

Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS) – 2006-2008 version

Available for download from http://www.ramsar.org/ris/key_ris_index.htm.

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 and guidelines 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 compiler of this form:

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Designation date

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Site Reference Number

2. Date this sheet was completed/updated:

20/02/2008

3. Country:

Hungary

4. Name of the Ramsar site:

The precise name of the designated site in one of the three official languages (English, French or Spanish) of the Convention. Alternative names, including in local language(s), should be given in parentheses after the precise name.

Montág-puszta

5. Designation of new Ramsar site or update of existing site:

This RIS is for (tick one box only):

- a) Designation of a new Ramsar site or
b) Updated information on an existing Ramsar site
-

7. Map of site:

Refer to Annex III of the *Explanatory Note 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) a **hard copy** (required for inclusion of site in the Ramsar List): ;
- ii) an **electronic format** (e.g. a JPEG or ArcView image) ;
- iii) a **GIS file providing geo-referenced site boundary vectors and attribute tables** .

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 boundary is the same as an existing protected area, part of the Körös-Maros National Park.

8. Geographical coordinates (latitude/longitude, in degrees and minutes):

Provide the coordinates of the approximate centre of the site and/or the limits of the site. If the site is composed of more than one separate area, provide coordinates for each of these areas.

46° 21' N; 20° 40' E

9. General location:

Include in which part of the country and which large administrative region(s) the site lies and the location of the nearest large town.

Hungarian Great Plain;
Békés and Csongrád Counties;
Ambrózfalva, Makó, Nagyér, Tótkomlós

10. Elevation: (in metres: average and/or maximum & minimum)

average : 90.2 m
maximum: 91.4 m
minimum: 89.2 m

11. Area: (in hectares)

2, 203 ha

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 Montág-puszta with its wetlands, including its largest marsh, represents a high nature value. The diverse habitat types one can find here ensure ideal life conditions for rare species of flora and fauna. Due to its closeness to the traditional migration flyway along the river Tisza it is not only an important nesting site for birds but roosting and feeding place as well used frequently during the migration.

13. Ramsar Criteria:

Tick the box under 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). All Criteria which apply should be ticked.

1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 • 7 • 8 • 9

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.

On the Montág-puszta according to the Ramsar criteria the following wetland types occur: Permanent saline brackish/alkaline marshes/pools (Sp), a Seasonal/intermittent saline/brackish/alkaline marshes/pools (Ss) és a Permanent freshwater marshes/pools (Tp). These habitat types according to the Habitats Directive belong to the Pannonic Salt Steppes and Salt Marshes (1530) category. This habitat type only occurs and is typical to the Pannonic Biogeographical Region.

The wetland habitats of the Montág-puszta are large and are in good condition, qualifying the site for the representative criterion.

Criterion 2. The site supports viable populations of the following species with international designations:

Insects:

Catopta thrips (moth) (Habitats Directive Annexes II and IV)

Fish:

Misgurnus fossilis (Habitats Directive Annex II)

Amphibians:

Bombina bombina (Habitats Directive Annexes II and IV)

Triturus dobrogicus (Habitats Directive Annexes II and IV)

Hyla arborea (Habitats Directive Annex IV)

Birds:

Migrants in significant numbers (see Criterion 5):

Nycticorax nycticorax (Birds Directive Annex I)

Egretta alba (Birds Directive Annex I)

Ciconia ciconia (Birds Directive Annex I)

Ciconia nigra (Birds Directive Annex I)

Platalea leucorodia (Birds Directive Annex I)

Pluvialis apricaris (Birds Directive Annex I)

Philomachus pugnax (Birds Directive Annex I)

Limosa limosa (Birds Directive Annex I)

Tringa glareola (Birds Directive Annex I)

Chlidonias hybridus (Birds Directive Annex I)

Anthus campestris (Birds Directive Annex I)

Annex I breeding bird species in wet years :

Porzana porzana (Birds Directive Annex I)

Limosa limosa (Birds Directive Annex I)

Chlidonias hybridus (Birds Directive Annex I)

Chlidonias leucopterus (Birds Directive Annex I)

Mammals:

Mustela erminea (Bern Convention Appendix II)
Lutra lutra (Habitats Directive Annexes II and IV)

Plants:

Cirsium brachycephalum (Habitats Directive Annexes II and IV) a fairly common Pannonic endemism

Criterion 4.

