

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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DD MM YY

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Designation date

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Site Reference Number

Name and address of the compiler of this form:

Updated by UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum
102 Broadway, Peterborough, PE1 4DG, UK

2. Date this sheet was completed/updated:

Designated: 20 March 2003

3. Country:

UK (Western Sovereign Base Area of Cyprus)

4. Name of the Ramsar site:

Akrotiri

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):

34 37 00 N 32 58 00 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. Akrotiri Ramsar site is located on Akrotiri Peninsula, the southernmost part of Cyprus. The site is located 5 km south-west of the city of Limassol (population circa 150,000). It also borders Akrotiri village (population circa 800) and RAF Station Akrotiri to the south and Asomatos village (population circa 350) to the north.

Administrative region: Western Sovereign Base Area of Cyprus

10. Elevation (average and/or max. & min.) (metres): 11. Area (hectares): 2171

Min.	-3
Max.	2
Mean	-0.5

12. General overview of the site:

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

The Akrotiri Ramsar site is composed of two distinct areas that are hydrologically connected. The first and largest area is the large salt lake and sand flats that are situated in the centre of the Akrotiri peninsula. Over the last three centuries, this former lagoon has been isolated from the sea and a number of saltmarsh vegetation communities have developed and now surround the lake. The lake and surrounding saltmarsh is important for a range of wetland birds, in particular greater flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber*. A eucalyptus forest borders the northern side of the lake and this is an important raptor roosting area. The second distinct area is the Fassouri marshes that lie to the north-east of the salt lake. This area is made up of a matrix of freshwater habitat types including grazing marsh and reedbeds. Rain water is the key hydrological input for both areas, although the lake does get occasional input from the sea during storms. The two areas are hydrologically linked and the Fassouri marshes provide important water inputs to the seasonal salt lake.

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).

1, 2, 3, 6

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).

The site qualifies under Criterion 1 of the Ramsar Convention as it is one of the very few major salt lakes within the eastern Mediterranean in semi-natural condition that exhibits a wide range of saline and freshwater influences. The site contains many good examples of inland saline and freshwater wetland habitats, a combination that is unique within the biogeographic region of the eastern Mediterranean, including permanent and seasonal saline pools, salt marsh, sand flats and freshwater marshes. The site is the largest aquatic system in Cyprus.

The site qualifies under Criterion 2 as it supports an appreciable number of rare, vulnerable or endangered species or subspecies of plant or animal including 13 endemic and rare plant species such as *Ophrys kotschyi* and *Linum maritimum*, as well as over 32 bird species listed on Annex I of the European Birds Directive.

The site qualifies under Criterion 3 as it supports populations of plant and animal species that are important for maintaining the biological diversity of the eastern Mediterranean biogeographic region. Many species of plant and animal, including a number of endemic plant and invertebrate species, are wholly dependent on habitat types represented within the site of which there are few remaining examples on Cyprus.

The site qualifies under Criterion 6 by regularly supporting an internationally important wintering population of greater flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber*. In the five-winter period 1998-2002, an average peak count of 6,000 was recorded, being approximately 2% of the eastern Mediterranean/SW & S Asian population.

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:

Mediterranean

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	sand, peat
Geomorphology and landscape	lowland, lagoon, basins, pools
Nutrient status	oligotrophic
pH	strongly alkaline
Salinity	brackish / mixosaline
Soil	mainly mineral
Water permanence	usually seasonal / intermittent

Summary of main climatic features	Temperate; Mediterranean with hot, dry summers and cool winters.
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General description of the Physical Features:

No information available

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 reported.

18. Hydrological values:

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

Flood water storage / desynchronisation of flood peaks

19. Wetland types:

Inland wetland

Code	Name	% Area
W	Shrub-dominated wetlands	44.8
R	Saline / brackish lakes: seasonal / intermittent	33.3
Ts	Freshwater marshes / pools: seasonal / intermittent	7.8
Other	Other	5.7
E	Sand / shingle shores (including dune systems)	4.2
H	Salt marshes	4.1
9	Canals and drainage channels	0.1

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.

Salt lake and small depressions holding water and plants. The main plants are *Ruppia maritima* and *Chara* spp. Unicellular algae are also present in the salt lake.

