

Pasvik

Information sheet on Ramsar wetlands

1. Country: Norway 2. Date: 3. Ref: 7NO 023
4. Name and address of compiler: Øystein R. Størkensen, Directorate for Nature Management, Tungasletta 2, N-7005 Trondheim, Norway. Tel. +47-7358 0500, fax. +47-7391 5433.
5. Name of wetland: Pasvik nature reserve, on Russian side: Pasvik zapovednik.
6. Date of Ramsar designation: 19/03/1996
7. Geographical coordinates: 69⁰ 10' N, 29⁰ 15' E.
8. General location: Pasvik river along the Norwegian - Russian border, Sør-Varanger municipality, Finnmark county. Nearest village being Kirkenes. Russian part of the reserve: Petsjenga municipality, Murmanskaya oblast.
9. Area: 1,910 ha, on Russian side: 14.730 ha.
10. Wetland type: M, O, U.
11. Altitude: 50 - 100 masl.
12. Overview: The reserve includes a part of the Pasvik river, characterised by many bays, islets og shallow waters. The river is surrounded by *Pinus sylvestris* forests and extensive mires. This area is especially important for breeding, resting and migratory wetland species.
13. Physical features: The Pasvik river originates from the Enare lake in Finland, and the nature reserve consists of a number of lakes, with the slow flowing river and some rapids in between. The reserve includes an unspoilt part of this riverine system. The soil is dominated by precambrian rocks, covered by mighty quaternary deposits. The Norwegian part of the reserve is dominated by shallow waters and extensive mires, dotted with *Pinus sylvestris*. On the Russian side extensive tracts of pristine *Pinus sylvestris* forests is included. Due to the physical factors with shallow and protected bays the aquatic flora is particularly well developed. The ice breaks very early in this area and is thus very important for staging migratory waterfowl. The area has an inland climate with relatively warm summers and cold winters, precipitation is moderate.
14. Ecological features: Situated in the northern boreal coniferous forest. The forest is characterised by few species of lichen and ericaceous species on dry ground. A typical feature is extensive tracts of mires, with domination of *Carex* spp. stands in minerogenic parts. Of particular interest is well developed structures of permafrost phenomenon called palsamires, ie. permanently frozen parts of the mire. Dense thickets of *Salix* spp. can be found along the river. In the river rich stands of *Potamogeton* spp. dominates, while in more shallow parts species like *Sparganium* spp. and *Ranunculus peltatus* dominates. Several other interesting waterplant

species can be found along the shore.

15. Land tenure/ ownership of:

a) Site: Most of the area is municipal. A minor part is private.

b) Surrounding area: Almost exclusively municipal.

16. Conservation measures taken: Established as a nature reserve on 15 October 1993, on the Russian side the zapovednik was established in 1992. This joint Norwegian-Russian nature reserve is the result of cooperation between the two governments. A joint committee has been established to decide on a management plan of the area.

17. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented: None.

18. Current land use: principal human activities:

a) Site: Nature protection, leisure activities including fishing. Boating is strictly restricted due to specific border regulations.

b) Surrounding/catchment: Reindeer husbandry, forestry, hunting, fishing and other leisure activities.

19. Disturbances/threats, including changes in land use and major development projects:

a) At the site: The Pasvik river is regulated by two electric power stations, this has some influence on the fluctuation of the water level. Two new and exotic species has entered the area from introductions in neighbouring Finland, these are *Coregonus albula* and *Ondatra zibethicus*. Of these the *Coregonus* has an impact on the local fish population.

b) In the surroundings/catchment: Large tracts of forests have been felled in the surrounding area on both sides of the border. Still large tracts of virgin taiga remains within and outside of the protected areas and a neighbouring national park. Prospecting for minerals has been undertaken in the catchment area, while extraction of a major deposit was rejected with the establishment of the reserve. Old plans for a new highway between Norway and Finland along the river still exists but is strongly opposed due to the unspoilt character of the area.

20. Hydrological and Physical values:

21: Social and cultural values: Rich findings of archeological interest documents habitation of the area 8,000 years ago. The valley of Pasvik has in the border area a history of Russian, Finnish and Norwegian background. Local lapps dominated the area prior to recent settlement by Norwegians.

The famous naturalist Hans. Tho L. Schaaning settled in the valley around 1900 and collected data particularly on the birdlife in the area well known among naturalists.

His farm at Noatun (within the reserve) is currently protected as a national historical monument.

Several books and articles has been written on historical events and on the local flora and fauna.

22. Noteworthy fauna: A number of species listed on the national redlist occurs and breeds within the reserve: Vulnerable species: *Anser fabalis*, *Limicola falcinellus*, *Grus grus* and *Pandion haliaetus*, rare species: *Anas acuta* (common), *Mergus albellus*, *Phylloscopus borealis*, *Emberiza pusilla* and *Strix nebulosa*. More common species are: *Anas platyrhynchos*, *Anas crecca*, *Anas penelope*, *Aythya fuligula*, *Bucephala clangula*, *Mergus merganser*, *Mergus serrator*, *Cygnus cygnus*, *Limosa lapponica*, *Lymnocyptes minimus*, *Tringa erythrurus* and *Tringa glareola*. A number of bird species migrate through the area. *Ursus arctos* and *Alces alces* has a stable occurrence in the area.

23. Noteworthy flora: Geographically interesting area with a number of eastern species like *Stella palustris*, *Sagittaria natans sagittifolia*, *Carex globularis* and *Carex lapponica*. A species like *Betula pendula* is rare in this northern climate. The rich and varied aquatic vegetation found in this river is rare for rivers draining towards the Barents Sea.

24. Current scientific research and facilities: The research centre at Svanvik Environmental Center, ca. 40 km to the north, has been assigned tasks concerning research and monitoring within the reserve. This is done in close cooperation with the authorities of the Russian zapovednik.

25. Current conservation education: A book on the reserve in Norwegian and Russian was published in 1994. Several posters and a brochure in English, Russian and Norwegian has been produced. An old Russian watchtower on the border has been restored with Norwegian funds and is now used as a bird observation tower.

26. Current recreation and tourism: The reserve is visited by many nature interested visitors, both local and foreign.

27. Management authority: Fylkesmannen i Finnmark, N-9800 Vadsø.

28. Jurisdiction: Dept. of Environment.

29. Bibliographical references: Wiliam, S., Makarova, O & Aarset, T. 1994: Pasvik. Norsk-russisk naturreservat. Grøndahl-Dreyer. 96 pp. (List of literature inside this book).

30. Reasons for inclusion: 1 b, c, 2 a, b, c, 3 b.

31. Map of site: Enclosed.