# 27. Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands

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

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

**1. Date this sheet was completed/updated:**
September 1997

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY.**

DD MM YY

Designation date

Site Reference Number

**2. Country**: Russian Federation

**3. Name of wetland:** Berezovye Islands in the Gulf of Finland, Baltic Sea

**4. Geographical coordinates:** 60°10'-60°27'N, 28°18'-29°43'E

**5. Altitude:** 60°10'-60°27'N, 28°18'-29°43'E **6. Area:** 12,000 ha, incl. 7,000 ha of sea waters

**7. Overview:** The site comprises the Berezovye Islands archipelago in the Gulf of Finland, with plenty of sea bays and extensive intertidal mud flats. The site is important for migrating and breeding populations of waterbirds.

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

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

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

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

**Please now rank these wetland types by listing them from the most to the least dominant:** G,A,D.

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

(1a) · (1b) · 1c · 1d [3] 2a · 2b · 2c · 2d [3] (3a) · 3b · 3c [3] 4a · 4b

**Please specify the most significant criterion applicable to the site: 3a**

**10. Map of site included? Please tick *yes* ✓ -or- *no***
(Please refer to the *Explanatory Note and Guidelines* document for information regarding desirable map traits).

**11. Name and address of the compiler of this form:** G.A.Noskov: Biological Institute of Saint Petersburg University. 2 Oranienbaum Shosse, Stary Petergoff, S-Petersburg 198904, Russia.

**12. Justification of the criteria selected under point 9, on previous page:** 3a - the wetlands supports large populations of waterfowl.

**13. General location:** In Leningrad Region, 2 km southwest offshore of the town of Primorsk.

**14. Physical features:** The Berezovye Islands archipelago consists of a large number of islands, which are different in size. The largest are Bolshoi Berezovy, Zapadny Berezovy, Severny Berezovy and Maly Berezovy. The islands have highly indented shorelines, with many bays, inlets, channels and shoals. The islands are composed of Quaternary sandy sediments with many boulders. Rondo Island, which is built up from granite (the Baltic shield exposure), is the only exception. Landforms are diverse and include kames, eskers and dunes up to 43.3 m high (Primorskaya Hill).

The area has a temperate marine climate, with the mean air temperatures of -5°C in January and +15°C in July. Annual precipitation is about 700 mm, mostly falling during warm months.

**15. Hydrological values:** No information

**16. Ecological features:** The major habitats are represented by intertidal mud and sand flats with stony islands of different size.

**17. Noteworthy flora:** The islands are mainly covered by forests, which are dominated by pine. On Severny Berezovy Island, spruce is more frequent. Birch is widespread on all the islands. Other trees include alders and willows. Maly Berezovy Island is occupied by a unique broad-leaved forest complex with ash, lime, maple and oak. A population of *Melica picta*, a typical forest-steppe species, has been found on this island. So far, this is the only place to the north of the Oka River where this species has been recorded.

Mires are not large in area, but are very interesting in terms of their species composition. For example, *Trichophorum caespitosum, Selaginella selaginoides, Drosera intermedia* and *Rhynchospora fusca* occur at the Chernichny moss bog on Zapadny Berezovy Island among the common bog species.

The littoral communities are of particular importance. Rare species of sedges, including *Carex glareosa*, *C. scandinavica* and *C. mackenziei*, and *Valeriana salina* occur on Cape Lugovoi, southeastern Zapadny Berezovy Island. Subaquatic meadows, very diverse in vegetation, are also found in the shallow sea areas near this island. *Alisma wahlenbergii*, a species listed in the Russian Red Data Book, is frequent in these communities. On Zapadny Berezovy and Severny Berezovy Islands, *Cuscuta halophila, Centunculus minimus* and *Tripolium vulgare* have been found. *Scutellaria hastifolia* covers large areas on Zapadny Berezovy Island.

Many bays and channels between the islands are overgrown with reeds *Phragmites communis*.

**18. Noteworthy fauna:** The site lies on a major waterfowl migration route, and is especially important as a staging area during the spring migration (Noskov *et al.*, 1965). Concentrations of breeding waterbirds are also very high (Khrabry, 1984). The importance of the Berezovy Islands for different groups of waterbirds is described below.

Divers: Black-throated diver *Gavia arctica* is a common passage migrant, with 20,000-40,000 birds passing through the area in spring. Hundreds of non-breeding and moulting black-throated divers can be seen in summer. Red-throated diver *G. stellata* occurs on migration in less amounts (<1,000).

Grebes: Two species of grebes: *Podiceps cristatus* and *P. griseigena* use the islands as a staging area during migrations. Their total number is between 1,000 and 2,000 birds.

Swans: 20,000-30,000 swans migrate through the area in spring, including whooper swan *Cygnus cygnus*, Bewick's swan *C. columbianus bewickii* (up to 5,000 individuals) and, occasionally, mute swan *C. olor*. Non-breeding birds often stay for summer.

Geese: Six species of geese have been registered on migrations. The total number of migrating geese is between 200,000 and 300,000. For the most part, birds pass through the area quickly, but barnacle goose *Branta leucopsis* and brent goose *Branta bernicla* (totalling 50,000-70,000 birds) stay for a longer time in the coastal marshes.

Dabbling ducks: Between 300,000 and 500,000 birds occur on migration in spring, including mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*, common teal *A. crecca*, northern pintail *A. acuta*, garganey *A. querquedula* and Eurasian wigeon *A. penelope*.

