

Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS)

Categories approved by Recommendation 4.7 (1990), as amended by Resolution VIII.13 of the 8th Conference of the Contracting Parties (2002) and Resolutions IX.1 Annex B, IX.6, IX.21 and IX. 22 of the 9th Conference of the Contracting Parties (2005).

Notes for compilers:

1. The RIS should be completed in accordance with the attached *Explanatory Notes and Guidelines for completing the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands*. Compilers are strongly advised to read this guidance before filling in the RIS.
2. Further information and guidance in support of Ramsar site designations are provided in the *Strategic Framework for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance* (Ramsar Wise Use Handbook 7, 2nd edition, as amended by COP9 Resolution IX.1 Annex B). A 3rd edition of the Handbook, incorporating these amendments, is in preparation and will be available in 2006.
3. Once completed, the RIS (and accompanying map(s)) should be submitted to the Ramsar Secretariat. Compilers should provide an electronic (MS Word) copy of the RIS and, where possible, digital copies of all maps.

1. Name and address of the compiler of this form:

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Designation date

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Site Reference Number

2. Date this sheet was completed/updated:

Designated: 08 June 1993

3. Country:

UK (England)

4. Name of the Ramsar site:

Hamford Water

5. Designation of new Ramsar site or update of existing site:

This RIS is for: Updated information on an existing Ramsar site

6. For RIS updates only, changes to the site since its designation or earlier update:

a) Site boundary and area:

** Important note: If the boundary and/or area of the designated site is being restricted/reduced, the Contracting Party should have followed the procedures established by the Conference of the Parties in the Annex to COP9 Resolution IX.6 and provided a report in line with paragraph 28 of that Annex, prior to the submission of an updated RIS.

b) Describe briefly any major changes to the ecological character of the Ramsar site, including in the application of the Criteria, since the previous RIS for the site:

7. Map of site included:

Refer to Annex III of the *Explanatory Notes and Guidelines*, for detailed guidance on provision of suitable maps, including digital maps.

a) A map of the site, with clearly delineated boundaries, is included as:

- i) **hard copy** (required for inclusion of site in the Ramsar List): *yes* ✓ -or- *no* ☐;
- ii) **an electronic format** (e.g. a JPEG or ArcView image) *Yes*
- iii) **a GIS file providing geo-referenced site boundary vectors and attribute tables** *yes* ✓ -or- *no* ☐;

b) **Describe briefly the type of boundary delineation applied:**

e.g. the boundary is the same as an existing protected area (nature reserve, national park etc.), or follows a catchment boundary, or follows a geopolitical boundary such as a local government jurisdiction, follows physical boundaries such as roads, follows the shoreline of a waterbody, etc.

The site boundary is the same as, or falls within, an existing protected area.

For precise boundary details, please refer to paper map provided at designation

8. Geographical coordinates (latitude/longitude):

51 52 46 N 01 14 29 E

9. General location:

Include in which part of the country and which large administrative region(s), and the location of the nearest large town.

Nearest town/city: Harwich

Hamford Water is a tidal inlet whose mouth is about 5 km south of Harwich, Essex.

Administrative region: Essex

10. Elevation (average and/or max. & min.) (metres): **11. Area** (hectares): 2187.21

Min. -1

Max. 3

Mean 1

12. General overview of the site:

Provide a short paragraph giving a summary description of the principal ecological characteristics and importance of the wetland.

Hamford Water is a large, shallow estuarine basin comprising tidal creeks and islands, intertidal mud and sand flats, and saltmarsh supporting rare plants and internationally important species/populations of migratory waterfowl.

13. Ramsar Criteria:

Circle or underline each Criterion applied to the designation of the Ramsar site. See Annex II of the *Explanatory Notes and Guidelines* for the Criteria and guidelines for their application (adopted by Resolution VII.11).

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14. Justification for the application of each Criterion listed in 13 above:

Provide justification for each Criterion in turn, clearly identifying to which Criterion the justification applies (see Annex II for guidance on acceptable forms of justification).

Ramsar criterion 6 – species/populations

occurring at levels of international importance.

Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation):

Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:

Ringed plover , <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> , Europe/Northwest Africa	1169 individuals, representing an average of 1.6% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
Common redshank , <i>Tringa totanus totanus</i> ,	2099 individuals, representing an average of 1.8% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Species with peak counts in winter:

Dark-bellied brent goose, <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i> ,	3629 individuals, representing an average of 1.6% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
Black-tailed godwit , <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i> , Iceland/W Europe	377 individuals, representing an average of 1% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Species/populations identified subsequent to designation for possible future consideration under criterion 6.

