

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 Official Respondent:

Joint Nature Conservation Committee

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UK
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Email: RIS@JNCC.gov.uk

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Designation date

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Site Reference Number

Name and address of the compiler of this form:
UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum
102 Broadway, Peterborough, PE1 4DG, UK
(with information from the Alderney Wildlife Trust)

2. Date this sheet was completed/updated:

Designated: 25 August 2005

3. Country:

UK (Alderney)

4. Name of the Ramsar site:

Alderney West Coast and the Burhou Islands

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.

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).

Criterion 1: Among global priority habitats, seagrass beds occur at and below low-water mark; there is also a small area of dune slack wet-grasslands at Platte Saline. These form part of a rich complex of habitats, including vegetated shingle banks, sand dunes, dune and coastal grassland, soft cliffs, sandy, gravelly and rocky shores (including the offshore islands of Burhou, Les Etacs and Ortac)

Criterion 3: Burhou island has a flora and fauna relatively little modified by man. Large nesting seabird populations, which include the only European storm-petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus* colony in the Channel Islands, Atlantic puffin *Fratercula arctica*, lesser black-backed gull *Larus fuscus* and great black-backed gull *Larus marinus*. Les Etacs and Ortac support the only northern gannet *Morus bassanus* colonies in the Channel Islands. The intertidal rocky shore supports many rare species of fauna including ormers *Haliotis tuberculata*, which, within the UK, are found only in the Channel Islands.

Criterion 4: Important breeding area (see Criterion 6 and Section 20)

Criterion 6: A large nesting population of northern gannets *Morus bassanus* are established on the Garden Rocks (Les Etacs) and Ortac. Here there are 11,000 breeding birds, about 1,000 non-breeding birds, and perhaps 5000 immature birds. This constitutes 2% of the world population.

Criterion 7: Many rare species, which include a representative sample of north-west European fish fauna, are found in the marine area of the site. Although ormers *Haliotis tuberculata* are the most significant, there is also a high diversity of fish and shellfish.

Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation):

Species regularly supported during the breeding season:

Northern gannet , *Morus bassana*, World 5950 pairs, representing an average of 1.5% of the breeding population (2000/01)

See Sections 21/22 for details of noteworthy species

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):

EU Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (as amended)

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	No information available
Geomorphology and landscape	No information available
Nutrient status	mesotrophic
pH	circumneutral
Salinity	saline / euhaline
Soil	mainly mineral
Water permanence	usually permanent

Summary of main climatic features	Annual averages (Platte Saline, 1984-2003) Max. daily temperature: 14° C Min. daily temperature: 10° C Average daily temperature: 11.8° C Annual rainfall: 721 mm Hours of sunshine: 1819
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General description of the Physical Features:

The rocks of Alderney belong to the great Armorican Province of north-west France rather than the south-west province of England. Although many different rock types occur on the Island, the ‘hard’ rocks have been divided into three major units – the Western Granodiorite, the Central Diorite complex and the Alderney Sandstone; these in turn overlain by the superficial sands and gravels deposited during the latter part of the Great Ice Age.

The western part of Alderney, which includes Platte Saline, Clonque Bay and Hannaine Bay, is composed mainly of an ancient greenish-grey granodiorite that has been radiometrically dated at 2220 million years. In Telegraph Bay, to the south of Clonque Bay, The rock is granitic in composition and, although less foliated than the granodiorite, is probably of similar age.

Numerous pinkish and light-coloured dykes of aplite and porphyritic microgranite have intruded both the granite and granodiorite: these dykes seam the cliffs of Telegraph and Hannaine Bays. Of a later date numerous dolerite and lamprophyre dykes also intrude the granodiorite.