The Montág-puszta ensures excellent conditions on huge areas for the important amphibian species (*Bombina bombina* and *Triturus dobrogicus* are listed on Annex II of the Habitats Directive, while *Hyla arborea* is on Annex IV) in their important life period of reproduction. The area is also an important step for the migrating bird species following the flyway of the Tisza River. Especially during the spring period it presents an ideal roosting and feeding site. The fast spring migration towards more northerly breeding places is also a critical life period. So considering all of these the Montág-puszta befits this criterion as well.

Criterion 5.

The importance of the Montág-puszta increased again after the 1997 restoration works. The following are the maximum numbers of migrating species in the mentioned spring time:

Nycticorax nycticorax* 250; Egretta alba* 75; Ardea cinerea 90; Ciconia ciconia* 80; Ciconia nigra* 42; Plegadis falcinellus* 3; Platalea leucorodia* 105; Anser albifrons 20000; Anas penelope 3500; Anas crecca 1600; Anas platyrhynchos 4000; Anas acuta 600; Anas querquedula 550; Anas clypeata 500; Grus grus 150; Pluvialis apricaria* 1000 – 13 000; Vanellus vanellus 4000; Philomachus pugnax* 12000; Lymnocyptes minimus 15; Gallinago gallinago 150; Limosa limosa 1100; Numenius phaeopus 1200; Numenius arquata 110; Tringa erythropus 500; Tringa totanus 40; Tringa stagnatilis 12; Tringa nebularia 14; Tringa glareola* 300; Larus ridibundus 200; Chlidonias hybridus* 300.

So in years of average winter and spring precipitation the Montág-puszta matches with this criterion as well.

Birds marked with an asterisk are listed on Annex I of the Birds Directive

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:

Pannonic

b) biogeographic regionalisation scheme (include reference citation):

European Commission DG Environment webpage

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.

The soils of the Montág-puszta are mostly alkaline soils: meadow solonchaks soils including variants turning into steppe formation. The western site of the Montág-puszta was represented as a marsh on the map of the 1783 Military Survey. In that time the alkaline basins without drainage were typical. The puszta is characterised by rich micro-relief: salt berms, former riverbeds, pits.

The climate of the area is typically continental, warm and dry. The average precipitation is some 600 mm, in years of drought it barely reaches 280 mm and in wet years can be over 800 mm. The maximum rainfall is at the end of spring–beginning of summer. The average temperature is 10.4 °C. The average of the summer maximum is 34.7 °C, winter minimum is -17 °C. Number of sunshine hours 2000-2050, from which 820-830 is in summer 190 at wintertime.

The Montág-puszta is a naturally low-lying, basin-like area which suffered from significant human interventions in the last one-and-a-half centuries. Regulation of the Szaraz-ér cut off the regular water supply of the area in the second half of the 19th century. In the mid 20th century during flood management activities it became fully drainable.

The turning point in the history of Montág-puszta was its declaration as a **National Park** and the rehabilitation works in 1997. During this work the main drainage channels were blocked. Due to this and the basin-like structure of the puszta in every spring, mainly on the western side of the area, 400-1500 ha is covered by 10-50 cm water. Thanks to the active conservation measures, winter and spring waters can be held back. In years of average precipitation the area dries out towards the end of summer and some years it does not dry out at all.

17. Physical features of the catchment area:

Describe the surface area, general geology and geomorphological features, general soil types, and climate (including climate type).

Due to the basin-like character of the area the catchment area is identical with the designated site. Water supply of the area is only by precipitation so the borders of the catchment area are the Tótkomlós-Makó main road from North and the Királyhegyesi-Száraz-ér from South.

18. Hydrological values:

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

The Montág-puszta is a part of the Körös-Maros National Park. The function of the water bodies, water habitats located here is the long term preservation of natural values of the area.

