

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 Secretariat. Compilers are strongly urged to provide an electronic (MS Word) copy of the RIS and, where possible, digital copies of maps.

1. Name and address of the compiler of this form:**Joint Nature Conservation Committee**

Monkstone House

City Road

Peterborough

Cambridgeshire PE1 1JY

UK

Telephone/Fax: +44 (0)1733 – 562 626 / +44 (0)1733 – 555 948

Email: RIS@JNCC.gov.uk

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Designation date

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Site Reference Number

2. Date this sheet was completed/updated:

9 March 2006

3. Country:

UK (Scotland)

4. Name of the Ramsar site:

Loch Eye

5. Map of site included:Refer to Annex III of the *Explanatory Notes and Guidelines*, for detailed guidance on provision of suitable maps.**a) hard copy** (required for inclusion of site in the Ramsar List): *yes* ✓ -or- *no***b) digital (electronic) format** (optional): Yes

6. Geographical coordinates (latitude/longitude):

57 47 30 N

03 58 00 W

7. 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: Inverness

Loch Eye Ramsar site lies 6 km south-east of Tain in Easter Ross.

Administrative region: Highland

8. Elevation (average and/or max. & min.) (metres): **9. Area** (hectares): 205.14

Min. 16

Max. 19

Mean 17

10. Overview:

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

Loch Eye is a relatively large, shallow, nutrient-rich inland water body located between the Cromarty and Dornoch Firths. In winter the loch acts as an important roosting site for internationally important numbers of waterfowl. The loch and surrounding area also supports a diverse range of higher plant communities.

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).

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Secretariat comment: The RIS provides information requiring the application of Criterion 4. This needs to be included in the next update.

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).

Ramsar criterion 6 – species/populations occurring at levels of international importance.

Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation):

Species with peak counts in winter:

Greylag goose, *Anser anser anser*, Iceland/UK, 6338 individuals, representing an average of 6.3% of the population (5 year peak mean for 1995/6-1999/2000)
Ireland

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.

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:

Atlantic

b) biogeographic regionalisation scheme (include reference citation):

Council Directive 92/43/EEC

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.

Soil & geology	basic, alluvium, nutrient-rich, sedimentary, sandstone
Geomorphology and landscape	lowland
Nutrient status	eutrophic
pH	alkaline
Salinity	fresh
Soil	mainly organic
Water permanence	usually permanent

Summary of main climatic features	Annual averages (Kinloss, 1971–2000) (www.metoffice.com/climate/uk/averages/19712000/sites/kinloss.html) Max. daily temperature: 12.2° C Min. daily temperature: 5.1° C Days of air frost: 53.5 Rainfall: 624.4 mm Hrs. of sunshine: 1261.4
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General description of the Physical Features:

Loch Eye is a relatively large, shallow, nutrient-rich inland water body, and is the best example of a eutrophic lowland loch north of the Highland boundary fault. The loch and surrounding area supports a diverse range of plant communities.

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).

Loch Eye is a relatively large, shallow, nutrient-rich inland water body, and is the best example of a eutrophic lowland loch north of the Highland boundary fault.

16. Hydrological values:

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

No special values known

17. Wetland types

Inland wetland

Code	Name	% Area
O	Freshwater lakes: permanent	68.2
Ts	Freshwater marshes / pools: seasonal / intermittent	8.5
U	Peatlands (including peat bogs swamps, fens)	8.5
Other	Other	14.8

18. General ecological features:

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

Open water forms the majority of the Ramsar site. Alder and willow carr occur in and adjacent to the loch in places. The loch supports a diverse range of submerged macrophytic plants. An extensive draw-down zone is usually present in summer, which together with fens/marshes, separates the loch from the surrounding land.

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.*

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

Goodyera repens, Potamogeton filiformis, Potamogeton rutilus

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.*

Birds**Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:**

Whooper swan , *Cygnus cygnus*,
Iceland/UK/Ireland

80 individuals, representing an average of 1.3%
of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-
2002/3)

Species Information

None reported

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.

Aesthetic
Aquatic vegetation (e.g. reeds, willows, seaweed)
Archaeological/historical site
Fisheries production
Livestock grazing
Sport fishing
Tourism

22. Land tenure/ownership:

Ownership category	On-site	Off-site
Local authority, municipality etc.		+
Private	+	+

23. Current land (including water) use:

Activity	On-site	Off-site
Nature conservation	+	
Tourism	+	
Recreation	+	
Current scientific research	+	
Fishing: recreational/sport	+	
Permanent arable agriculture		+
Livestock watering hole/pond	+	
Grazing (unspecified)	+	+
Irrigation (incl. agricultural water supply)	+	

24. Factors 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?
No factors reported	NA				

For category 2 factors only.

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

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.

Conservation measure	On-site	Off-site
Site/ Area of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI/ASSI)	+	
Special Protection Area (SPA)	+	
Site management statement/plan implemented	+	
Other	+	

26. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:

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

No information available

27. Current scientific research and facilities:

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

Completed.

Habitat.

The palaeolimnology of Loch Eye was studied during 1998 as part of a wider study investigating the palaeolimnology of Scottish Freshwater Lochs.

Easter Ross Loch Survey 1994

Loch Eye, Easter Ross: a case study in eutrophication (Bailey-Watts 1991).

28. Current conservation education:

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

None reported

29. 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.

Land based recreation:

Walkers and bird watchers tend to go where there is easy public access or where the site can be viewed from the road. Walking occurs all year; birdwatching concentrates between September and April.

Wildfowling has largely ceased following the Bird Sanctuary Order effective since 1974. Shooting by the owners/occupiers on site is not problematic. Goose are scared off adjacent agricultural fields and this requires a licence out of season. The Loch Eye Angling Association fish the loch (season April to September) and have occasionally stocked it with brown trout in the past. Fishing uses rowing boats only and this activity does not conflict with the conservation objectives of the site.

Water based recreation:

Windsurfing occurs less frequently now than in the past. Mainly April to September.

30. Jurisdiction:

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

Scottish Executive, Environment and Rural Affairs Department

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.

Scottish Natural Heritage, 2 Anderson Place, Edinburgh, EH6 5NP

32. Bibliographical references:

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

Site-relevant references

- Bailey-Watts, AE (1991). *Loch Eye, Easter Ross – a case study in eutrophication*. Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, Edinburgh (unpublished report)
- Batten, LA, Bibby, CJ, Clement, P, Elliot, GD & Porter, RF (1990) *Red Data Birds in Britain. Action for rare, threatened and important species*. Poyser, London, for Nature Conservancy Council and Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- Lassiere, O (1994) *Easter Ross loch survey*. Scottish Natural Heritage
- 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.)
- Stewart, NF (2004) *Important stonewort areas. An assessment of the best areas for stoneworts in the United Kingdom*. Plantlife International, Salisbury
- 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
- Worham, P (1998) *Loch Eye Site of Special Scientific Interest, 5 Year Management Statement. 1997/8 – 2001/2*. Scottish Natural Heritage, Dingwall
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Please return to: **Ramsar Secretariat, Rue Mauverney 28, CH-1196 Gland, Switzerland**

Telephone: +41 22 999 0170 • Fax: +41 22 999 0169 • email: ramsar@ramsar.org