Ramsar Information Sheet

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Denmark (Greenland)

Kuannersuit Kuussuat

Designation date	27 January 1988
Site number	383
Coordinates	69°38'30"N 53°17'18"W
Area	3 800,00 ha

Color codes

Fields back-shaded in light blue relate to data and information required only for RIS updates.

Note that some fields concerning aspects of Part 3, the Ecological Character Description of the RIS (tinted in purple), are not expected to be completed as part of a standard RIS, but are included for completeness so as to provide the requested consistency between the RIS and the format of a 'full' Ecological Character Description, as adopted in Resolution X.15 (2008). If a Contracting Party does have information available that is relevant to these fields (for example from a national format Ecological Character Description) it may, if it wishes to, include information in these additional fields.

1 - Summary

Summary

A wide valley with a braiding river. Barren moraines and small lakes (many with turbid water) dominate the landscape. A delta with extensive sand flats at the mouth of the fjord. Several homeothermic springs are found within the site. At the head of the valley, above Sorte Hak, a glacier surge in 1995-1999 covered the upper 2 km (14%) of the Ramsar site.

2 - Data & location

2.1 - Formal data

2.1.1 - Name and address of the compiler of this RIS

Compiler 1

Name	David Boertmann
Institution/agency	Aarhus University, Institute for Bioscience
Postal address	Frederiksborgvej 399 DK-4000 Roskilde Denmark
E-mail	dmb@bios.au.dk
Phone	+45 25580687

2.1.2 - Period of collection of data and information used to compile the RIS

From year	1979
To year	2015

2.1.3 - Name of the Ramsar Site

Official name (in English, French or Spanish)	Kuannersuit Kuussuat

2.1.4 - Changes to the boundaries and area of the Site since its designation or earlier update

(Update) A. Changes to Site boundary	Yes ◉ No ○
(Update) The boundary has been delineated more accurately	☑
(Update) The boundary has been extended	☐
(Update) The boundary has been restricted	☐
(Update) B. Changes to Site area	the area has decreased
(Update) The Site area has been calculated more accurately	☐
(Update) The Site has been delineated more accurately	☑
(Update) The Site area has increased because of a boundary extension	☐
(Update) The Site area has decreased because of a boundary restriction	☑

2.1.5 - Changes to the ecological character of the Site

(Update) 6b i. Has the ecological character of the Ramsar Site (including applicable Criteria) changed since the previous RIS?	No

2.2 - Site location

2.2.1 - Defining the Site boundaries

b) Digital map/image
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Former maps	0

Boundaries description

The borders follow generally the 500 m contour along the sides of the valley from the low tide mark in the delta and to where marshes no longer occur in the upper part of the valley (before the glacier surge).

2.2.2 - General location

a) In which large administrative region does the site lie?	Kommune Qeqertalik
b) What is the nearest town or population centre?	Qeqertarsuaq, 40 km away in straight line, 93 km by boat

2.2.3 - For wetlands on national boundaries only

a) Does the wetland extend onto the territory of one or more other countries? Yes ○ No ◉

b) Is the site adjacent to another designated Ramsar Site on the territory of another Contracting Party? Yes ○ No ◉

2.2.4 - Area of the Site

Official area, in hectares (ha): 3800

Area, in hectares (ha) as calculated from GIS boundaries: 3820.75

2.2.5 - Biogeography

Biogeographic regions

Regionalisation scheme(s)	Biogeographic region
Other scheme (provide name below)	Low Arctic oceanic
WWF Terrestrial Ecoregions	Kalallit Nunaat low Arctic tundra

Other biogeographic regionalisation scheme

Low Arctic oceanic according to Bay 1997.

3 - Why is the Site important?

3.1 - Ramsar Criteria and their justification

☑ Criterion 1: Representative, rare or unique natural or near-natural wetland types

Other reasons: The site has a rich diversity of wetlands types and several homeothermic springs. The latter are unique in a Greenland context, being extremely lush with willow copses and high stand of Archangelica.

