# Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS)

*Categories approved by Recommendation 4.7, as amended by Resolution VIII.13 of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.*

Note 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. Once completed, the RIS (and accompanying map(s)) should be submitted to the Ramsar Bureau. Compilers are strongly urged to provide an electronic (MS Word) copy of the RIS and, where possible, digital copies of maps.

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FOR OFFICE USE ONLY.
DD MM YY
Designation date Site Reference Number

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

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**2. Date this sheet was completed/updated:**

January 2004

**3. Country:**

Finland

**4. Name of the Ramsar site:**

Aspskär Islands

**5. Map of site included:**
Refer to Annex III of the Explanatory Note and Guidelines, for detailed guidance on provision of suitable maps.

**a) hard copy** (required for inclusion of site in the Ramsar List):

Yes. The boundaries are the same as in the strictly protected area. The waters near the small islands are mostly less than six metres deep, while the areas between are mostly 10–20 metres deep (still very important and usable for bottom-diving ducks, alcids etc.).

**b) digital (electronic) format** (optional):

Yes.

**6. Geographical coordinates** (latitude/longitude):

60°16' N / 26°25' E

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

The unbroken area is situated in the province of Southern Finland, in the middle part of the Gulf of Finland, in the municipality of Pernaja, 26 km southeast of Pernaja village and 23 km south of Loviisa city centre. The municipality (418 sq.km of land) has ca. 3 800 residents. Loviisa city (44 sq.km of land) has ca. 7 600 residents.

**8. Elevation:** (average and/or max. & min.)

10 – 0 m

**9. Area:** (in hectares)

728ha

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

The archipelago forms an important breeding area for archipelago birds, including the most important islet for Alcids in Finland.

**11. 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** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** |

**12. Justification for the application of each Criterion listed in 11. 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).

1) A representative example of a near-natural wetland type (archipelago in shallow marine waters) in the EU Boreal region.
2) Threatened bird species (VU in Finnish Red List) include Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*) (VU) with ca. 10 pairs and Guillemot (*Uria aalge*) with ca. 20 pairs (the

only true colony in Finland). Species of the EU Birds Directive Annex I include Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) with 60 pairs and Common Tern (*S. hirundo*) with 20 pairs.

4) The archipelago forms an important breeding area for archipelago birds, including the most important islet for Alcids in Finland: Finland's responsibility species include the largest colony in Finland of Razorbill, *Alca torda* (e.g. 650 pairs), and 150 pairs of Black Guillemot (*Cepphus g. grylle*).

**13. 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:**

Southern boreal forest vegetation zone.

**b) biogeographic regionalisation scheme** (include reference citation):

Etelä-Suomen ja Pohjanmaan metsien suojelun tarve-työryhmä. Puheenjohtaja: Ruuhijärvi, R., Sihteerit: Kuusinen, M., Raunio, A. and Eisto, K. 2000. Metsien suojelun tarve Etelä-Suomessa ja Pohjanmaalla. Etelä-Suomen ja Pohjanmaan metsien suojelun tarve-työryhmän mietintö. Suomen ympäristö 437. Ympäristöministeriö. Helsinki.

Working group on the need for forest protection in southern Finland and Ostrobothnia. Chairman Ruuhijärvi, R., Secretaries Kuusinen, M., Raunio, A. and Eisto, K. 2000. Forest protection in southern Finland and Ostrobothnia. The Finnish Environment 437. Ministry of the Environment.

**14. 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.

**Geology:** Geochemically included in Rapakivi granites area. Bedrock is composed of rapakivi granite.
**Origins:** Natural
**Soil type:** Mainly bedrock terrain.
**Water quality:** General quality satisfactory. Salinity ca. 3–7 ‰.
**Depth of water:** Mostly 3–9 m, maximum ca. 27 m. Water-level usually low in spring and high in autumn and winter.
**Climate:** Duration of growing season ca. 170 days, mean annual temperature ca. +4 ºC, mean annual rainfall ca. 600 mm. Waters ice-covered normally from January to April. Southern boreal forest vegetation zone.

## 15. 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).

Data not available.

## 16. Hydrological values:

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

None significant.