Species with peak counts in winter:

Grey plover , <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> , E Atlantic/W Africa -wintering	2749 individuals, representing an average of 1.1% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
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Contemporary data and information on waterbird trends at this site and their regional (sub-national) and national contexts can be found in the Wetland Bird Survey report, which is updated annually. See www.bto.org/survey/webs/webs-alerts-index.htm.

15. Biogeography (required when Criteria 1 and/or 3 and /or certain applications of Criterion 2 are applied to the designation):

Name the relevant biogeographic region that includes the Ramsar site, and identify the biogeographic regionalisation system that has been applied.

a) biogeographic region:

Atlantic

b) biogeographic regionalisation scheme (include reference citation):

Council Directive 92/43/EEC

16. Physical features of the site:

Describe, as appropriate, the geology, geomorphology; origins - natural or artificial; hydrology; soil type; water quality; water depth, water permanence; fluctuations in water level; tidal variations; downstream area; general climate, etc.

Soil & geology	neutral, shingle, sand, mud, clay, alluvium, sedimentary
Geomorphology and landscape	lowland, coastal, floodplain, barrier beach, subtidal sediments (including sandbank/mudbank), intertidal sediments (including sandflat/mudflat), open coast (including bay), enclosed coast (including embayment), estuary, islands, lagoon, pools
Nutrient status	eutrophic
pH	strongly alkaline
Salinity	brackish / mixosaline, fresh
Soil	mainly organic
Water permanence	usually permanent

Summary of main climatic features	Annual averages (Lowestoft, 1971–2000) (www.metoffice.com/climate/uk/averages/19712000/sites/lowestoft.html) Max. daily temperature: 13.0° C Min. daily temperature: 7.0° C Days of air frost: 27.8 Rainfall: 576.3 mm Hrs. of sunshine: 1535.5
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General description of the Physical Features:

Hamford Water is a large, shallow estuarine basin comprising tidal creeks and islands, intertidal mud- and sand-flats, and saltmarsh.

17. Physical features of the catchment area:

Describe the surface area, general geology and geomorphological features, general soil types, general land use, and climate (including climate type).

Hamford Water is a large, shallow estuarine basin comprising tidal creeks and islands, intertidal mud- and sand-flats, and saltmarsh.

18. Hydrological values:

Describe the functions and values of the wetland in groundwater recharge, flood control, sediment trapping, shoreline stabilization, etc.

Shoreline stabilisation and dissipation of erosive forces, Sediment trapping, Recharge and discharge of groundwater, Maintenance of water quality (removal of nutrients)

19. Wetland types:

Human-made wetland, Marine/coastal wetland

Code	Name	% Area
G	Tidal flats	69.5
H	Salt marshes	25
E	Sand / shingle shores (including dune systems)	2
9	Canals and drainage channels	1
5	Salt pans, salines	0.5
Tp	Freshwater marshes / pools: permanent	0.5
O	Freshwater lakes: permanent	0.5
K	Coastal fresh lagoons	0.5
J	Coastal brackish / saline lagoons	0.5

20. General ecological features:

Provide further description, as appropriate, of the main habitats, vegetation types, plant and animal communities present in the Ramsar site, and the ecosystem services of the site and the benefits derived from them.

The main habitat types of this site are, intertidal mud and sand flats; and saltmarsh.

The main vegetation types of this site consist of pioneer saltmarsh communities; *Salicornia sp.*, *Suaeda maritima* and *Spartina maritima*. Mature saltmarsh communities; *Limonium binervosum* and *Atriplex portulacoides*, *Puccinellia sp.* and eelgrass *Zostera sp.* beds

Ecosystem services

21. Noteworthy flora:

Provide additional information on particular species and why they are noteworthy (expanding as necessary on information provided in 12. Justification for the application of the Criteria) indicating, e.g. which species/communities are unique, rare, endangered or biogeographically important, etc. *Do not include here taxonomic lists of species present – these may be supplied as supplementary information to the RIS.*

Nationally important species occurring on the site.**Higher Plants.**

Peucedanum officinale (nationally rare RDB Lower risk – near threatened)

22. Noteworthy fauna:

Provide additional information on particular species and why they are noteworthy (expanding as necessary on information provided in 12. Justification for the application of the Criteria) indicating, e.g. which species/communities are unique, rare, endangered or biogeographically important, etc., including count data. *Do not include here taxonomic lists of species present – these may be supplied as supplementary information to the RIS.*

Birds**Species currently occurring at levels of national importance:****Species regularly supported during the breeding season:**