Reed beds and sedges: *Phragmites australis*, *Imperata cylindrica*, *Calystegia sepium*, *Cladium mariscus*, *Saccharum ravennae*, *Juncus* spp., *Scirpus maritimus*.

Salicornia and other annuals colonizing mud and sand: *Salicornia europaea*, *Halopeplis amplexicaulis*, *Suaeda maritima*, *Cressa cretica*, *Frankenia pulverulenta*, *Hordeum marinum*, *Parapholis marginata*, *Sphenopus divaricatus*, *Spergularia marina*.

Mediterranean salt meadows (*Juncetalia maritimi*): *Juncus maritimus*, *Juncus acutus*, *Juncus articulatus*, *Juncus heldreichianus*, *Juncus hybridus*, *Juncus littoralis*, *Juncus rigidus*, *Juncus subulatus*, *Aeluropus lagopoides*, *Agropyron elongatum*, *Bolboschoenus maritimus*, *Carex distans*, *Carex divisa*, *Carex extensa*, *Centaurium pulchellum*, *Centaurium tenuiflorum*, *Crypsis factorovskiyi*, *Hordeum marinum*, *Imperata cylindrica*, *Limonium mucronulatum*, *Linum maritimum*, *Parapholis marginata*, *Plantago maritima* subsp. *crassifolia*, *Saccharum ravennae*, *Schoenoplectus littoralis*, *Schoenus nigricans*, *Scirpoides holoschoenus*, *Triglochin bulbosa*.

Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic halophilous scrubs (*Sarcoconetea fruticosi*): *Arthrocnemum macrostachyum*, *Salicornia fruticosa*, *Sarcocornia perennis*, *Atriplex portulacoides*, *Halocnemum strobilaceum*, *Inula crithmoides*, *Spergularia marina*, *Suaeda vera*, *Limonium mucronulatum*.

Dune sclerophyllous scrubs (*Cisto-Lavenduletalia*): *Thymus capitatus*, *Teucrium micropodioides*, *Helianthemum stipulatum*, *Cistus* spp., *Echium angustifolium*, *Fumana thymifolia*, *Pistacia lentiscus*,

Asparagus stipularis, *Rhamnus oleoides* ssp. *graecus*, *Thymelaea hirsuta*, *Lycium sweinfurthii*, *Noaea mucronata*, *Phagnalon rupestre*, *Echium angustifolium*.

Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of *Chara* spp.: *Chara* spp.

Arborescent matorral with *Juniperus* spp.: *Juniperus phoenicea*, *Ceratonia siliqua*, *Cistus* spp., *Myrtus communis*, *Olea europaea*, *Pistacia lentiscus*, *Prasium majus*, *Rhamnus oleoides* subsp. *graecus*, *Thymus capitatus*, *Thymelaea hirsuta*.

Sarcopoterium spinosum phrygas: *Sarcopoterium spinosum*, *Thymus capitatus*, *Cistus* spp., *Convolvulus oleifolius*, *Fumana* spp., *Helianthemum obtusifolium*, *Helianthemum* spp., *Helichrysum conglobatum*, *Lithodora hispidula* ssp. *versicolor*, *Micromenia* spp., *Noaea mucronata*, *Onosma fruticosa*, *Phagnalon rupestre*, *Teucrium* spp.

Mediterranean tall humid grasslands of the *Molinio-Holoschoenion*: *Panicum repens*, *Baldellia ranunculoides*, *Teucrium scordium* ssp. *scorpioides*, *Centaurea calcitrapa* ssp. *angusticeps*, *Cyperaceae* spp., *Juncus* spp., *Lotus corniculatus*, *Lythrum junceum*, *Mentha aquatica*, *Ononis spinosa*, *Pulicaria dysenterica* ssp. *uliginosa*, *Ranunculus peltatus*, *Sacharum ravennae*, *Schoenus nigricans*, *Scirpoides holoschoenus*, *Euphorbia pubescens*.

Southern riparian galleries and thickets (*Nerio-Tamaricetea* and *Securinegion tinctoriae*): *Tamarix tetragyna*, *Asparagus stipularis*.