The islands of Burhou and Ortac are composed of Alderney Sandstone and are separated from the granodiorite by a significant fault along The Swinge. The Alderney Sandstone, deposited rapidly in shallow waters by fast flowing streams, is several hundreds metres in thickness and comprises grits, arkoses, sandstone and conglomerates. The outcrop extends from Corblets Bay around the east and south-east coasts. Many lamprophyre and dolerite dykes have intruded the sandstones as well as older rocks on the island; this indicates that the majority of these dykes are post-sandstone in age.

The Pleistocene Deposits: Superficial sands and gravels of the Great Ice Age, which have been deposited during the last 100,000 years, cover most of Alderney. Several changes in sea level have occurred during the waxing and waning of the great sheets to the north and have given rise to distinct layers of either beach pebbles or wind-blown sand and dust (loess) as well as raised beaches which can be recognised in the Clonque Bay area. The beach pebbles were lain down during periods of high sea level during the interglacial periods, while the loess were deposited when the sea level fell after the ice sheets advanced. During the maximum extension of the ice sheets, coarse solifluction breccias known as ‘head’ were formed. These deposits are well exposed in the quarries and cliffs around the island particularly in Hannaine Bay.

Soils: In the sloping cliffs of Clonque and Hannaine Bays, soils are very thin, of brownish-grey colour and have stony subsoil. In contrast, at Plate Saline in the east, blown sand of considerable thickness has been deposited up to 100 m inland; this has given rise to a low-lying coastal area with no shore platforms and a steeply-sloping shingle beach.

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).

No information available

18. Hydrological values:

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

No special values known

19. Wetland types:

Marine/coastal wetland

Code	Name	% Area
B	Marine beds (e.g. sea grass beds)	45
D	Rocky shores	30
A	Shallow marine waters	20
E	Sand / shingle shores (including dune systems)	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.

Vegetated shingle banks.

Rocky shores, including rockpools, kelp beds, and sandbars.

Rocky islets, which are very important for some birds for breeding (northern gannet *Morus bassanus*, Atlantic puffin *Fratercula arctica*, European storm-petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*). There is also a seal colony to the north of Burhou Island.

Some fish and shellfish are locally important, such as ormers, crabs, lobsters, bass, plaice, etc., for both recreational and commercial fishing.

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.*

Seaweeds have been studied in the site for many years. Initially the marine officer has identified about 100 species, with at least 50 more expecting to be identified by the end of 2005. *Ascophyllum nodosum* has special importance because more than 75% of the world population is found in the UK. *Halymenia latifolia* may be at unfavourable conservation status within Europe (UK Biodiversity Steering Group 1995). The seaweeds also play a very important role in supporting all the marine fauna in the area and these fauna support the large nesting bird population.

Please see separate list of marine Algae, lichens and terrestrial vascular plants recorded in the site

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.*

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

Northern gannet, *Morus bassana*, World 5950 pairs, representing an average of 1.5% of the breeding population (2000/01)

Species Information

The main communities in the area are the bird colonies. The gannet colony has about 5,950 pairs, which are based on just two islets; the colony is important, as it is the only colony in the Channel Islands. The storm petrel, which breeds on Burhou, is also very important, as it is the only colony in the Channel Islands. The puffin colony, which breeds on Burhou, is one of the more southern sites.

Ormers *Haliotis tuberculata* are also important, as they are part of the heritage of the Channel Islands.

On the reefs off Burhou, there is a seal colony with about seven individuals, which makes for a high biodiversity in the area.

Please see separate list of invertebrates recorded in the site

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.

- Archaeological/historical site
- Environmental education/ interpretation
- Fisheries production
- Non-consumptive recreation
- Sport fishing
- Tourism

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
Local authority, municipality etc.	+	+

25. Current land (including water) use:

Activity	On-site	Off-site
Recreation	+	+
Current scientific research	+	
Fishing: commercial	+	+
Fishing: recreational/sport	+	+
Gathering of shellfish	+	

Other	+	
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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?

What measures have been taken / are planned / regulatory processes invoked, to mitigate the effect of these factors?

