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# Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands

## (RIS) – 2009-2012 version

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

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Designation date

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Site Reference Number

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

September 2013

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### 3. Country:

the Netherlands

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### 4. Name of the Ramsar site:

Leekstermeergebied

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

This RIS is for:

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

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### 6. For RIS updates only, changes to the site since its designation or earlier update:

#### a) Site boundary and area

The Ramsar site boundary and site area are unchanged:

or

**If the site boundary has changed:**

- i) the boundary has been delineated more accurately ; or  
ii) the boundary has been extended ; or  
iii) the boundary has been restricted\*\*

and/or

**If the site area has changed:**

- i) the area has been measured more accurately ; or  
ii) the area has been extended ; or  
iii) the area has been reduced\*\*

\*\* **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:**

The site does not qualify anymore for criterion 5.

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**7. Map of site:**

**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:**

Ramsar site Leekstermeergebied has also been designated as the European Natura 2000-site Leekstermeergebied. For this RIS-version, the Ramsar site boundary has therefore been adjusted to the Natura 2000-boundary.

Some nature development area in the north has been included, while residential area and recreation terrain has been excluded or exclavated from the Ramsar site.

In total this new boundary resulted in a decrease of -6,0 ha.

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

53°11'N - 06°26'E

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**9. General location:**

The site lies at the border of the provinces of Drenthe and Groningen. The site is located some 5 km southwest from the centre of Groningen city (population 195.418 per 1-1-2013; source: CBS, Netherlands Statistics), the provinces capital.

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**10. Elevation:** (min & max)

NAP -3 / -1 m

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**11. Area:**

1.543,2 ha

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**12. General overview of the site:**

The Leekstermeergebied is a transition zone from the elevated Drents plateau to peat land. The area is characterized by an open landscape of peat meadows with the Leekstermeer in the west.

Reed marshes exist along the shores of the lake.

The area is important for its woodland along streams, marsh breeding birds and its potential for herbivorous water birds.

### 13. Ramsar Criteria:

1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 • 7 8 • 9

### 14. Justification for the application of each Criterion listed in 13 above:

The Ramsar site Leekstermeergebied, has been designated under Natura 2000 as well. Natura 2000 is the centrepiece of EU nature & biodiversity policy. It is an EU-wide network of nature protection areas which aims to assure the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats. It is comprised of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) designated by Member States under the Habitats Directive, and also incorporates Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the Birds Directive. Natura 2000 applies to SACs and SPAs which are divided into biogeographical regions. The Ramsar site Leekstermeergebied applies to both and the justification for the application of each Ramsar criterion below, greatly refers to its designation as a SAC and SPA.

#### *Justification criterion 2*

The table below shows Annex II species (HD) and Annex I species (BD) for which the site has been designated as a SAC and SPA respectively, as well as their current status on the National Red List. Some other threatened species of the National Red Lists have also been added to the table.

*Species of Annex II of the European Habitat Directive (HD) and Annex I of the European Bird Directive for which the site has been designated as a SAC and SPA respectively, as well as species of Annex IV (HD) and some threatened species of the National Red Lists (- = Not Applicable). Year of adoption of the National Red List in parentheses.*

Species	Species code	HD Annex	BD Annex	National RL Category
<b>Vascular Plants</b>				(2004)
Marsh Lousewort <i>Pedicularis palustris</i>	-	-	-	VU
Early Marsh orchid <i>Dactylorhiza incarnata</i>	-	-	-	VU
<b>Non-breeding birds</b>				
Barnacle Goose <i>Branta leucopsis</i>	A045	-	I	-
<b>Breeding birds</b>				(2004)
Spotted Crake <i>Porzana porzana</i>	A119	-	I	VU
Corn Crake <i>Crex crex</i>	A122	-	I	VU
<b>Dragonflies</b>				(2004)
Green Hawker <i>Aeshna viridis</i>	-	IV	-	EN
<b>Molluscs</b>				(2004)
Desmoulin's Whorl Snail <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i>	H1016	II	-	VU

#### *Justification criterion 3*

The Leekstermeergebied is designated as a Natura 2000 site (both SAC and SPA) and can therefore be considered important for maintaining the biodiversity of the Atlantic biogeographic region. Besides the species mentioned under criterion 2, the site has also been designated as a SPA for a number of bird species that are not on Annex I of the BD. See the table below.

*Bird species (not on Annex I of the BD) for which the site has been designated as a SPA as well as their status on the National Red List (2004).*

Bird species	Species code	National RL Category
<b>Non-breeding birds</b>		
White-fronted Goose <i>Anser albifrons</i>	A041	-
Eurasian Wigeon <i>Anas [Mareca] penelope</i>	A050	-
<b>Breeding birds</b>		
Sedge Warbler <i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	A295	LC

#### Justification criterion 4

The site is of particular importance for several breeding and non-breeding bird species (see criterion 2, 3 and 6), of which several species gather in high numbers and relatively small areas during wintering and/or migration periods like ducks and geese.

#### Justification criterion 6:

Species meeting the 1% threshold (WPE-4, Wetlands International 2006; source: Sovon, Dutch Centre for Field Ornithology). (NB = nonbreeding, BR = breeding period 2006-2010)

Species (UK)	Species	NB / BR	Biographical population	1% WPE-4	Number of birds at site	% at site
White-fronted Goose <sup>1</sup>	<i>Anser albifrons</i>	nb	NW. Siberia/ NW-NE. Europe	10000	11725	1,2
<sup>1</sup> Roosting						

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### 15. Biogeography

#### a) biogeographic region:

The Ramsar site belongs to the Atlantic biogeographic region.