Olea and *Ceratonia* forests: *Pistacia lentiscus*, *Rhamnus oleoides* ssp. *graecus*, *Olea europaea* ssp. *sylvestris*, *Ceratonia siliqua*, *Calycotome villosa*, *Genista fasselata*, *Myrtus communis*, *Pistacia terebinthus*, *Prasium majus*.

Eucalyptus/Acacia: *Eucalyptus gomphocephala*, *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*, *Acacia saligna* and other *Acacia* spp., *Casuarina cunninghamiana*.

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.

Habitats of International Importance:

1150 Coastal lagoons [EC Habitats Directive Annex I *Priority habitat]

1310 *Salicornia* and other annuals colonizing mud and sand [EC Habitats Directive Annex I]

1410 Mediterranean salt meadows (*Juncetalia maritimi*) [EC Habitats Directive Annex I]

1420 Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic halophilous scrubs (*Sarcoconetea fruticosi*) [EC Habitats Directive Annex I]

2260 Dune sclerophyllous scrubs (*Cisto-Lavenduletalia*) [EC Habitats Directive Annex I]

3140 Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of *Chara* spp. [EC Habitats Directive Annex I]

5210 Arborescent matorral with *Juniperus* spp. [EC Habitats Directive Annex I]

5420 *Sarcopoterium spinosum* phrygas [EC Habitats Directive Annex I]

6420 Mediterranean tall humid grasslands of the *Molinio-Holoschoenion* [EC Habitats Directive Annex I]

92D0 Southern riparian galleries and thickets (*Nerio-Tamaricetea* and *Securinegion tinctoriae*) [EC Habitats Directive Annex I]

9320 *Olea* and *Ceratonia* forests [EC Habitats Directive Annex I]

Higher plants of National Importance:

Ophrys kotschyi Endemic (Listed Bern)

Anthemis tricolor Endemic

Centaurea calcitrapa angusticeps Endemic
Convolvus cyprius Endemic
Dianthus strictus Endemic
Odontites cypria Endemic
Onopordum cyprium Endemic
Teucrium micropodioides Endemic
Ipomea sagittata Rare
Linum maritimum Rare
Lotus cytisoides Rare
Mentha aquatica Rare
Juncus maritimus Uncommon

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 Information

Species occurring at levels of international importance:

6,000 greater flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber*, count period 1993-2002, representing 1% of the biogeographical population (EC Birds Directive Annex I)

Species occurring at levels of national importance:

2 Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* Count period 2002, Conservation status Near Threatened IUCN

3 Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni* Count period 2001, Conservation status Vulnerable IUCN

60-750 Common shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* Count period 1993-2002, Conservation status EC Birds Directive Annex I

Assemblages of national importance:

45 bird species included on Annex I of the EC Birds Directive have been recorded from 1998-2002.

Important Bird Area (Birdlife International) congregations of waterbirds of global and European Importance.

The area typically supports, in winter, about 600 Shelducks, 400 Shoveler, 200 Pintail, 500 Wigeon, 600 Mallard, 1000 Teal, hundreds of Grey Herons, Glossy Ibis and Little Egrets, as well as many migrant shorebirds.

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

Aquatic vegetation (e.g. reeds, willows, seaweed)

Environmental education/ interpretation

Livestock grazing

Non-consumptive recreation

Scientific research

Tourism

Traditional cultural

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
National/Crown Estate	+	+
Private	+	+
Public/communal	+	+
Other	+	+

25. Current land (including water) use:

Activity	On-site	Off-site
Nature conservation	+	+
Tourism	+	+
Recreation	+	+
Current scientific research	+	+
Collection of non-timber natural products: (unspecified)	+	+
Collection of non-timber natural products: commercial	+	+
Cutting/coppicing for firewood/fuel		+
Cutting of vegetation (small-scale/subsistence)	+	+
Fishing: (unspecified)		+
Fishing: commercial		+
Fishing: recreational/sport		+
Arable agriculture (unspecified)		+
Shifting arable agriculture		+
Permanent arable agriculture		+
Livestock watering hole/pond	+	+
Grazing (unspecified)	+	+
Rough or shifting grazing	+	+
Permanent pastoral agriculture	+	+
Hunting: recreational/sport	+	+
Industrial water supply		+

