

INFORMATION SHEET ON RAMSAR WETLANDS

Country: Sweden

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Name of wetland: Sjaunja

Date of Ramsar designation: 5 December 1974

Geographical coordinates: 67°17'N 19°49'E

General location: Located about 50 km south-west of Kiruna, in the County of Norrbotten.

Area: 188,600 ha

Wetland type: M O U X

Altitude: Maximum 1600 m, minimum 444 m

Overview: The designated site covers a whole catchment area and comprises virgin wilderness with a wide range of habitats, including the most extensive mire in Europe outside the former Soviet Union. The Sjaunja-region supports a greater number of vertebrate species than any other mountain region in Sweden.

Physical features: The site contains open water, mire moraine ridges and mountain slopes. The whole catchment area is included. The mires are characterized by aapa-mire complexes but palsa-mires occur too.

Among geomorphological elements there are glacio-fluvial channels and tundra polygons. The bedrock is dominated by perthite granite and perthite monzonite. There is also granite from the Lina Granite Series, and acid volcanic rocks. The western area is partly affected by the water regulation at lake Satihaure.

Ecological features: the site is characterized by a mixture of open marshes, shallow lakes and woods of *Betula*. In drier parts there are virgin *Picea* and *Pinus* forests.

Land tenure/ownership of

a) **site:** state owned

b) **surrounding area:** state owned

Conservation measures taken: Listed as site of national importance for nature conservation. Most of the area is included within the boundary of Sjaunja Nature Reserve, established 26 February 1988. The Nature Reserve has an approved management

plan. Some hunting is allowed in the outer zones of the reserve. The use of off-road vehicles is restricted to a few trails.

Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented: In 1989 the area was proposed as a World Heritage Site, but so far no decision is taken by UNESCO.

Current land use: principal human activities in

a) **site:** Reindeer farming; Nature conservation; Fishing; Recreation

b) **surroundings/catchment:** no information supplied.

Disturbances/threats, including changes in land use and major development projects

a) **at the site:** There is some disturbance in spring from the use of snow-mobiles.

The site is almost unaffected by man apart from the reindeer farming and the damage older an regulation regime has caused on the shores of Lake Satisjaure. Earlier there have been plans of mineral mining but the area is today protected against exploitation. There is some fear that increased canoeing may lead to disturbances on the animal life.

b) **in the surroundings/catchment:** no information supplied.

Hydrological and physical values: The relatively undisturbed catchment area together with the extensive mires make the area unique in Scandinavia.

Social and cultural values: In parts of the area sport fishing is a very popular activity, especially in spring time.

Noteworthy fauna: More than 150 species of birds have been observed out of which 100 have been nesting.

Permanent residents: *Haliaeetus albicilla* (several pairs), *Aquila chrysaetos* (several), *Cygnus cygnus*, *Anser fabalis*, *Falco rusticolus*

Breeding: *Lymnocyptes minimus*, *Tringa erythropus*, *Limicola falcinellus*, *Phalaropus lobatus*, *Asio flammeus*, *Anthus cervinus*, *Emberiza rustica*, *E. pusilla*, *Gallinago media*, *Vanellus vanellus*, *Limosa lapponica*, *Circus cyaneus*, *Larus ridibundus*.

The area contains at least 25 mammal species including *Ursus arctos*, *Lynx lynx*, *Gulo gulo* and *Lutra lutra* (all occurring regularly).

Noteworthy flora: no information supplied.

Current scientific research and facilities: Research is largely confined to irregular studies of the bird fauna.

Current conservation education: no information supplied.

Current recreation and tourism: A few trails are traversing the area. Canoeing is popular in the main river.

Management authority: The manager of the Nature Reserve is the County Administration.

The surrounding areas are also owned by the state and managed

accordingly.

Jurisdiction: Territorial and functional: County Administration of Norrbotten.

Bibliographical references:

- Grimmett, R.F.A. & Jones, T.A. (1989). Important Bird Areas of Europe. ICBP.
- Svenska våtmarker av internationell betydelse (1989). Swedish EPA information. (English summary).
- Management plan for Sjaunja Nature Reserve (1988).
- Curry-Lindahl, K. (1971). Sjaunja och Kaitum.

Reasons for inclusion: 1b, 1c, 2a, 2b, 3b

Map of site: enclosed.