## 17. Wetland Types

### a) presence:

Circle or underline the applicable codes for the wetland types of the Ramsar "Classification System for Wetland Type" present in the Ramsar site. Descriptions of each wetland type code are provided in Annex I of the *Explanatory Notes & Guidelines.*

**Marine/coastal:**

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **A** | **B** | **C** | **D** | **E** | **F** | **G** | **H** | **I** | **J** | **K** | **Zk(a)** |

**Inland:**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **L** | **M** | **N** | **O** | **P** | **Q** | **R** | **Sp** | **Ss** | **Tp** | **Ts** | **U** | **Va** | **Vt** | **W** | **Xf** | **Xp** | **Y** | **Zg** | **Zk(b)** |

**Human-made:**

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **9** | **Zk(c)** |

### b) dominance:

List the wetland types identified in a) above in order of their dominance (by area) in the Ramsar site, starting with the wetland type with the largest area.

A – Shallow marine waters
D – Rocky offshore islands

## 18. General ecological features:

Provide further description, as appropriate, of the main habitats, vegetation types, plant and animal communities present in the Ramsar site.

Aspskär consists of five partly forested islands and the rocky islet of Haverören in the outer archipelago. The area includes 695 ha of water and 36 ha of land. Small forests are composed mostly of Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*), Common Juniper (*Juniperus communis*), Black Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) and Aspen (*Populus tremula*).

**19. 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.***

None significant.

**20. 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.***

An increasing population (>440 pairs) of Great Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis*) was established in 1997.

**21. Social and 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.

None significant.

**22. Land tenure/ownership:**
(a) within the Ramsar site:

Private-owned.

**23. Current land (including water) use:**
(a) within the Ramsar site:
None significant.

(b) in the surroundings/catchment:
None significant

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

Oil pollution damage is the main threat. American Mink (*Mustela vison*) may cause notable damage especially in the colony of Alcids.

**25. 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.

The site is included in the Natura 2000 Network as a part of the Protected Sea Area of Pernajanlahti Bay and Pernaja Archipelago (65 760 ha), designated both as SPA and SCI, and in the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) network of Baltic Sea Protected Areas. Aspskär was protected as a nature conservation area (369 ha) in 1953, being unofficially protected already since 1922. Aspskär Private Protected Area (366 ha) and Haverören Private Protected Area (362 ha). The area is guarded and landing is prohibited in the breeding season of birds. Trapping of American Minks has been intensified.

**26. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:**
e.g. management plan in preparation; official proposal as a legally protected area, etc.

None known.

**27. Current scientific research and facilities:**
e.g., details of current research projects, including biodiversity monitoring; existence of a field research station, etc.

Finnish Game and Fisheries Research Institute monitors annually the development of archipelago bird populations. The breeding bird fauna has been surveyed regularly since 1949. An unofficial bird station, specialized in the migration of arctic waterfowl and waders, has been in operation since the 1950s.

**28. Current conservation education:**
e.g. visitors' centre, observation hides and nature trails, information booklets, facilities for school visits, etc.

None significant.

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

None significant.

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

**a)** Uusimaa Regional Environment Centre, **b)** Ministry of the Environment.

## 31. 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.

Uusimaa Regional Environment Centre, PO Box 36, FIN-00521 Helsinki, Finland.
Mr. Ilpo Huolman: ilpo.huolman@ymparisto.fi

## 32. Bibliographical references:

scientific/technical references only. If biogeographic regionalisation scheme applied (see 13 above), list full reference citation for the scheme.

Hario, M. 1982. On the size and recruitment of a peripheral breeding colony of the Guillemot *Uria aalge*. Ornis Fennica 59.

Hildén, O. & Hario, M. 1993. Muuttuva saaristolinnusto. Forssan kirjapaino Oy.

Leivo, M. 2000. Suomen kansainvälisesti tärkeät lintualueet. Linnut-vuosikirja 1999. (English summary: Important Bird Areas in Finland).

Leivo, M., Asanti, T., Koskimies, P., Lammi, E., Lampolahti, J., Mikkola-Roos, M. & Virolainen, E. 2002. Suomen tärkeät lintualueet FINIBA. BirdLife Suomen julkaisuja 4, Suomen graafiset palvelut, Kuopio.