

## INFORMATION SHEET ON RAMSAR WETLANDS

**Note: General** refers to the whole Ramsar site

**A** refers to the southern part of the Ramsar site which lies in the Bundesland Thüringen

**B** refers to the northern part of the Ramsar site which lies in the Bundesland Sachsen-Anhalt

**Country:** Germany

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**Name of wetland:** Helmestausee Berga-Kelbra

**Date of Ramsar designation:** 31 July 1978

**Geographical coordinates:** 51°26'N 11°00'E

**General location:** On the border between the two Bundesländer Thüringen and Sachsen-Anhalt, 20 km to the west/south-west of Sangerhausen

**Area:**

A: 1,940 ha in Thüringen

B: 850 ha in Sachsen-Anhalt

2,790 ha in total

**Wetland type:**

A: H M Q P T 1 6

B: 6 P M 4

**Altitude:** 153 m

**Overview:** Flood protection reservoir with reedbeds and wet meadows in the flood plain of the river Helme and two salt springs with salt meadows extending inland. Important resting area for waders and waterfowl on summer and autumn migration, and breeding area for waterbirds.

**Physical features:**

A: The wetland was created in 1967 by damming the river Helme.

The wet meadow is formed through quaternary deposits and only features very small variations in altitude. Regular changes in the water level result from a water regulation scheme, causing temporary flooding of the meadow and marsh areas as well as temporary drops in ground water level along the riverbank.

The salt springs, which emerge on the edge of the neighbouring chalk formation, have been dry since 1987, so that the inland saline areas are becoming increasingly fresh.

B: Artificial shallow waterbody, which can completely dry out during the winter season.

#### **Ecological features:**

General: The open water surface, which covers about 600 ha has many shallow water areas and is, particularly in autumn, surrounded by sometimes extensive silty areas. During the winter season (from October to April) the area can at times become completely dry. The reedbeds only occur along parts of the bank. To the east of the reservoir, in the area which is only flooded during high water (further 730 ha), there are extensive areas of *Phragmites australis* and various large sedges. Finally, these core areas of the wetland are surrounded by rough meadows and agricultural fields.

#### **Land tenure/ownership of**

##### **a) site:**

A: Water regulation Agency Saale-Werra

B: The area within the Bundesland Sachsen-Anhalt is partially owned by the administrative authorities and privately, and is partially used for extensive agriculture.

##### **b) surrounding area:**

A: former LPG Heringen  
former LPG Uftrungen  
former LPG Soncershausen  
former LPG Badra

(LPG probably means agricultural party co-operative)

B: various private owners

#### **Conservation measures taken:**

A: The south-western part of the reservoir and the salt-meadows have been part of the Nature Protection Area "Schlossberg-Solwiesen" since 1967. In 1969 the wetland became "Protected area for waterfowl" and in 1970 it was formally protected under the name Landscape Protection Area "Helme-Reservoir near Kelbra".

B: Ramsar site, EC SPA, part of the Landscape Protection Area "Kyffhäuser". There are guidelines for the management of water supply, fishery, agriculture, hunting, and recreation. These guidelines will have to be further developed, taking into account new structural circumstances.

#### **Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:**

A: no information supplied.

B: Extension of the protection measures by designating

suitable areas as a Nature Reserve.  
Development of a management plan, which will ensure sustainable use of the site.

**Current land use: principal human activities in**

**a) site:**

General:

- Fisheries (intensive Carp production)
- Management of water supply
- Storage of rainwater
- Flood protection
- Recreation (Camping Park with beach on the Eastern shore)
- Grazing (occasionally, and on the fringes by sheep)
- Nature conservation, ornithology
- Research and Education (up to now site for capturing waders by Hiddensee bird observatory; Nature Conservation Field Station Numburg is starting point for student expeditions).

**b) surroundings/catchment:**

- Agriculture (the valley which is known as "Golden meadow" is used intensively for agriculture)
- Nature conservation (to the south lies the chalk formation of the western slope of mount Kyffhäuser)
- Fisheries (to the west are the intensively used Aulebener-fish ponds, which also support diverse bird species).
- Recreation
- Villages

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

**a) site:**

A:

- Intensive fish-farming causes enormous eutrophication of the water; there is already remarkable over-siltation (rotting mud??) and decline in water quality.
- The drying out of the salt-springs and the occasional flooding is causing the salt meadows to become less saline, with consequent degradation of the flora .
- Illegal traffic through the wetland and growing observation-tourism (probably bird-watchers?) are sources of frequent disturbances.

B: Recreation and sailing

**b) in the surroundings/catchment:**

A: no information supplied.

B: extension of recreational use.

**Hydrological and physical values:**

General: The reservoir is a means of flood protection and water regulation.

**Social and cultural values:**

General: At the moment, the wetland is still important for fish-farming, and the surrounding area for cattle grazing. Its value for recreation has decreased since swimming is no longer possible. The area is of increasing value for nature-education and recreational research, which is promoted through the Nature Conservation Field Station

Numburg, which can sleep 10 people.

