

# Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS)

*Categories approved by Recommendation 4.7 (1990), as amended by Resolution VIII.13 of the 8<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Contracting Parties (2002) and Resolutions IX.1 Annex B, IX.6, IX.21 and IX. 22 of the 9<sup>th</sup> 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 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.

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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:

Designated: 22 September 2000

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## 3. Country:

UK (England)

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## 4. Name of the Ramsar site:

Lee Valley

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

**This RIS is for:** 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:

\*\* 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:

**7. Map of site included:**

Refer to Annex III of the *Explanatory Notes 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) **hard copy** (required for inclusion of site in the Ramsar List): *yes* ✓ -or- *no* ☐;
- ii) **an electronic format** (e.g. a JPEG or ArcView image) *Yes*
- iii) **a GIS file providing geo-referenced site boundary vectors and attribute tables** *yes* ✓ -or- *no* ☐;

**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 site boundary is the same as, or falls within, an existing protected area.

For precise boundary details, please refer to paper map provided at designation

**8. Geographical coordinates (latitude/longitude):**

51 34 51 N                      00 02 58 W

**9. General location:**

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

The Lee Valley site comprises four SSSIs spaced along the valley from just downstream of Ware in Hertfordshire to Finsbury Park in London, a total distance of about 24 km. The whole site is contained within the Lee Valley Regional Park.

**Administrative region:** Essex; Greater London; Hertfordshire

**10. Elevation (average and/or max. & min.) (metres):** **11. Area (hectares):** 447.87

Min.	10
Max.	29
Mean	20

**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 Lee Valley comprises a series of embanked water supply reservoirs, sewage treatment lagoons and former gravel pits along approximately 24 km of the valley. These waterbodies support internationally important numbers of wintering gadwall and shoveler and nationally important numbers of several other bird species.

The site also contains a range of wetland and valley bottom habitats, both man-made and semi-natural, which support a diverse range of wetland fauna and flora.

**13. Ramsar Criteria:**

Circle or underline 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).

**2, 6**

**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).

Ramsar Criterion 2

The site supports the nationally scarce plant species whorled water-milfoil *Myriophyllum verticillatum* and the rare or vulnerable invertebrate *Micronecta minutissima* (a water-boatman).

**Ramsar criterion 6 – species/populations occurring at levels of international importance.**

**Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation):**

**Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:**

Northern shoveler , *Anas clypeata*, NW & C Europe 287 individuals, representing an average of 1.9% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

**Species with peak counts in winter:**

Gadwall , *Anas strepera strepera*, NW Europe 445 individuals, representing an average of 2.6% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Contemporary data and information on waterbird trends at this site and their regional (sub-national) and national contexts can be found in the Wetland Bird Survey report, which is updated annually. See [www.bto.org/survey/webs/webs-alerts-index.htm](http://www.bto.org/survey/webs/webs-alerts-index.htm).

**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:**

Atlantic

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

Council Directive 92/43/EEC

**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.

Soil & geology	neutral, mud, clay, alluvium, nutrient-rich, gravel
Geomorphology and landscape	lowland, valley, floodplain
Nutrient status	highly eutrophic
pH	circumneutral
Salinity	fresh
Soil	no information
Water permanence	usually permanent
Summary of main climatic features	Annual averages (Greenwich, 1971–2000) ( <a href="http://www.metoffice.com/climate/uk/averages/19712000/sites/greenwich.html">www.metoffice.com/climate/uk/averages/19712000/sites/greenwich.html</a> ) Max. daily temperature: 14.8° C Min. daily temperature: 7.2° C Days of air frost: 29.1 Rainfall: 583.6 mm Hrs. of sunshine: 1461.0

**General description of the Physical Features:**

A series of wetlands and reservoirs occupy about 20 km of the Lee valley. The site comprises embanked water supply reservoirs, sewage treatment lagoons and former gravel pits that support a range of man-made, semi-natural and valley bottom habitats.

