

# Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS) – 2009-2012 version

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

Ms. A. Pel-Roest  
Ministry of Economic Affairs  
Department of Nature and Biodiversity  
Prins Clauslaan 8  
P.O. Box 20401  
2500 EK The Hague, the Netherlands  
Tel: +31 (0)70 378 6868

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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:**

Weerribben

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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:**

Nothing particular

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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 Weerribben has also been designated as the European Natura 2000-site Weerribben. For this RIS-version, the Ramsar site boundary has therefore been adjusted to the (proposed) Natura 2000-boundary. Some farmland and residential areas have been excluded or exclavated, while substantial nature development area in the south between the Weerribben and the neighbouring Ramsarsite Wieden has been included. In total this new boundary resulted in an increase of +790,4 ha.

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

52°47'N - 05°55'E

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**9. General location:**

Province of Overijssel, ca. 10 km west of Steenwijkerland (population 43.437 per 1-1-2013; Source: CBS, Statistics Netherlands).

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

NAP -1 / 0 m

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**11. Area:**

3328,8 ha

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

The Weerribben consists of partly excavated peat land in the north western corner of the province of Overijssel, to the west of the city of Steenwijk. The site is situated close to the Ramsar site Rottige Meenthe, and lies adjacent to the Ramsar site Wieden.

The present landscape is characteristic for the peat working. It consists of a complex of channels ("petgaten" or "weren") with ridges in between ("ribben"). When the extraction of peat was no longer profitable around 1920, the local people started reed cutting. In 1919 the pumping station Stroink near Blokzijl was built to control the water levels in north western Overijssel. Because of this the reed lands became drier which accelerated the succession to land, after which the reed lands became overgrown with weeds.

The Weerribben is an area of ponds and canals, separated by strokes of land of varying sizes, fens, reed beds, swampy woodland and wet meadows. All the stages of succession between open water and swamp forest occur.

### 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 Weerribben, 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 Weerribben 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 1*

The Weerribben has been awarded a European Diploma of Protected Areas by the Council of Europe in 1996. This award is a prestigious international award granted since 1965 by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to natural and semi-natural areas and landscapes of exceptional European importance for the preservation of biological, geological and landscape diversity and managed in an exemplary way. The Weerribben and the adjoining Wieden (which received the same award in 2010) form the largest peat swamp of its kind in Western-Europe.

#### *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 code	HD Annex	BD Annex	National RL Category
<b>Vascular Plant Species</b>				(2004)
Fen Orchid <i>Liparis loeselii</i>	H1903	II, IV	-	EN
Marsh Spurge <i>Euphorbia palustris</i>	-	-	-	VU
Marsh Lousewort <i>Pedicularis palustris</i>	-	-	-	VU
Early Marsh-orchid <i>Dactylorhiza incarnata</i>	-	-	-	VU
<b>Moss species</b>				(2004)
<i>Calliergon giganteum</i>	-	-	-	EN
<i>Campyliadelphus elodes</i>	-	-	-	EN
<i>Fissidens adianthoides</i>	-	-	-	VU
<i>Rhizomnium pseudopunctatum</i>	-	-	-	VU
<i>Scorpidium scorpioides</i>	-	-	-	CR
<i>Preissia quadrata</i>	-	-	-	EN

<i>Riccardia multifida</i>	-	-	-	EN
<b>Mush room species</b>				(2004)
<i>Armillaria ectypa</i>	-	-	-	EN
<b>Mammals</b>				(2009)
Pond Bat <i>Myotis dasycneme</i>	H1318	II, IV	-	LC
1 Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i>	H1355	II, IV	-	CR
<b>Breeding birds</b>				(2004)
Bittern <i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	A021	-	I	EN
Purple Heron <i>Ardea purpurea</i>	A029	-	I	EN
Spotted Crake <i>Porzana porzana</i>	A119	-	I	VU
Black Tern <i>Chlidonias niger</i>	A197	-	I	EN
<b>Fish</b>				(2004)
Bitterling <i>Rhodens sericeus amarus</i>	H1134	II	-	VU
Weatherfish <i>Misgurnus fossilis</i>	H1145	II	-	VU
Spined Loach <i>Cobitis taenia</i>	H1149	II	-	LC
<b>Dragonflies</b>				(2004)
<i>Leucorrhinia pectoralis</i>	H1042	II, IV	-	EN
<i>Brachytron pratense</i>	-	-	-	VU
<i>Aeshna viridis</i>	-	IV	-	EN
<i>Libellula fulva</i>	-	-	-	VU
<b>Butterflies</b>				(2004)
Large Copper <i>Lycena dispar ssp. batavia</i>	H1060	II, IV	-	CR
<i>Boloria selene</i>	-	-	-	EN
<b>Beetles</b>				(2004)
<i>Graphoderus bilineatus</i>	H1082	II, IV	-	-
<b>Molluscs</b>				(2004)
<i>Marstoniopsis scholtzii</i>	-	-	-	VU
<i>Myxas glutinosa</i>	-	-	-	CR
<i>Anisus vorticulus</i>	H101X	II, IV	-	VU
<i>Gyraulus riparius</i>	-	-	-	EN

