

Prestrud, P. and Børset, A. 1984. Status of the goose populations in the bird sanctuaries in Svalbard. Norsk Polarinstitutt Skr. 181: 129-133.

Prestrud, P. and Mehlum, F. 1991: Population size and summer distribution of the Common Eider *Somateria melissima* in Svalbard 1981-1985. Norsk Polarinstitutt Skrifter 195. 9-20.

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:



Aerial view of Forlandsøyane (Norwegian Polar Institute, 26-10-2017)

6.1.4 - Designation letter and related data

Designation letter

<1 file(s) uploaded>

Date of Designation