



# Ramsar Information Sheet

Published on 1 January 2012

Update version, previously published on : 1 January 2012

## Norway Isøyane



Designation date	24 July 1985
Site number	316
Coordinates	77°08'36"N 14°47'25"E
Area	230,00 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

The Site is located in the western Svalbard archipelago, on the south-western coast of Spitsbergen and includes two islands, Nordre Isøya and Isøykalven, several smaller islets and the surrounding marine area.

Nordre Isøya, the northern island, is covered with rich, grassy vegetation, and small freshwater ponds, while Isøykalven, the southern island, supports less-developed vegetation. The area is among the most important localities on Spitsbergen for the nesting barnacle geese and common eider. Polar bears regularly visit the Site. Apart from the occasionally permitted traditional collection of eider down and eggs (at a sustainable level), human activities are restricted to research and monitoring. Isøyane is part of the Sør-Spitsbergen National Park, and is a bird protection area.

## 2 - Data & location

### 2.1 - Formal data

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

##### Compiler 1

Name	Pernille Kvernland
Institution/agency	Norwegian Environment Agency
Postal address	Post box 5672 Torgarden, N-7485 Trondheim, Norway
E-mail	post@miljodir.no
Phone	+47 73580500

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

From year	1984
To year	2015

#### 2.1.3 - Name of the Ramsar Site

Official name (in English, French or Spanish)	Isøyane
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#### 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

#### 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	0
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#### Boundaries description

The boundary is the same as of the Isøyane Nature Reserve established on July 1th 1973.  
The site is composed of two separate islands, Nordre Isøya and Isøykalven, and some small skerries.  
The Sea areas at 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?	Svalbard
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b) What is the nearest town or population centre?	Longyearbyen, approx pop. est. 2 100 (2015)
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### 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):	230
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Area, in hectares (ha) as calculated from  
GIS boundaries 230.16

### 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 distributions 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, skerries and small islands. It is a typical archipelago for this biogeographic region.

- Criterion 2 : Rare species and threatened ecological communities

- Criterion 3 : Biological diversity

Justification

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



















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

- Criterion 6 : >1% waterbird population

#### 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	Common name	Species qualifies under criterion				Species contributes under criterion				Pop. Size	Period of pop. Est.	% occurrence <sup>1)</sup>	IUCN Red List	CITES Appendix I	CMS Appendix I	Other Status	Justification
			2	4	6	9	3	5	7	8								
<b>Birds</b>																		
CHORDATA / AVES	<i>Branta leucopsis</i> 	Bamade Goose	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	700	1995	2,3	LC 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ann. II Berne Convention	250-450 pairs (1995) Criterion 3 & 4: This group of islands and skerries are traditional breeding sites for this species. Criterion 6: Biogeographic Region: Svalbard/South-west Scotland
CHORDATA / AVES	<i>Gavia stellata</i> 	Red-throated Diver; Red-throated Loon	<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 annually breeds at Isøyane.
CHORDATA / AVES	<i>Larus hyperboreus</i> 	Glaucous Gull	<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"/>	Svalbard Red List: Considered as NT	>30 pairs. Criterion 4: This species annually breeds at Isøyane.
CHORDATA / AVES	<i>Larus marinus</i> 	Great Black-backed Gull	<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"/>	6			LC 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		1-5 pairs. Criterion 4: This species annually breeds at Isøyane.
CHORDATA / AVES	<i>Phalaropus fulicarius</i> 	Red Phalarope	<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"/>	70			LC 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		30-40 pairs. Criterion 4: This species annually breeds at Isøyane.
CHORDATA / AVES	<i>Somateria mollissima</i> 	Common Eider	<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"/>	436			NT 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		218 pairs (1995). Criterion 3 & 4: This group of islands and skerries are traditional breeding sites for this species.
CHORDATA / AVES	<i>Stercorarius skua</i> 	Great Skua	<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"/>	40			LC 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		>20 pairs. Criterion 4: This species annually breeds at Isøyane.
CHORDATA / AVES	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i> 	Arctic Tern	<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"/>	80			LC 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ann. II Berne Convention	>40 pairs. Criterion 4: This species annually breeds at Isøyane.
<b>Others</b>																		
CHORDATA / MAMMALIA	<i>Ursus maritimus</i> 	Polar Bear	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				VU 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	National Red List: Considered as VU	This species is known to visit these islands to prey upon eggs.

1) Percentage of the total biogeographic population at the site

### 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.
- 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

<no data available>

#### 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 4,0°C. Annual average temperature is -5,4°C. Annual average precipitation is 405 mm. Drift ice occurs in 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 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. The northern island has rich grassy vegetation.

#### 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
Marine water	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change
Water inputs from rainfall	<input checked="" 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 meters deep at low tide, includes sea bays and straits. There is also some deeper areas. The middle tidal amplitude is approx. 1,5 m (Longyearbyen harbour).

#### 4.4.5 - Sediment regime

Sediment regime unknown

#### 4.4.6 - Water pH

Unknown

#### 4.4.7 - Water salinity

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 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

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

No human activity except for ships passing.



## 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

#### 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
Scientific and educational	Long-term monitoring site	Medium

#### Other ecosystem service(s) not included above:

The site has some value in shoreline stabilization. Harvest of eggs and eider down, at a sustainable level, has been performed with various intensity in Svalbard from the 18th century and until today. Trappers using this part of Svalbard as hunting grounds have also collected eggs and eider down in this archipelago in the past. In 2010 a permission was given to collect up to 30 eggs from common eiders.

Some research and biodiversity monitoring have been conducted in the area. There is no field research stations in the area.

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:

PO Box. 633, N-9171 Longyearbyen.

E-mail address:

firmapost@syssemmannen.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
Commercial and industrial areas	Medium impact	Medium impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change
Unspecified development	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

Biological resource use

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

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	South Spitsbergen		partly
Nature Reserve	Isøyane		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 South Spitsbergen 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

Some research and biodiversity monitoring have been conducted in the area. There is no field research stations in the area.

## 6 - Additional material

### 6.1 - Additional reports and documents

#### 6.1.1 - Bibliographical references

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.

Henriksen, S., Hilmo, O., 2015. Norsk rødliste for arter 2015 (red). Artsdatabanken, Norge - 2015 Norwegian Red List. Artsdatabanken, Norway

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>

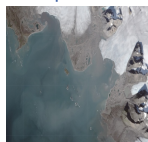
vi. other published literature

<no file available>

<no data available>

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

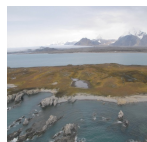
Please provide at least one photograph of the site:



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



Nordre Isøya ( Georg Bangjord, 23-06-2015 )



Isøyane ( Gunhild Luttnæs/Governor of Svalbard, 04-07-2016 )



Isøyane ( Gunhild Luttnæs/Governor of Svalbard, 04-07-2016 )



Isøyane ( Gunhild Luttnæs/Governor of Svalbard, 04-07-2016 )



Isøyane ( Gunhild Luttnæs/Governor of Svalbard, 04-07-2016 )

#### 6.1.4 - Designation letter and related data

Designation letter

<1 file(s) uploaded>

Date of Designation 1985-07-24