### Justification criterion 3

The Weerribben 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 SAC for a range of habitat types (Annex I of HD) and SPA for a number of bird species that are not on Annex I of the BD. See the tables below.

*Habitat types (according to interpretation manual of EU-Habitat Directive; \* = priority habitat type) for which the site has been designated as a SAC.*

Habitat code	Habitat type
H3140	Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp.
H3150	Natural eutrophic lakes with <i>magnopotamion</i> or <i>Hydrocharition</i> -type vegetation
H4010	Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i>
H6410	<i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt laden soils ( <i>Molinion caeruleae</i> )
H6430	Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels
H7140	Transition mires and quaking bogs

<sup>1</sup> The site has not been designated as an SAC for the European Otter (*Lutra lutra*). However, after extinction from the Netherlands, the species was reintroduced at this site in 2002. The population is increasing since then and the Otter is slightly extending its distribution across the Netherlands.

H7210	*Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i>
H91D0	*Bog woodland

*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).*

Species	Species code	RL category
<b>Breeding birds</b>		(2004)
Common Snipe <i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	A153	EN
Savi's Warbler <i>Locustella luscinioides</i>	A292	VU
Sedge Warbler <i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	A295	LC
Great Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	A298	EN

#### *Justification criterion 8*

The site has among others been designated as a SAC for the following fish species: Bitterling *Rhodeus sericeus amarus*, Weatherfish *Misgurnus fossilis* and Spined Loach *Cobitis taenia* (see criterion 2).

#### *Justification criterion 9*

The Weerribben is among others designated as a SAC for the endemic butterfly subspecies Large Copper *Lycena dispar ssp. batavia*. The site is crucial for its conservation as it is the only site in the Netherlands (and the world!) where a viable population of this subspecies exists. The only other (smaller) populations in the adjacent Ramsar sites of the Wieden and 'Rottige Meenthe en Brandemeer' can only sustain with the migration of individuals from the Weerribben (Janssen & Schaminée 2009, Alterra 2008).

## 15. Biogeography

### a) biogeographic region:

The Ramsar site belongs to the Atlantic biogeographical 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)

## 16. Physical features of the site:

The current landscape has been formed by peat excavations in the 19th century.  
The water level is stabilised at 0,7 m - NAP in summer and at 0,8 m - NAP during winter.

## 17. Physical features of the catchment area:

This wetland is part of the catchment area of the river Rhine. The surface area of the catchment is 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 general land use is forestry, pasture farming, arable farming, unproductive land (high mountains). The climates according to Köppen are rainy (Cbf) and montane (EH).

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## 18. Hydrological values:

The Hydrological values of the Weerribben include flood control and groundwater replenishment.

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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:

Tp 42% (9); Xp 34%; O 4%; Wet grassland 20%

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## 20. General ecological features:

It is an area of ponds and canals (former peat-workings: “petgaten”), separated by strokes of land of varying sizes where the peat was laid to dry (“legakkers”), fens, reedbeds, swampy woodland and wet meadows.

Plant communities of European interest that occur are:

- *Scorpidio-Caricetum diandrae*
- *Sphagno palustris-Ericetum*
- *Carici elongatae alnetum*
- *Thelypterido-Alnetum*
- *Carici cutrae-Betuletum pubescentis*

Together with the adjacent site Wieden it is the most extensive and important area of peat bog landscape in Northwest Europe. All the stages of succession between open waters, marsh heaths and swamp forests occur. Because the peat excavations occurred relatively recent, the original characteristic of the site is still visible. In comparison with the coastal plain bog of Noord-Holland, this site is less brackish, but more freshwater and limy. Many plants and animals of the coastal plain bog survive in viable populations, among which the most important population of the endemic butterfly (sub) species *Ljveana dispar batava*.

It has always been an important breeding area for birds of marshes, both from reed marshes and from more open marshes and open water with floating vegetations and quacking bogs. In total it concerns some 90 bird species.