Sewage treatment/disposal		+
Harbour/port		+
Flood control	+	+
Irrigation (incl. agricultural water supply)	+	+
Transport route		+
Domestic water supply	+	+
Urban development		+
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?
Water diversion for irrigation/domestic/industrial use	1			+	+
Erosion	1		+		+
Introduction/invasion of non-native plant species	1		+	+	+
Reservoir/barrage/dam impact: loss of wetland due to restriction	1		+	+	+
Salination of groundwater	1		+	+	+

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? 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
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Other	+	
Management plan in preparation	+	

b) Describe any other current management practices:

Direct loss of fauna through hunting or capture - Policing of illegal hunting being enforced

Pollution – unspecified - Rubbish removal being implemented

Recreational/tourism disturbance (unspecified) - The competitions have recently been discouraged by the Administration, and organisers informed that such activity in this area would not be allowed in the future.

Other - Policing of illegal hunting being enforced;
Rubbish removal being implemented

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 - Consideration should be given to the benefits of extending the site to include the nesting beaches of vulnerable turtles (mainly green, with some loggerhead).

29. Current scientific research and facilities:

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

- Bird flight line surveys including infrared monitoring at night.
- Monitoring of bird collisions on aerals.
- Monitoring of cranes and flamingos.
- Monitoring of translocated habitat.
- Research by the Department of Forests in relation to invasive non-native plant species and bird flight lines.
- Ph.D. research on the flora of Akrotiri Peninsula.
- Studies carried out this year in the context of Project Pluto Supplementary Environmental Work including Hydrogeology and Hydrology, Vegetation and Flora, Mammals and Herpetofauna, Ornithology, Terrestrial Invertebrates, Benthic Macro-invertebrates and Archaeological Desk-Based, Geophysical and Geological Assessment.

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.

Occasional TV documentaries.

31. Current recreation and tourism:

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

A. Lady's Mile beach, which is adjacent to the Akrotiri Ramsar Site, is visited by thousands of sea bathers during the summer. Their activities are confined to the area east of the beach road. There are also six restaurants on the beach, which mainly operate during the summer period. The beach track is maintained yearly using local materials, but not hard-topped to encourage traffic. Parking on the beach is prohibited and is limited in parking areas east of the track. However occasional encroachment and parking west of the track is observed, which needs to be stopped under the management plan. There is a regular rubbish collection service, which removes the rubbish generated by visitors and restaurants to an approved tip in Limassol.

B. There is a permanent station at the south-eastern end of the site, which is used for model-aircraft flying. This activity will be assessed by the management plan and appropriate action recommended.

C. Car-racing competitions had been organised in the past in the area between Lady's Mile Beach and the salt lake. These competitions have recently been discouraged by the Administration, and organisers informed that such activity in this area would not be allowed in the future. Again this issue will be addressed by the management plan.

D. The site is regularly visited by bird-watchers and other wildlife enthusiasts. Although they do not appear to be causing disturbance, their access to the site will be better managed in the future for mutual benefit.

E. Hunting within the site itself is not allowed. Measures are in place against illegal hunting. In the future, these will be improved under the management plan. Also seasonal hunting, which is allowed in areas adjacent to the site, will be assessed appropriately under the management plan.

32. Jurisdiction:

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

Administrative Secretary, Ministry of Defence,
Sovereign Base Areas Administration,
BFPO 53, Episkopi, Cyprus

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.

Ministry of Defence,
Defence Estates Conservation Office, Blandford House, Farnborough Road, Aldershot, Hants., GU11
2HA, 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

Government of Cyprus (2000) *Natura 2000 Standard Data Form for 'Alyki Akrotiriou - Ygroviotopos Fasouriou' (Akrotiri Salt Lake – Fassouri Wetlands)*

Defence Estates & RPS (2002) *Supplementary environmental work for Project Pluto, June 2002*. Defence Estates

Jalon Consultants and Engineers Ltd & Phedonos Consultants Ltd (1992) *Environmental study and management plan for the Akrotiri Salt Lake and Wetlands, Balasha*

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

Salathé, T (2002) *Akrotiri Wetland Complex. UK Sovereign Base Area, Cyprus. Mission report 17–21 June 2002*. Ramsar Bureau, Gland. www.ramsar.org/w.n.cyprus_akrotiri2.htm

Williams, WD (1993) The conservation of salt lakes. *Hydrobiologia*, **267**, 291-306

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