

INFORMATION SHEET ON RAMSAR WETLANDS

Country: Sweden

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Name of wetland: Helge River

Date of Ramsar designation: 5 December 1974

Geographical coordinates: 56°00'N 14°12'E

General location: A section of the River Helge to the immediate north (Araslövssjön) and south (Hammarsjön-Egeside) of Krisianstad, the chief town of the County of Kristianstad in the south.

Area: 5,480 ha (Araslövssjön 1,180 ha; Hammarsjön and Egesidesjön 4,300 ha)

Wetland type: M Q W S

Altitude: Average of 2m above sea level.

Overview: The site comprises the lower River Helge and is in two sectors. The River Helge is scania's largest watercourse and flows through a flat, arable valley. The region, especially Håslöv meadows at Lake at Lake Hammarsjön, is one of Scania's most important breeding localities for birds.

Physical features: The designated site is the lower part of the River Helge which flows through a flat, arable valley and emerges into the Baltic Sea. Most of the lakes along its course have been drained. Araslövssjön and Hammarsjön are shallow eutrophic lakes on cretaceous bedrock.

Ecological features: Habitats include reedbeds, srubland and large areas of hummocky pasture. Some areas are cut for hay.

Land tenure/ownership of

- a) **site:** Ownership is appt state and part private.
- b) **surrounding area:**

Conservation measures taken: Listed as site of national importance for nature conservation. The designated site includes two Nature Reserves: 1) Håslöv meadows (166 ha, 25 April 1967); and 2) Norra Lingenäset of the first-mentioned reserve. Both the reserves have management plans.

Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:

Current land use: principal human activities in

a) site: Nature conservation; livestock grazing; hay cutting; agriculture.

b) surroundings/catchment: There are several military exercise areas in the surroundings. The region is otherwise characterized by arable land. The town of Kristanstad is situated in the catchment area.

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

a) at the site: Some areas are in danger of becoming overgrown. In recent years several species of waders and ducks have declined in number, probably due to altered land use (overgrowth, artificial fertilizers etc.). Continued grazing as well as hay-cutting and lowering of the amount of nutrients is therefore necessary. Uncontrolled reed cutting may impair on the breeding opportunities of several species.

b) in the surroundings/catchment:

Hydrological and physical values: The River Helge is very little affected by waterr regulation, which allows regular flooding of the meadow areas.

Social and cultural values: Being situated close to a large town, great efforts are being made to expose the different values of the wetland to people. For that purpose a wetland-directed project has been established within the site.

Noteworthy fauna: (Figures refer to 1988)

Breeding birds: *Limosa limosa* (40 pairs); *Philomachus pugnax* (30); *Calidris alpina* (10); *Chlidonias niger* (100); *Larus ridibundus* (2000-3000); *Porzana porzana*, *Crex crex*, *Botaurus stellaris* (5); *Anas clypeata* (50); *A. querquedula* (15); *Tachybaptus ruficollis*, *Circus pygargus*, *Falco subbuteol* (>300); *F. tinnunculus* (10).

Regular annual visitors: *Locustella naevia* (about 100); *L. fluviatilis*; *L. Cuscinioides*; *Carpodacus erythrinus* (15 pairs).

Resting: Thousands of ducks visit the lakes during autumn and spring. During March/April, and October/November *Anser fabalis* (10,000-15,000) graze at Araslövssjön, Hammarsjön and Yngsjön lakes. Also *Cygnus columbianus* and *Sterna Caspia* rest.

Wintering: *Branta canadensis* (2000), *Haliaetus albicilla* (5-10).

Noteworthy flora: The site has important botanical values such as *Liparis loeselii*, *Herminium monorchis* and *Viola uliginosa*.

Current scientific research and facilities:

Current conservation education: There are several observation towers at the site. See point 21.

Current recreation and tourism: The wetlands are popular excursion areas for ornithologists and nature-lovers.

Management authority: The two Nature Reserves are both managed by the County Forestry Board. Outside reserves it is the

landowner himself who manages the land.

Jurisdiction: Territorial and functional: County Administration of Kristianstad.

Bibliographical references:

- Grimmett, R.F.A. & Jones, T.A. (1989). Important bird areas of Europe. ICBP.
- Svenska våtmarker av internationell betydelse (1989). Swedish EPA Information. (English summary).
- Cronert, H. (1991). project "Kristianstads Vattenrike" - An economic approach to wetland management. In: Finlayson, C.M. and Larsson, T. (Eds): Wetland Management and Restoration - Swedish EPA (in press).
- Bengtsson, S. (1963). Hammarsjöns häckfågelfauna. (Breeding bird fauna of the Hammarsjön). Skånes Natur.
- Björk, S. (1971). Araslövssjön och Hammarsjön. Förlag till restaureringsåtgärder (Restoration plan). Limn. Inst. Lund University.
- Management plan for Norra Lingenäset nature Reserve (1990).

Reasons for inclusion: 1b, 2a, 3b

Map of site: enclosed.