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

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

A series of wetlands and reservoirs occupy about 20 km of the Lee valley. The site comprises embanked water supply reservoirs, sewage treatment lagoons and former gravel pits that support a range of man-made, semi-natural and valley bottom habitats.

**18. Hydrological values:**

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

Other, Maintenance of water quality (removal of nutrients), Water supply

**19. Wetland types:**

Human-made wetland, Inland wetland

Code	Name	% Area
7	Gravel / brick / clay pits	30
6	Reservoirs / barrages / dams	30
Other	Other	29
8	Sewage farms	7
U	Peatlands (including peat bogs swamps, fens)	4

**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.

Open water, plus associated wetland habitats including reedbeds, fen grassland and woodland supporting a number of wetland plant and animal species including internationally important numbers of wintering wildfowl.

Ecosystem services

**21. Noteworthy flora:**

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. *Do not include here taxonomic lists of species present – these may be supplied as supplementary information to the RIS.*

Nationally important species occurring on the site

Higher Plant

*Myriophyllum verticillatum* (nationally scarce)

Invasive non-natives:

*Impatiens glandulifera*, *Fallopia japonica*

**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.*

**Birds****Species currently occurring at levels of national importance:****Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:**

Great cormorant , <i>Phalacrocorax carbo carbo</i> , NW Europe	419 individuals, representing an average of 1.8% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9- 2002/3 - spring peak)
Tufted duck , <i>Aythya fuligula</i> , NW Europe	2081 individuals, representing an average of 2.3% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9- 2002/3)
Common coot , <i>Fulica atra atra</i> , NW Europe	2032 individuals, representing an average of 1.1% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9- 2002/3)

**Species with peak counts in winter:**

Great bittern , <i>Botaurus stellaris stellaris</i> , W Europe, NW Africa	1 individuals, representing an average of 1% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9- 2002/3)
Smew , <i>Mergellus albellus</i> , NW & C Europe	14 individuals, representing an average of 3.7% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9- 2002/3)
Water rail , <i>Rallus aquaticus</i> , Europe	17 individuals, representing an average of 3.7% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9- 2002/3)

**Species Information**

Nationally important species occurring on the site

Invertebrate

*Micronecta minutissima* (RDB3)

Invasive non-native:

*Mustela vison*

**23. Social and cultural values:**

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.

Aesthetic

Environmental education/ interpretation

Non-consumptive recreation

Scientific research

Sport fishing

Tourism

**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

If Yes, 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:**

Ownership category	On-site	Off-site
Non-governmental organisation (NGO)	+	+
Local authority, municipality etc.	+	+
Private	+	+
Other	+	+

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

Activity	On-site	Off-site
Nature conservation	+	+
Tourism	+	+
Recreation	+	+
Current scientific research	+	+
Fishing: recreational/sport	+	+
Freshwater aquaculture		+
Grazing (unspecified)		+
Industry		+
Sewage treatment/disposal	+	+
Flood control		+
Mineral exploration (excl. hydrocarbons)		+
Transport route		+
Domestic water supply	+	+
Urban development		+
Non-urbanised settlements		+

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

Explanation of reporting category:

1. Those factors that are still operating, but it is unclear if they are under control, as there is a lag in showing the management or regulatory regime to be successful.
2. Those factors that are not currently being managed, or where the regulatory regime appears to have been ineffective so far.

NA = Not Applicable because no factors have been reported.

Adverse Factor Category	Reporting Category	Description of the problem (Newly reported Factors only)	On-Site	Off-Site	Major Impact?
No factors reported	NA				

For category 2 factors only.

What measures have been taken / are planned / regulatory processes invoked, to mitigate the effect of these factors?

Is the site subject to adverse ecological change? NO

**27. Conservation measures taken:**

List national category and legal status of protected areas, including boundary relationships with the Ramsar site; management practices; whether an officially approved management plan exists and whether it is being implemented.