19. 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.

Ts, Ss, Tp

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.

In the Montág-puszta due to the restoration works, right after its declaration as a National Park, the ancient low-lying parts of the puszta (steppe) turned to wetlands again. Typical associations of the lowest parts are *Scirpo-Phragmitetum*, *Typhaetum angustifoliae*, *Typhaetum latifoliae*. On more shallow parts *Schoenoplectetum lacustris* associations occur. In shallow water and banks *Bolboschoenetum maritimi*, *Agrostio-*

Beckmannietum, and *Agrostio-Glycerietum pojiformis* are located. The largest populations of *Agrostio-Alopecuretum pratensis* are located in the temporary drying side zones of the marshes.

In the spring alkaline formations are temporarily flooded. Here are located the following associations: *Camphorosmetum annuae*, *Puccinellietum limosae*, *Pholiurus-plantaginetum tenuiflorae*.

From the associations of dryer sites the *Artemisio-Festucetum pseudovinae* association is present.

In the aquatic habitats of the Montág-puszta fish species prefer oxygen poor waters (like *Misgurnus fossilis*) and numerous amphibian species find optimal life conditions. Masses of *Bombina bombina* and members of the *Rana esculenta* species complex present but here one can find *Hyla arborea* as well. The newt species living here, like *Tristurus dobrogicus*, *T. vulgaris*, are also worth mentioning.

Detailed monitoring from 1975 confirmed the presence of more than 250 bird species. Among these species are most of the water and shorebird species that occur in Hungary. Many of them nest in the area like the various species of the mixed heronry; duck species prefer the marshy area and shorebirds nest in loose colonies. The area is also important roosting place of migrating birds following the traditional flyway of the River Tisza. Mostly during the spring migration thousands of wild geese, ducks and shorebirds roost and feed on the area.

From the mammals preferring wetland habitats, *Mustela erminea* (Bern Convention Appendix II) and *Lutra lutra* (Habitats Directive Annex II) should be mentioned.

21. Noteworthy flora:

Provide additional information on particular species and why they are noteworthy (expanding as necessary on information provided in 14, 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.*

From the associations in wet years occurs in lot of places the *Agrostio-Beckmannietum* which has declined in the last years.

In the marshes *Cirsium brachycephalum*, a Pannonic endemism is fairly common. It is protected on national level and is listed on Annex II and IV of the Habitats Directive.

The rare endemic association of *Pholiurus-plantaginetum tenuiflorae* is characterised by *Pholiurus pannonicus* and *Plantago tenuiflora*.

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.*

Among the amphibians noteworthy is the *Triturus dobrogicus* (Habitats Directive Annex II), whose range is poorly known, but according to our present knowledge 30% of the world population lives in Hungary. In the Montág-puszta the species is quite common.

With respect to birds, the heronry of 250 breeding pairs is worth mentioning. Most interesting species of the colony are *Egretta garzetta** (15 – 20 pairs) and *Ardeola ralloides** (1-5 pairs).

*Branta ruficollis** occurs in low numbers, mostly during the spring migration, frequently in flocks of 16-20 000 wild geese. Recently there have been records of the critically endangered *Anser erythropus** as well. In years of average precipitation, *Aythya nyroca** (0-2 pairs) also nests here.

Because of the massive flocks of waterbirds in autumn and winter, the occurrence of *Haliaeetus albicilla** (1-3 specimens) is frequent. There was a breeding attempt, too so settlement of a nesting pair is likely in the future.

The margin zone of the western marsh is used by *Himantopus himantopus** (25-75 pairs), *Tringa totanus* (15-20 pairs) and *Limosa limosa* (25-60 pairs) for breeding.

In years of precipitation higher than average, *Cblidonias hybridus** and *Cblidonias leucopterus* colonies are formed with more than 1000 nesting pairs.

In migration several species of ducks (10-15 000 individuals) and shorebirds occur in high numbers (*Vanellus vanellus* max.: 4000 specimens, *Philomachus pugnax** max.: 12 000 specimens, *Pluvialis apricaria** 1000 – 13 000 specimens).