When about 1920 the extraction of peat was no longer profitable, the local community gradually switched to reed-cutting practices. Water and littoral plants had started to grow again in and along the shallow turf ponds, from which reed-land developed. Reed-cutting became a major source of income. The quality of the reed that grows in Overijssel (and which is used for roofing) was so good that it was renowned throughout Europe.

In 1919 the pumping station Stroink near the town of Blokzijl was built to control the water levels in north western Overijssel. As a result the reedlands became drier and the succession to

land accelerated and the reed lands got overgrown with weeds. The reed harvesting became less and less important. However, still some people substantially depend on reed-cutting for a living. For that, and also in view of the scenic and natural value of the reed-land, a piece of land of twelve hundred hectares is preserved for reed-cutting.

Recreation activities are mainly aimed at nature. There is a visitors centre and a boat rental. Motorboats are subject to certain rules in order to control the tranquillity of the area. Rowing boats and canoes are allowed in the area, as well as electric boats. Due to the amount of water the opportunities for walking and cycling are limited. There are various guided tours in the area: including boat trips and cycling excursions, visits to the duck decoy, and outings especially for children.

The ecosystem services mainly refer to:

- the wetlands potential for water recreation;
- provision of reed;
- the ability to store fresh water (especially i.r.t. potential impacts from climate change);
- 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:**

Most noteworthy flora is listed under no. 14.

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#### **22. Noteworthy fauna:**

Most noteworthy fauna is 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 mainly owned by Staatsbosbeheer, also some private ownership.

**b) in the surrounding area:**

Surrounding area: several private owners

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

### a) within the Ramsar site:

Diary farming 5 - 35%, Reed cutting 5 - 35%, Commercial fisheries 5 - 35%, Angling <5%, Residential (conurbation) <5%, Residential (scattered) <5%, Leisure and tourism 5 - 35%, Nautical sports <5%, Water management >95%.

### b) in the surroundings/catchment:

Agriculture

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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:

(A = serious threat covering large part of the area; B = moderate threat or local threat; C = minor threat):

Drainage (B -); Natural events (B - natural succession); Selective logging/ cutting (A - reed cutting); Disturbance by recreation (A); Pollution (not Industrial discharge) (A - eutrophication).

### b) in the surrounding area:

Drainage, Atmospheric deposition of nutrients from bio-industry, Nutrient pollution caused by water from surrounding farmland.

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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, 1986)
- Special Area of Conservation (Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC)
- Natura2000 site
- De Weerribben-Wieden National Park (1992)

### b) If appropriate, list the IUCN (1994) protected areas category/ies which apply to the site:

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 (proposed) designation for Natura2000. The process for the Natura2000 management plan has been started.

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

Among others:

- reed cutting.
- reintroduction since 2002 of the European Otter (*Lutra lutra*) in the Ramsar sites Wieden, Weerribben and Rottige Meenthe. Currently a healthy population exists.

## **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 Natura 2000 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 Weerribben).

The University of Amsterdam and Nijmegen do several studies in the site a.o. concerning the impacts of flexible water level management and phosphorous.

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

Visitors centre, excursions, hide, information booklet.

Websites on the area are available like the website of Dutch National Parks [www.np-weerribbenwieden.nl](http://www.np-weerribbenwieden.nl).

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## **31. Current recreation and tourism:**

See 25. Current land use. Number of persons visiting the site by boat are an estimated 150,000 a year; during summer holidays on average 3,100 cyclists a day visit the site.

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## **32. Jurisdiction:**

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

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## **33. Management authority:**

Staatsbosbeheer, P.O. Box 1300, 3970 BH Driebergen, the Netherlands, tel. +31 (0)30-6926111.

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## **34. Bibliographical references:**

The number of scientific/technical references is too extended to list here. For a complete list please surf to the publication lists of the research institutes on the internet. For an arbitrary selection see below:

- Alterra, 2008. Profielen habitatoorten; Grote vuurvliinder (*Lycaena dispar*) H1060: p. 392-396. ([www.synbiosis.alterra.nl](http://www.synbiosis.alterra.nl)).
- 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 EL&I. Ontwerpbesluit Natura 2000 gebied Weerribben.
- 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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Please return to: **Ramsar Convention Secretariat, Rue Mauverney 28, CH-1196 Gland, Switzerland**

Telephone: +41 22 999 0170 • Fax: +41 22 999 0169 • e-mail: [ramsar@ramsar.org](mailto:ramsar@ramsar.org)