**Noteworthy fauna:**

A: 89 species of waders and waterfowl have been recorded at the site. According to Görner *et al.* (1983) the following species use the site for feeding and resting (maxima):

25,000 <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	1,000 <i>Calidris alpina</i>
12,000 <i>Fulica atra</i>	400 <i>Podiceps ruficollis</i>
10,000 <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	200 <i>Philomachus pugnax</i>
8,000 <i>Aythya ferina</i>	140 <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>
5,000 <i>Anas crecca</i>	100 <i>Mergus merganser</i>

also the rare species *Ciconia nigra* (4), *Haliaeetus albicilla*, *Circus cyaneus* (5), *Pandion haliaetus* (14), *Falco peregrinus* (2) and *Sterna albifrons*.

Endangered or rare species which regularly breed in the wetland are *Ciconia ciconia*, *Milvus milvus* and *Gallinago gallinago*.

Irregularly breeding rare species are: *Netta rufina*, *Porzana porzana*, *Numenius arquata* and *Emberiza calandra*.

The marsh on the North-Western shore is roosting area for ca. 200,000 *Sturnus vulgaris* and 600 *Motacilla flava*.

B: The following species rest and winter at the site: *Tachybaptus ruficollis*, *Podiceps cristatus*, *Ardea cinerea*, *Anas crecca*, *Anas platyrhynchos*, *Anas querquedula*, *Anas clypeata*, *Aythya ferina*, *Aythya fuligula*, *Mergus merganser*, *Pandion haliaetus*, *Fulica atra*, *Limicolae*, *Larus ridibundus* and numerous rare visiting species.

The site is also important for breeding to the following species: *Podiceps cristatus*, *Anas querquedula*, *Anas clypeata*, *Aythya fuligula*, *Gallinago gallinago*.

**Noteworthy flora:**

General: In the area of the salt-meadows there are typical plant communities of central european inland-salt-areas (*Saliconietum europaeae germanicum*, *Astero-Puccinellietum distantis*, *Junco-Glaucetum maritimae*) and others including *Halimione pedunculata*.

The reeds (*Phragmites australis*) and sedges (*Carex* spp.), which build the link to the wet meadows, are characteristic because of their wide-spread occurrence in the area are.

There are varied mosaics of differing reed communities along the shore of the reservoir and in the areas protected from floods.

**Current scientific research and facilities:**

A: The wetland was designated as a site for capturing waders by the Hiddensee bird observatory. Volunteer ringers and recreational ornithologists are continually working in the wetland. Botanical and entomological surveys are mainly concerned with the salt-meadows and the neighbouring chalk formations.

B: There is insufficient or rather insufficiently published research on fauna and ecology of the site. Ornithological research is carried out, especially by the Ornithologists Club Nordhausen.

**Current conservation education:**

A: Apart from the Nature Conservation Field Station, which

accommodates scientists, there are so far no Information or Education Centres. Information material on the Nature Park Kyffhäuser, which also takes the wetland into account, is currently being printed.

B: none at present

**Current recreation and tourism:**

A: The camping park on the South-Eastern shore always holds several hundred visitors; the disturbance is however limited to this side of the shore. An increase in observation tourism from ornithologists has been occurring in recent times.

B: Recreational centre for swimming, camping, tourism, rowing, sailing.

**Management authority:**

A: no information supplied.

B: District Community of Sangerhausen, Untere Naturschutzbehörde, Sangerhausen, Germany

**Jurisdiction:**

A: Territorial judicial responsibility:

Bundesland Thüringen District Nordhausen

District Sondershausen

District Artern

Managerial responsibility: Water Authority of Bundesland Thüringen

B: Bundesland Sachsen-Anhalt District Sangerhausen  
Bezirksregierung Halle, Obere Naturschutzbehörde,  
Willy-Lohmann-Str. 7, Halle/Saale, Germany

**Bibliographical references (published in German):**

A: - Management Plan (1983): B. for the Wetland of International Importance "Berga-Kelbra Reservoir". Unpublished manuscript. Institute for Landscape Research and Nature Conservation Halle (Saale), working group Jena.

A&B: - Görner, M., Kneis, J., Karlstedt, W., Schulze, W., & Schröder, W. (1983): The internationally important wetland "Berga-Kelbra Reservoir" and its birds. Landscape management and Nature Conservation in Thüringen 20(2): 30-54.

B: - Karlstedt, K. (1979), Beitr. Vogelk. (contribution to ornithology) 25, 75-80

B: - Warthold, R. (1987), Naturschutzarb. (Nature conservation) in Halle u. Magdeburg, 24, 13-24

A: - Weinitschke, H. (ed.) (1983): Handbook on Nature Protection Areas in the German Democratic Republic. Vol. 4, 2. revised edition.

A: - Westhus, W. (1984): On the forming and the need for management of salt springs, using the salt meadows of the nature protection area "Schlossberg-Solwiesen" (Nordhausen District) as an example. Arch. Nature Conservation and Landscape Research, Berlin 24(3): 177-188.

A: The above articles and internal reference material from the Thüringer Environment Institute were used to compile this overview report. Further references, especially on ornithological observations, may be obtained from the reference lists in the enclosed reprints.

**Reasons for inclusion:**

A: 2a, 2c, 3a

B: 1d, 2c, 3b

**Map of site:** enclosed