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

The bio-geographic regions dataset used, contains the official delineations used in the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and for the EMERALD Network set up under the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention)

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### 16. Physical features of the site:

The Leekstermeergebied is a transition zone from the elevated Drents plateau to peat land. It's a man-made area which goes back until the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Drain off of water caused subsidence of the land which resulted in flooding of the low land mainly during the winter period. After the nearby Lauwersmeer was dammed from the Wadden Sea in 1969 it became more easy to control the water level in the Leekstermeergebied. The water levels are stabilised meaning that flooding only rarely occurs nowadays. The lake is of natural origin, though its surroundings have been converted into agricultural grassland. The average water depth is 1 meter.

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### 17. Physical features of the catchment area:

The site belongs to the river Rhine catchment area of 185.000 km<sup>2</sup>. Geologically and geomorphologically it consists mainly of Quarternary, Paleozoic and Mesozoic sediments and Tertiary mountains. The general soil types are: Alluvial, Brown forest soils and montane soils. The climates according to Köppen are rainy (Cbf) and montane (EH).

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### 18. Hydrological values:

Several streams flow into the Leekstermeer and the surrounding polders are drained into the lake. Subsequently lake Leekstermeer drains via the Reitdiep into the Lauwersmeer. Part of this water originates from river Rhine which is directed to agricultural polders to compensate for water shortage during summer.

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### 19. Wetland Types

#### a) presence:

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:

O-4-Tp

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## 20. General ecological features:

The area is characterized by an open landscape of peat meadows with the Leekstermeer in the west. Reed marshes exist along the shores of the lake. The area is especially important for its woodland along streams and its potential for herbivorous water birds and marsh breeding birds.

Ecosystem services mainly refer to:

- the ability to store fresh water (especially i.r.t. potential impacts of climate change) to be drained via the Lauwersmeer into the Wadden Sea;
- the ability for agriculture to take fresh water in (for irrigation or livestock drinking water) or drain it off.

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21. **Noteworthy flora:** Main noteworthy species have been listed under no. 14.

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22. **Noteworthy fauna:** Main noteworthy species have been listed under no. 14.

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## 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: See 25. Current land use.

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

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## 24. Land tenure/ownership:

a) within the Ramsar site:

The site is partly owned by Staatsbosbeheer and the Groninger Landschap; the remainder is state (Dienst der Domeinen, Ministerie van Financiën) and private ownership.

b) in the surrounding area:

Several private owners.

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## 25. Current land (including water) use:

a) within the Ramsar site:

Boating 18%, Tourism and leisure 5%, Residential (scattered) 1%, Commercial fisheries 18%, Conservation and research 97%, Water management 100%.

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

Agriculture is the main land-use in the immediate surrounding of the lake. On a broader scale of the Rhine catchment area the general land use is forestry, pasture farming, arable farming, inproductive land (high mountains).

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**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:**

- Drainage (C - drainage to improve farming conditions);
- Unnatural water management (B - high in summer, low in winter).

**b) in the surrounding area:**

- Pollution (B - not industrial discharge but eutrophication from Rhine water).

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**27. Conservation measures taken:**

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

- Special Protection Area (Birds Directive 79/409/EEC, 2000);
- Special Area of Conservation (Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC);
- Natura2000 site.

**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 Ramsar site matches 100% with the designation for Natura2000.

The process for the Natura2000 management plan has been started.

**d) Describe any other current management practices:**

Nothing particular.

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**28. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:** Nothing particular

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**29. Current scientific research and facilities:**

Ongoing biodiversity monitoring is one of the obligatory activities in relation to the designated Natura2000 habitat types and/or species. SOVON, the Dutch Bird Research Organisation, coordinates for instance a continues national bird monitoring program in which it cooperates with 7000 volunteers, research institutes and organisations in the monitoring of birds throughout the Netherlands (among which the Oudegaasterbrekken, Fluessen en omgeving).

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

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**31. Current recreation and tourism:** See 25. Current land use. Number of visitors not known.

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**32. Jurisdiction:**

Municipalities Leek and Noordenveld.

Functional jurisdiction (conservation purposes): Ministry of Economic Affairs.

### 33. Management authority:

Main management authorities:

- Staatsbosbeheer, P.O. Box 1300, 3970 BH Driebergen, the Netherlands, tel. +31 (0)30-6926111.
- Stichting Het Groninger Landschap, Rijksweg 333, 9752 CG Haren, +31 (0)50 313 59 01.
- Stichting Het Drentse Landschap, P.O. Box 83, 9400 AB Assen, tel. +31 (0)592 31 35 52.

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### 34. Bibliographical references:

- BirdLife International, 2004. Birds in Europe, population estimates, trends and conservation status. Cambridge, UK: BirdLife International. (BirdLife Conservation Series No. 12).
- Hornman, M., Hustings, F., Koffijberg, K., Kleefstra, R., Klaassen, O., van Winden, E., SOVON Ganzen- en Zwanenwerkgroep & L. Soldaat, 2012. Watervogels in Nederland 2009/2010. SOVON-rapport 2012/02, Waterdienst-rapport 12.06. SOVON Vogelonderzoek Nederland, Nijmegen.
- Janssen, John, A.M. & Joop, H.J. Schaminée, 2009. Europese Natuur in Nederland. Laag Nederland Natura 2000-gebieden. KNNV-Uitgeverij. 248p.
- Ministerie van LNV, 2010. Besluit Natura 2000-gebied Leekstermeergebied.
- Van Roomen M.W.J, Boele A., van der Weide M.J.T., van Winden E.A.J, Zoetebier D. 2000. Belangrijke vogelgebieden in Nederland, 1993-97. Actueel overzicht van Europese vogelwaarden in aangewezen en aan te wijzen speciale beschermingszones en andere belangrijke gebieden. SOVON-informatierapport 2000/01. SOVON Vogelonderzoek Nederland, Beek-Ubbergen.

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