Diving ducks: This group is the most numerous and consists of 11 species, including: black scoter *Melanitta nigra* (300,000-400,000), velvet scoter *M. fusca* (100,000-200,000), long-tailed duck *Clangula hyemalis* (300,000-400,000), greater scaup *Aythia marila* (100,000-300,000), tufted duck *A. fuligula* (100,000-200,000), pochard *A. ferina* (10,000-20,000), common goldeneye *Bucephala clangula* (150,000-200,000), goosander *Mergus merganser* (10,000-20,000), red-breasted merganser *M. serrator* (10,000-20,000). Smew *M. albellus* and common eider *Somateria mollissima* occur in less amounts.

Charadriidae: 28 species occur during migrations. The most numerous are *Calidris alpina, C. minuta, C. temminckii, Numenius arquatus, N. phaeopus, Gallinago gallinago* and *Charadrius dubius*. The total population is about 100,000 individuals.

Gulls: Six species of gulls have been registered, with a total of 500,000 birds passing through the area in spring. In autumn, gulls concentrate on the sand beaches and shoals, and their total number may reach 1-1.5 million in September and October. Hundreds of birds winter on the islands. The most numerous species are black-headed gull *Larus ridibundus* (40%), herring gull *L. argentatus* (20%), common gull *L. canus* (20%) and lesser black-backed gull *L. fuscus* (10%). There are several breeding colonies with about 10,000 pairs.

Terns: Five species of terns occur at the site during the spring and autumn migration seasons. Common tern *Sterna hirundo* and Arctic tern *S. paradisea* breed in the mixed colonies with gulls. The total number of breeding terns is between 300,000 and 500,000 pairs.

The Berezovye Islands provide important habitats for many threatened species: 44 animal species, including 38 species of birds, entered in the Russian Red Data Book (RRB) and the Red Data Book of the Baltic Region, occur at the site. These are listed below, with breeding species marked with an asterisk. The threatened species categories are given in brackets, following the Red Data Book of the Baltic Region: 0= extinct; 1= endangered; 2= vulnerable; 3= rare; 4= indeterminate (required attention):

Birds

*Gavia arctica* (1)
*Gavia stellata* (0)
*Podiceps ruficollis* (1)
*Podiceps griseigena** (2)
*Podiceps nigricollis* (1)
*Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis** (2)
*Cygnus olor** (2)
*Cygnus bewickii* (RRB)
*Anser anser** (2)
*Anser erythropus* (RRB)
*Branta leucopsis** (RRB)
*Tadorna tadorna* (1)
*Anas strepera* (2)
*A. clypeata** (3)
*A. penelope** (2)
*A. acuta** (4)
*Melanitta fusca* (2)
*Megrus albellus* (1)
*M. serrator** (3)
*Somateria mollissima** (2)
*Pandion haliaetus** (RRB)
*Haliaeetus albicilla** (RRB)
*Falco subbuteo** (3)
*Crex crex** (4)
*Charadrius hiaticula** (1)
*Haematopus ostralegus** (2)
*Tringa totanus** (3)
*Numenius arquata** (2)
*N. phaeopus* (2)
*Sterna albifrons** (2)
*S. caspia* (2)
*S. paradisea** (2)
*Larus fuscus** (4)
*L. marinus** (1)
*Asio flammeus** (2)
*Dendrocopos leucotos** (4)
*Phylloscopus trochiloides** (3)
*Acroucephalus arundinaceus** (4)

Other fauna
*Anguis fragilis* (4)
*Natrix natrix* (1)
*Triturus cristatus* (2)
*Helichoerus grypus* (1)
*Phoca hispida botnica* (2)
*Mustela lutreola* (2)

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**19. Social and cultural values:** The area provides favourable conditions for fishing, navigation and recreation.

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**20. Land tenure/ownership:** State owned.

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**21. Current land use:** Activities at the site include hay-making, sport fishing and recreation. Until recently, commercial fishing was carried out in the surrounding sea waters. Navigation through the Bjerkezund Strait is very intense.

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**22. Factors (past, present or potential) adversely affecting the site's ecological character, including changes in land use and development projects:** No information

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**23. Conservation measures taken:** The site is protected as the Berezovye Islands Nature Reserve ('zakaznik'), established at the regional level. The Hunting Management Office of Leningrad Region is in charge of the practical protection of the reserve.

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**24. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:** The following recommendations have been made to strengthen the protection regime at the site:

- to forbid forest cutting (except sanitary fellings), use of pesticides for any purpose, drainage works of all kinds, mining for sand, houses construction and all projects which might cause changes to the landscape and hydrological regime, disposal of wastes, fishing with nets, sport fishing in winter, waterfowl shooting in spring, use of boats from the break-up of ice till 10 June, and harvesting and burning of reeds;
- to allow sanitary fellings in the forests, collecting of berries and mushrooms, sport fishing with a rod at a distance from the waterfowl staging areas, hay harvesting, waterfowl shooting in autumn and scientific research;
- to establish the staff of two or three rangers for the Berezovye Islands Nature Reserve;
- to develop a zoning system at the site, defining the protected and recreational zones; and
- to carry out regular monitoring of habitats and populations of seals and waterbirds.

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**25. Current scientific research and facilities:** No information

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**26. Current conservation education:** No information

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**27. Current recreation and tourism:** Recreational activities include waterfowl shooting, fishing, and collecting of berries and mushrooms.

**28. Jurisdiction:**
Territorial: Government of Leningrad Region (67 Suvorovsky Prospect, Saint Petersburg 193311, Russia).
Functional: State Committee of the Russian Federation for Environmental Protection (4/6 Bolshaya Gruzinskaya Street, Moscow 123812, Russia).

**29. Management authority:** Regional Hunting Management Office (3 Smolny Street, Saint Petersburg 193311, Russia).
Ministry of Environment, Government of Leningrad Region (67 Suvorovsky Pr., Saint Petersburg 193311, Russia).

**30. Bibliographical references:** Khrabry (1984); Noskov *et al.* (1965); Red Data Book of the Baltic Region (1993); Red Data Book of the USSR (1984).