Mediterranean gull , <i>Larus melanocephalus</i> , Europe	3 apparently occupied nests, representing an average of 2.7% of the GB population (Seabird 2000 Census)
Black-headed gull , <i>Larus ridibundus</i> , N & C Europe	11000 apparently occupied nests, representing an average of 8.5% of the GB population (Seabird 2000 Census)
Little tern , <i>Sterna albifrons albifrons</i> , W Europe	113 apparently occupied nests, representing an average of 5.8% of the GB population (Seabird 2000 Census)

Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:

Ruff , <i>Philomachus pugnax</i> , Europe/W Africa	28 individuals, representing an average of 4% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
Spotted redshank , <i>Tringa erythropus</i> , Europe/W Africa	3 individuals, representing an average of 2.2% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
Common greenshank , <i>Tringa nebularia</i> , Europe/W Africa	76 individuals, representing an average of 12.7% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Species with peak counts in winter:

Common shelduck , <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> , NW Europe	1738 individuals, representing an average of 2.2% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
Eurasian teal , <i>Anas crecca</i> , NW Europe	2684 individuals, representing an average of 1.3% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
Pied avocet , <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i> , Europe/Northwest Africa	388 individuals, representing an average of 11.4% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
European golden plover , <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> <i>apricaria</i> , P. a. altifrons Iceland & Faroes/E Atlantic	3021 individuals, representing an average of 1.2% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
Red knot , <i>Calidris canutus islandica</i> , W & Southern Africa (wintering)	3956 individuals, representing an average of 1.3% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Species Information

None reported

23. Social and cultural values:

Describe if the site has any general social and/or cultural values e.g. fisheries production, forestry, religious importance, archaeological sites, social relations with the wetland, etc. Distinguish between historical/archaeological/religious significance and current socio-economic values.

- Aesthetic
- Fisheries production
- Non-consumptive recreation
- Scientific research
- Sport fishing
- Sport hunting
- Tourism
- Transportation/navigation

b) Is the site considered of international importance for holding, in addition to relevant ecological values, examples of significant cultural values, whether material or non-material, linked to its origin, conservation and/or ecological functioning? **No**

If Yes, describe this importance under one or more of the following categories:

- i) sites which provide 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) sites which have exceptional cultural traditions or records of former civilizations that have influenced the ecological character of the wetland:
- iii) sites where the ecological character of the wetland depends on the interaction with local communities or indigenous peoples:
- iv) sites where 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:

24. Land tenure/ownership:

Ownership category	On-site	Off-site
Non-governmental organisation (NGO)	+	+
Local authority, municipality etc.	+	+
National/Crown Estate	+	+
Private	+	+

25. Current land (including water) use:

Activity	On-site	Off-site
Nature conservation	+	
Tourism		+
Recreation	+	
Current scientific research		+
Fishing: commercial	+	
Fishing: recreational/sport		+
Marine/saltwater aquaculture		+
Gathering of shellfish		+

Bait collection		+
Livestock watering hole/pond		+
Grazing (unspecified)		+
Rough or shifting grazing		+
Permanent pastoral agriculture		+
Hay meadows		+
Hunting: recreational/sport	+	
Industry		+
Sewage treatment/disposal		+
Harbour/port		+
Flood control	+	
Military activities		+

26. Factors (past, present or potential) adversely affecting the site’s ecological character, including changes in land (including water) use and development projects:

Explanation of reporting category:

1. Those factors that are still operating, but it is unclear if they are under control, as there is a lag in showing the management or regulatory regime to be successful.
2. Those factors that are not currently being managed, or where the regulatory regime appears to have been ineffective so far.

NA = Not Applicable because no factors have been reported.

Adverse Factor Category	Reporting Category	Description of the problem (Newly reported Factors only)	On-Site	Off-Site	Major Impact?
Erosion	2		+		+

For category 2 factors only.

What measures have been taken / are planned / regulatory processes invoked, to mitigate the effect of these factors?
 Erosion - There is a programme of recharge of dredged material from off-site that has alleviated some of the habitat loss on site. The Essex Coast and Estuaries Coastal Habitat Management Plan (CHaMP) (Anon. 2002) covers the site and it is expected to inform the shoreline management plan as well as local plan policies.
 The possibility of managed realignment schemes to address erosion impacts may be considered.

Is the site subject to adverse ecological change? YES

27. Conservation measures taken:

List national category and legal status of protected areas, including boundary relationships with the Ramsar site; management practices; whether an officially approved management plan exists and whether it is being implemented.

Conservation measure	On-site	Off-site
Site/ Area of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI/ASSI)	+	

National Nature Reserve (NNR)	+	
Special Protection Area (SPA)	+	
Land owned by a non-governmental organisation for nature conservation	+	
Management agreement	+	
Site management statement/plan implemented	+	

b) Describe any other current management practices:

The management of Ramsar sites in the UK is determined by either a formal management plan or through other management planning processes, and is overseen by the relevant statutory conservation agency. Details of the precise management practises are given in these documents.

28. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:

e.g. management plan in preparation; official proposal as a legally protected area, etc.

No information available

29. Current scientific research and facilities:

e.g. details of current research projects, including biodiversity monitoring; existence of a field research station, etc.

Fauna.

Numbers of migratory and wintering wildfowl and waders are monitored annually as part of the national Wetland Birds Survey (WeBS) organised by the British Trust for Ornithology, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

There are also other bird counts and research on oysters.

Environment.

Hydrological monitoring.

Sedimentation monitoring.

Saltmarsh erosion.

30. Current communications, education and public awareness (CEPA) activities related to or benefiting the site:

e.g. visitor centre, observation hides and nature trails, information booklets, facilities for school visits, etc.

Boat trips are available around the site.

31. Current recreation and tourism:

State if the wetland is used for recreation/tourism; indicate type(s) and their frequency/intensity.

Activities, Facilities provided and Seasonality.

Yachting, walking, wildfowling and sport fishing occur on the site.

32. Jurisdiction:

Include territorial, e.g. state/region, and functional/sectoral, e.g. Dept. of Agriculture/Dept. of Environment, etc.

Head, Natura 2000 and Ramsar Team, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs,

European Wildlife Division, Zone 1/07, Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6EB

33. Management authority:

Provide the name and address of the local office(s) of the agency(ies) or organisation(s) directly responsible for managing the wetland. Wherever possible provide also the title and/or name of the person or persons in this office with responsibility for the wetland.

Site Designations Manager, English Nature, Sites and Surveillance Team, Northminster House, Northminster Road, Peterborough, PE1 1UA, UK

34. Bibliographical references:

Scientific/technical references only. If biogeographic regionalisation scheme applied (see 15 above), list full reference citation for the scheme.

Site-relevant references

- Anon. (2002) *Essex Coast and Estuaries Coastal Habitat Management Plan: Executive summary*. English Nature, Peterborough (Living with the Sea LIFE Project). www.english-nature.org.uk/livingwiththesea/champs/pdf/ESSEX.FINALEXEC.SUMMARY.pdf
- Barne, JH, Robson, CF, Kaznowska, SS, Doody, JP, Davidson, NC & Buck, AL (eds.) (1998) *Coasts and seas of the United Kingdom. Region 7 South-east England: Lowestoft to Dungeness*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough. (Coastal Directories Series.)
- Buck, AL (ed.) (1993) *An inventory of UK estuaries. Volume 5. Eastern England*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough
- Burd, F (1989) *The saltmarsh survey of Great Britain. An inventory of British saltmarshes*. Nature Conservancy Council, Peterborough (Research & Survey in Nature Conservation, No. 17)
- Covey, R (1998) Chapter 6. Eastern England (Bridlington to Folkestone) (MNCR Sector 6). In: *Benthic marine ecosystems of Great Britain and the north-east Atlantic*, ed. by K. Hiscock, 179-198. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough. (Coasts and Seas of the United Kingdom. MNCR series)
- Cranswick, PA, Waters, RJ, Musgrove, AJ & Pollitt, MS (1997) *The Wetland Bird Survey 1995–96: wildfowl and wader counts*. British Trust for Ornithology, Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds & Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Slimbridge
- Davidson, NC, Laffoley, D d'A, Doody, JP, Way, LS, Gordon, J, Key, R, Pienkowski, MW, Mitchell, R & Duff, KL (1991) *Nature conservation and estuaries in Great Britain*. Nature Conservancy Council, Peterborough
- Doody, JP, Johnston, C & Smith, B (1993) *Directory of the North Sea coastal margin*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough
- Hill, TO, Emblow, CS & Northen, KO (1996) *Marine Nature Conservation Review Sector 6. Inlets in eastern England: area summaries*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough (Coasts and seas of the United Kingdom. MNCR series)
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- Pritchard, DE, Housden, SD, Mudge, GP, Galbraith, CA & Pienkowski, MW (eds.) (1992) *Important Bird Areas in the United Kingdom including the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man*. Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Sandy
- Ratcliffe, DA (ed.) (1977) *A Nature Conservation Review. The selection of biological sites of national importance to nature conservation in Britain*. Cambridge University Press (for the Natural Environment Research Council and the Nature Conservancy Council), Cambridge (2 vols.)
- Stroud, DA, Chambers, D, Cook, S, Buxton, N, Fraser, B, Clement, P, Lewis, P, McLean, I, Baker, H & Whitehead, S (eds.) (2001) *The UK SPA network: its scope and content*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough (3 vols.) www.jncc.gov.uk/UKSPA/default.htm

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