

# 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: 11 August 1997

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## 3. Country:

UK (Scotland)

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## 4. Name of the Ramsar site:

Ronas Hill – North Roe and Tingon

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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):**

60 33 00 N                      01 25 00 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.

Nearest town/city: Lerwick

The site lies in the north-west of Mainland Shetland.

**Administrative region:** Shetland Islands

**10. Elevation (average and/or max. & min.) (metres):** **11. Area (hectares):** 5470.2

Min.	16
Max.	393
Mean	157

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

Provide a short paragraph giving a summary description of the principal ecological characteristics and importance of the wetland.

Ronas Hill - North Roe and Tingon Ramsar site comprises two adjacent headlands separated by Ronas Voe in the North Mainland of Shetland. Most of the site is composed of active blanket bog with numerous lochans and pools that support a typical peatland avifauna.

**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).

1, 2

**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 1

Supporting outstanding examples of blanket bog with extensive pool systems. The lower ground at North Roe and most of Tingon is covered by deep peat with some of the best preserved active blanket bog in Shetland. The peat layer has remained intact at Tingon with none of the erosion seen in other typical sites on Shetland. Further patches of wet heath and mire are found on the higher ground. The site also contains many oligotrophic lochs and dystrophic lochans and has an unusual formation of peat moulds.

Ramsar criterion 2

Supports a number of rare species of animal and plant. The mammal fauna includes common seal *Phoca vitulina* and otter *Lutra lutra* and the invertebrate fauna includes the arctic water flea *Eurycercus glacialis* found at only one other site in Britain.

**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	acidic, peat, nutrient-poor, igneous, granite, sandstone/mudstone
Geomorphology and landscape	lowland, upland, montane, coastal, hilly, slope, open coast (including bay), voe, cave/tunnel, cliffs
Nutrient status	oligotrophic
pH	acidic
Salinity	fresh
Soil	mainly mineral
Water permanence	usually permanent
Summary of main climatic features	Annual averages (Lerwick, 1971–2000) ( <a href="http://www.metoffice.com/climate/uk/averages/19712000/sites/lerwick.html">www.metoffice.com/climate/uk/averages/19712000/sites/lerwick.html</a> ) Max. daily temperature: 9.3° C Min. daily temperature: 5.0° C Days of air frost: 38.1 Rainfall: 1238.1 mm Hrs. of sunshine: 1065.6

**General description of the Physical Features:**

Ronas Hill – North Roe and Tingon comprises two adjacent headlands separated by the large Ronas Voe. Most of the site is composed of active blanket bog with numerous lochans and pools. The flatter parts of Tingon and North Roe have many pools and acidic lochans set within an open landscape of blanket bog and maritime heath. The area holds some of the highest-quality blanket bog in Shetland, which is floristically rich and intact.

**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).

Ronas Hill – North Roe and Tingon comprises two adjacent headlands separated by the large Ronas Voe. Most of the site is composed of active blanket bog with numerous lochans and pools. The flatter parts of Tingon and North Roe have many pools and acidic lochans set within an open landscape of blanket bog and maritime heath. The area holds some of the highest-quality blanket bog in Shetland, which is floristically rich and intact.

**18. Hydrological values:**

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

Water supply

**19. Wetland types:**

Inland wetland, Marine/coastal wetland

Code	Name	% Area
Other	Other	60
U	Peatlands (including peat bogs swamps, fens)	32.1
Tp	Freshwater marshes / pools: permanent	3
O	Freshwater lakes: permanent	2.5
D	Rocky shores	2.3
M	Rivers / streams / creeks: permanent	0.1

**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.

The main habitat type on this site is active blanket bog, which is amongst the most intact in Shetland, showing characteristic features of peatland including permanent and temporary pools fringed with mosses, sedges and rushes. A notable feature of the site is the large number of peat mounds, similar in appearance to arctic palsas. The sub-alpine heaths of the upper slopes of Ronas Hill, Mid Field and Collafirth Hill and the summit of the Beorgs of Skelberry are also of international importance. A smaller area of coastal grassland and dry heath is also present on the north end of the Tingon peninsula.