Birds marked with an asterisk are listed on Annex I of the Birds Directive

Among mammals, *Mustela erminea* (Bern Convention Appendix II) and *Lutra lutra* (Habitats Directive Annex II) are relatively common.

23. Social and cultural values:

a) 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:

The site has no social or cultural values of international importance.

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?

If Yes, tick the box and 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:

a) within the Ramsar site:

Most of the area belongs to the Hungarian State managed by the Körös-Maros National Park Directorate. The rest (260 ha) is partly private property, partly the property of the local council.

b) in the surrounding area:

The neighbouring areas mostly belong to private owners.

25. Current land (including water) use:

a) within the Ramsar site:

On Montág-puszta grasslands are dominating (1660 ha) that's why in farming the grazing and mowing is determinative. On arable lands in the margin zones of the area extensive land use is carried out.

b) in the surroundings/catchment:

On neighbouring areas there are a high percentage of intensively used arable lands.

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

a) within the Ramsar site:

Among affective factors only positive effects are on the area due it is a part of the Körös-Maros National Park, so ongoing activities are subjected to the goals of nature conservation.

b) in the surrounding area:

Areas neighbouring to the Ramsar Site area partly belong to the National Park and the ones next to the Ramsar Site are all Nature 2000 sites, so there is a legal guarantee that all negative effects could be eliminated in the future.

27. Conservation measures taken:

a) List national and/or international category and legal status of protected areas, including boundary relationships with the Ramsar site:

In particular, if the site is partly or wholly a World Heritage Site and/or a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, please give the names of the site under these designations.

All the Montág-puszta is a part of the Körös-Maros National Park from which 335 ha are strictly protected.

The designated area is a part of the Nature 2000 network as well:

- Vásárhelyi- és Csanádi-puszták Special Protection Area (HUKM10004),
- Vásárhelyi és Csanádi gyepek Site of Community Interest (HUKM20001)

b) If appropriate, list the IUCN (1994) protected areas category/ies which apply to the site (tick the box or boxes as appropriate):

Ia ; Ib ; II ; III ; IV ; V ; VI

c) Does an officially approved management plan exist; and is it being implemented?:

The management plan of the Montág-puszta is under preparation. At the present stage it is under the revision in the Ministry of Environment and Water.

d) Describe any other current management practices:

In the Montág-puszta the extensive grazing and mowing are the management methods controlled by the National Park Directorate handling natural conservation aspects as a priority.

28. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:

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

There are preservation aimed restoration works on the area since 1997 (closing canals, building dykes etc.) The next project of the Körös-Maros National Park Directorate is to eliminate a 4.5 km long functionless canal of the area. This work improves mostly the landscape value of the area. The second step will be the elimination of the Határ-canal (a 3 km long canal north of the area) to approach water conditions closer to the natural state.

29. Current scientific research and facilities:

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

Regular data collection is only about birds. We have basic data on some invertebrates and the rest of the vertebrate groups. Further research is needed.

30. Current communications, education and public awareness (CEPA) activities related to or benefiting the site:

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

The Montág-puszta is open to the public except for the strictly protected area. On the western side of the area there is a watchtower that can be visited free of charge.

31. Current recreation and tourism:

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

Despite the fact that the Montág-puszta can be freely visited, the number of visitors is minimal.

32. Jurisdiction:

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

Lower-Tisza Regional Authority for Environmental Protection, Natura Conservation and Water Management Agency

Local Government of Békés County

Local Government of Csongrád County

Agricultural Office of Békés County

Agricultural Office of Csongrád County

Local Government of Ambrózfalva

Local Government of Makó

Local Government of Nagyér

Local Government of Tótkomlós

Local Government of Ambrózfalva

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.

Körös-Maros National Park Directorate

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Official responsible for Ramsar affairs: Greksza János E-mail: janos.greksza@kmnp.hu

34. Bibliographical references:

Scientific/technical references only. If biogeographic regionalisation scheme applied (see 15 above), list full reference citation for the scheme.

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