Is the site subject to adverse ecological change? NO

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
Other	+	+
Management plan in preparation	+	

b) Describe any other current management practices:

Other - The terrestrial area within the site, including intertidal rock formations, is a Protected Zone under the Land Use Plan. As a result, no development is likely to be permitted in the site other than restoration of existing structures.

Fishery conservation measures apply:

- The minimum catch size for lobster in Alderney’s waters is set higher than the EU minimum size (85 mm) at 87 mm
- Parlour pots may not be used in the Island’s territorial waters out to 3 nautical miles.
- There is a ban on trawling by vessels over 120 hp from the farthest drying rock to 1 nautical mile. From 1 to 3 nautical miles there is a ban on trawlers exceeding 350 hp.
- Divers are not permitted to take lobster, ormer, crayfish or crab.
- There is a ban on the export of ormers and tails/claws of lobster and crab.

Visiting restrictions are applied to Burhou Island; no access is allowed between March and the end of July during the breeding season for puffins and storm petrels.

28. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:

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

Management plan in preparation - The Alderney Wildlife Trust is working on a management plan for the coastal grassland. The Trust is also working with the States of Alderney to formulate a plan to manage the bird colonies and excursions around the area to avoid people disturbing the birds (gannets, puffins and storm petrel colonies mainly) with the help of the RSPB south-west.

29. Current scientific research and facilities:

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

The Alderney Wildlife Trust Marine Officer Juan Salado was working on research into seaweeds and invertebrates in Clonque and Hannaine Bays in 2003. He has also had the support of the Guernsey Biological Centre; Bridget Ozanne (Conservation Officer) and Charles David (Manager) have been helping with this research.

The Trust also has the seabird data from La Société Guernesaise, which has carried out research in the area on several occasions.

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.

The Trust has produced booklets on the area, and visitor's guides are available for the few footpaths that have been opened up in the area.

The Trust's Marine Officer carries out seasonal events with children.

There is a visitor centre in town with considerable information on the flora and fauna in the area.

31. Current recreation and tourism:

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

Tourists use the wetland mainly in summer, with bird watching, walking and rockpooling being the most common activities.

32. Jurisdiction:

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

States of Alderney,

Queen Elizabeth II Street, Alderney, GY93AA.

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.

The Alderney Wildlife Trust,

Wildlife/Tourism Information Centre, Victoria Street, Alderney, GY9 3AA

info@alderneywildlife.org

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

Bates, JM (1989) A bryophyte flora of Alderney. *Cryptogamie, Bryologie-Lichénologie*, **10**(2), 147-174

Bonnard, B (1988) *Flora of Alderney, a check-list with notes*. Privately published, updated with inserts to 1999.

Bonnard, B (1999) *An illustrated guide to the wild and naturalised flowers of the Channel Islands*. Privately published CD-ROM

Bonnard, B (2002) *The wild flowers of Alderney*. Privately published CD-ROM

Bonnard, B & Bonnard, J (1995) *A natural history of Guernsey, Alderney, Sark and Herm*. The Guernsey Press, Vale

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- Pienkowski, MW (ed.) (2005) *Review of existing and potential Ramsar sites in UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies*. (Contractor: UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, Peterborough.) Final report on Contract CR0294 to the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Bristol. www.ukotcf.org
- 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
- UK Biodiversity Steering Group (1995) *Biodiversity: The UK Steering Group report. Volume 2: Action plans*. HMSO, London. www.ukbap.org.uk/Library/Tranche1_Ann_f.pdf
- Wanless, S, Murray, S & Harris, MP (2005) The status of northern gannet in Britain & Ireland in 2003/04. *British Birds*, **98**(6), 280-294
- Alderney Society www.alderneysociety.org
- Alderney Wildlife Trust www.alderneywildlife.org
- Guernsey Biological Records Centre www.biologicalrecordscentre.gov.gg
- La Société Guernesiaise www.societe.org.gg
- States of Guernsey, Board of Administration www.alderney.gov.gg

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