☑ Criterion 2 : Rare species and threatened ecological communities

☑ Criterion 4 : Support during critical life cycle stage or in adverse conditions

3.2 - Plant species whose presence relates to the international importance of the site

At the homeothermic spring there is a rich and lush vegetation.
Three endemics for Greenland are known from this site: Antennaria affinis, Antennaris internmedia and Antennaria hansii

3.3 - Animal species whose presence relates to the international importance of the site

Phylum	Scientific name	Common name	Species qualifies under criterion				Species contributes under criterion				Pop. Size	Period of pop. Est.	% occurrence 1)	IUCN Red List	CITES Appendix I	CMS Appendix I	Other Status	Justification
			2	4	6	9	3	5	7	8								
Birds																		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Anas platyrhynchos conboschas*	Greenland Mallard	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐					☐	☐	endemic subspecies	breeding
CHORDATA / AVES	*Anser albifrons flavirostris*	Greenland White-fronted Goose	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	0	2015	0		☐	☐	very few occur today, see optional text below	breeding and moulting
CHORDATA / AVES	*Branta canadensis*	Canada Goose	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		breeding
CHORDATA / AVES	*Clangula hyemalis*	Oldsquaw; Long-tailed Duck	☑	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				VU	☐	☐		breeding
CHORDATA / AVES	*Falco rusticolus*	Gyrfalcon	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☑	☐	NT on national red list	breeding
CHORDATA / AVES	*Gavia stellata*	Red-throated Loon; Red-throated Diver	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		breeding
CHORDATA / AVES	*Mergus serrator*	Red-breasted Merganser	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		probably breeding
CHORDATA / AVES	*Phalaropus lobatus*	Red-necked Phalarope	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		breeding
CHORDATA / AVES	*Somateria mollissima*	Common Eider West Greenland population	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				NT	☐	☐		breeding

1) Percentage of the total biogeographic population at the site

Criterion 6: The site was originally (in 1987) designated due to the occurrence of internationally important numbers of Greenland White-fronted Geese (Anser albifrons flavirostris). Such high numbers have not been confirmed during later visits and surveys (1992, 1995, 2001, 2015) . As the source for the original information remains obscure, the quoted numbers may be an error, perhaps caused by confusion with other sites on Disko Island. See discussion in Egevang and Boertmann 2001b.

3.4 - Ecological communities whose presence relates to the international importance of the site

Name of ecological community	Community qualifies under Criterion 2?	Description	Justification
Homeothermic spring	☑	several such springs within site	Rare

4 - What is the Site like? (Ecological character description)

4.1 - Ecological character

The site is located within the low Arctic climatic zone with continuous permafrost. The average tidal amplitude is c. 2 meters.

The fjord usually is ice covered in winter.

The u-shape valley is dominated by a braiding melt water river. The sides are steep basaltic (Tertiary) mountains (up to 1200 m asl.). The river delta in the fjord is as wide as the riverbed, and during low tide extensive mudflats become exposed. The riverbed is very wide and covers almost completely the entire valley floor in the outermost 7 km of the Ramsar site. The following 2.5 km towards north in the valley, is dominated by recently de-iced moraines and there are many ponds and lakes here. The northernmost 2 km of the Ramsar site is now covered by a glacier, which in the years 1995-1999 surged more than 10 km. The glacier covers about 14% of the Ramsar site.

A single small pingo is located near the southwestern border of the Ramsar site.

Barren moraines and small lakes (many with turbid water) dominate the valley floor. Several “hot” (homeothermic) springs are found within the site.

4.2 - What wetland type(s) are in the site?

Marine or coastal wetlands

Wetland types (code and name)	Local name	Ranking of extent (1: greatest - 4: least)	Area (ha) of wetland type	Justification of Criterion 1
A: Permanent shallow marine waters		1		Representative
E: Sand, shingle or pebble shores		3		Representative
G: Intertidal mud, sand or salt flats		2		Representative

Inland wetlands

Wetland types (code and name)	Local name	Ranking of extent (1: greatest - 4: least)	Area (ha) of wetland type	Justification of Criterion 1
Fresh water > Flowing water >> M: Permanent rivers/ streams/ creeks		1		Representative
Fresh water > Lakes and pools >> O: Permanent freshwater lakes		2		Representative
Fresh water > Lakes and pools >> Tp: Permanent freshwater marshes/ pools		3		Representative
Fresh water > Flowing water >> Y: Permanent Freshwater springs; oases		4		Rare