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.*

Assemblage

The site is internationally important because it supports the following Habitats Directive Annex I wetland features:

- H3130 Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the *Littorelletea uniflorae* and/or of the *Isoëto-Nanojuncetea*
- H3160 Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds
- H4010 Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*
- H7130 Blanket bogs

**Nationally important species occurring on the site.****Higher Plants.**Shetland endemic *Hieracia***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 regularly supported during the breeding season:**

Red-throated diver , <i>Gavia stellata</i> , NW Europe	50 pairs, representing an average of 5.3% of the GB population (Count as at 1994)
Northern fulmar , <i>Fulmarus glacialis</i> , North Atlantic	6710 apparently occupied sites, representing an average of 1.3% of the GB population (Seabird 2000 Census)
Whimbrel , <i>Numenius phaeopus islandicus</i> , NE Atlantic	25 pairs, representing an average of 5% of the GB population (not specified)
Arctic skua , <i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i> , NE Atlantic	114 apparently occupied territories, representing an average of 5.3% of the GB population (Seabird 2000 Census)
Great skua , <i>Catharacta skua</i> , World	227 apparently occupied territories, representing an average of 1.6% of the breeding population (Seabird 2000 Census)
Black guillemot , <i>Cephus grylle</i> , E Atlantic	774 individuals, representing an average of 1.9% of the breeding population (Seabird 2000 Census)

**Species Information****Nationally important species occurring on the site.****Mammals.**

*Phoca vitulina*, *Lutra lutra* (Habitats Directive Annex II species)

**Invertebrates.**

*Eurycercus glacialis*.

**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  
 Aquatic vegetation (e.g. reeds, willows, seaweed)  
 Environmental education/ interpretation  
 Livestock grazing  
 Non-consumptive recreation  
 Scientific research  
 Sport fishing  
 Tourism  
 Traditional cultural

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.	+	
National/Crown Estate	+	
Private	+	
Public/communal	+	

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

Activity	On-site	Off-site
Nature conservation	+	
Tourism	+	
Recreation	+	
Current scientific research	+	
Fishing: recreational/sport	+	+
Rough or shifting grazing	+	
Hydro-electricity/ water-power	+	
Mineral exploration (excl. hydrocarbons)	+	
Transport route	+	+
Domestic water supply	+	
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)	+	
Management agreement	+	
Site management statement/plan implemented	+	
Other	+	
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	+	

**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.

**Habitat.**

Research proposed to encourage heather regeneration on the site

All management agreements are subject to compliance monitoring.

**Fauna.**

Annual ringing of red-throated divers, gives rough estimate for productivity.

**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.

None reported

**31. Current recreation and tourism:**

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

**Activities, Facilities provided and Seasonality.**

Sport angling: on the lochs for brown trout

Walking: walking on Ronas Hill in particular and at a low level elsewhere.

**32. Jurisdiction:**

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

Scottish Executive, Environment and Rural Affairs Department

**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.

Scottish Natural Heritage, 2 Anderson Place, Edinburgh, EH6 5NP

**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**

Anon. (1997) *Ronas Hill–North Roe Site of Special Scientific Interest Management Statement*. Scottish Natural Heritage, Shetland

Barne, JH, Robson, CF, Kaznowska, SS, Doody, JP, Davidson, NC & Buck, AL (eds.) (1997) *Coasts and seas of the United Kingdom. Region 1. Shetland*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough. (Coastal Directories Series.)

Berry, RJ & Johnston, JL (1980) *The natural history of Shetland*. Collins, London (New Naturalist No. 64)

Gordon, JE & Sutherland, DG (eds.) (1993) *Quaternary of Scotland*. Chapman & Hall, London, for Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough (Geological Conservation Review Series, No. 6)

Hulme, PD (1985) The peatland vegetation of the Isle of Lewis and Harris and the Shetland Islands, Scotland. *Aquilo, Series Botanica*, **21**, 81-88

Johnston, R & Mudge, G (1996) *North Roe & Tingon Proposed Special Protection Area/Ramsar Site (204A) Departmental brief*. Scottish Natural Heritage, Edinburgh

McLeod, CR, Yeo, M, Brown, AE, Burn, AJ, Hopkins, JJ & Way, SF (eds.) (2004) *The Habitats Directive: selection of Special Areas of Conservation in the UK*. 2nd edn. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough. [www.jncc.gov.uk/SACselection](http://www.jncc.gov.uk/SACselection)

Ratcliffe, DA (ed.) (1977) *A Nature Conservation Review. The selection of biological sites of national importance to nature conservation in Britain*. Cambridge University Press (for the Natural Environment Research Council and the Nature Conservancy Council), Cambridge (2 vols.)

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)

Swale, J & Osborn, K (1997) *Tingon Site of Special Scientific Interest Management Statement*. Scottish Natural Heritage, Shetland



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