Conservation measure	On-site	Off-site
Site/ Area of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI/ASSI)	+	+
Special Protection Area (SPA)	+	
Land owned by a non-governmental organisation for nature conservation	+	+
Site management statement/plan implemented	+	

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

The management of Ramsar sites in the UK is determined by either a formal management plan or through other management planning processes, and is overseen by the relevant statutory conservation agency. Details of the precise management practises are given in these documents.

**28. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:**

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

No information available

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

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

- Wetland Bird Survey counts
- Various University of Hertfordshire projects
- Ongoing SSSI unit monitoring

- Rye Meads used for experimental study of fish predation by cormorants
- Monitoring of recently created reedbed at Rye Meads

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

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

Various activities organised by Lee Valley Regional Park Authority. Schools visits to Rye Meads RSPB reserve. Projects by University of Hertfordshire students. The Heritage Lottery Fund is considering a partnership bid for funds for a new visitor centre at Rye Meads.

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**31. Current recreation and tourism:**

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

The whole site is within the Lee Valley Regional Park, with a large area forming the River Lee Country Park. The whole site supports high levels of visitor pressure; principally for purposes of angling, walking, cycling and birdwatching; with boating on the adjacent canal. These activities are mostly well regulated and at current levels are not considered to threaten the interest (although they may reduce the potential for enhancing the interest).

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**32. Jurisdiction:**

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

Head, Natura 2000 and Ramsar Team, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, European Wildlife Division, Zone 1/07, Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6EB

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**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.

Site Designations Manager, English Nature, Sites and Surveillance Team, Northminster House, Northminster Road, Peterborough, PE1 1UA, UK

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**34. Bibliographical references:**

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

**Site-relevant references**

- Batten, LA, Bibby, CJ, Clement, P, Elliot, GD & Porter, RF (1990) *Red Data Birds in Britain. Action for rare, threatened and important species*. Poyser, London, for Nature Conservancy Council and Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- Bibby, CJ (1981) Wintering bitterns in Britain. *British Birds*, **74**(1), 1-10
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- Fox, AD (1988) Breeding status of the gadwall in Britain and Ireland. *British Birds*, **81**(1), 51-66
- Musgrove, AJ, Pollitt, MS, Hall, C, Hearn, RD, Holloway, SJ, Marshall, PE, Robinson, JA & Cranswick, PA (2001) *The Wetland Bird Survey 1999-2000: wildfowl and wader counts*. British Trust for Ornithology, Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds & Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Slimbridge. [www.wwt.org.uk/publications/default.asp?PubID=14](http://www.wwt.org.uk/publications/default.asp?PubID=14)
- Rose, PM & Scott, DA (1997) *Waterfowl population estimates*. 2nd edn. Wetlands International, Wageningen (Wetlands International Publication, No. 44) [www.wetlands.org/IWC/wpe2/WPE2-toc.htm](http://www.wetlands.org/IWC/wpe2/WPE2-toc.htm)
- Stone, BH, Sears, J, Cranswick, PA, Gregory, RD, Gibbons, DW, Rehfish, MM, Aebischer, NJ & Reid, JB (1997) Population estimates of birds in Britain and in the United Kingdom. *British Birds*, **90**(1), 1-22
- Stroud, DA, Chambers, D, Cook, S, Buxton, N, Fraser, B, Clement, P, Lewis, P, McLean, I, Baker, H & Whitehead, S (eds.) (2001) *The UK SPA network: its scope and content*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough (3 vols.) [www.jncc.gov.uk/UKSPA/default.htm](http://www.jncc.gov.uk/UKSPA/default.htm)
- Stroud, DA, Mudge, GP & Pienkowski, MW (eds.) (1990) *Protecting internationally important bird sites: a review of the EEC Special Protection Area Network in Great Britain*. Nature Conservancy Council, Peterborough
- Tucker, GM & Heath, MF (1994) *Birds in Europe: their conservation status*. BirdLife International, Cambridge (BirdLife Conservation Series, No. 3)



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