4.3 - Biological components

4.3.1 - Plant species

<no data available>

4.3.2 - Animal species

Other noteworthy animal species

Phylum	Scientific name	Common name	Pop. size	Period of pop. est.	%occurrence	Position in range /endemism/other
CHORDATA/AVES	*Acanthis flammea*	Redpoll				breeder
CHORDATA/AVES	*Calcarius lapponicus*	Lapland Longspur				breeder
ARTHROPODA/INSECTA	*Clossiana chariclea*					common
ARTHROPODA/INSECTA	*Colias hecla*	Northern Clouded Yellow;Greenland Sulphur;Hecla Orange				common
CHORDATA/AVES	*Falco peregrinus*	Peregrine Falcon				breeder
CHORDATA/AVES	*Oenanthe oenanthe*	Northern Wheatear				breeder
CHORDATA/AVES	*Plectrophenax nivalis*	Snow Bunting				breeder
CHORDATA/MAMMALIA	*Vulpes lagopus*	Arctic Fox				common

4.4 - Physical components

4.4.1 - Climate

Climatic region	Subregion
E: Polar climate with extremely cold winters and summers	ET: Tundra (Polar tundra, no true summer)

The Köppen-Gieger Climate Classification System do not really apply to this site. The site is within the low Arctic climate zone.

4.4.2 - Geomorphic setting

a) Minimum elevation above sea level (in metres): 0

a) Maximum elevation above sea level (in metres): 500

- [x] Entire river basin
- [ ] Upper part of river basin
- [ ] Middle part of river basin
- [ ] Lower part of river basin
- [ ] More than one river basin
- [ ] Not in river basin
- [x] Coastal

Please name the river basin or basins. If the site lies in a sub-basin, please also name the larger river basin. For a coastal/marine site, please name the sea or ocean.

Disko Fjord, Baffin Bay

4.4.3 - Soil

- [ ] Mineral

(Update) Changes at RIS update: No change ○ Increase ○ Decrease ○ Unknown ◉

- [ ] Organic

(Update) Changes at RIS update: No change ○ Increase ○ Decrease ○ Unknown ◉

- [x] No available information

Are soil types subject to change as a result of changing hydrological conditions (e.g., increased salinity or acidification)? Yes ○ No ◉

4.4.4 - Water regime

Water permanence

Presence?	Changes at RIS update
Usually permanent water present	

Source of water that maintains character of the site

Presence?	Predominant water source	Changes at RIS update
Water inputs from rainfall / snowfall	☐	No change

Water destination

Presence?	Changes at RIS update
Marine	No change

Stability of water regime

Presence?	Changes at RIS update
Water levels fluctuating (including tidal)	No change

Please add any comments on the water regime and its determinants (if relevant). Use this box to explain sites with complex hydrology:

Melt water from the glacier is the major freshwater source. Rainfall includes also snow here.

4.4.5 - Sediment regime

- [ ] Significant erosion of sediments occurs on the site

(Update) Changes at RIS update: No change ○ Increase ○ Decrease ○ Unknown ◉

- [ ] Significant accretion or deposition of sediments occurs on the site

(Update) Changes at RIS update: No change ○ Increase ○ Decrease ○ Unknown ◉

- [ ] Significant transportation of sediments occurs on or through the site

(Update) Changes at RIS update: No change ○ Increase ○ Decrease ○ Unknown ◉

- [ ] Sediment regime is highly variable, either seasonally or inter-annually

(Update) Changes at RIS update: No change ○ Increase ○ Decrease ○ Unknown ◉

- [x] Sediment regime unknown

4.4.6 - Water pH

- [ ] Acid (pH<5.5)

(Update) Changes at RIS update: No change ○ Increase ○ Decrease ○ Unknown ◉

Circumneutral (pH: 5.5-7.4) ☐

(Update) Changes at RIS update: No change ○ Increase ○ Decrease ○ Unknown ◉

Alkaline (pH>7.4) ☐

(Update) Changes at RIS update: No change ○ Increase ○ Decrease ○ Unknown ◉

Unknown ☑

4.4.7 - Water salinity

Fresh (<0.5 g/l) ☐

(Update) Changes at RIS update: No change ○ Increase ○ Decrease ○ Unknown ◉

Mixohaline (brackish)/Mixosaline (0.5-30 g/l) ☐

(Update) Changes at RIS update: No change ○ Increase ○ Decrease ○ Unknown ◉

Euhaline/Eusaline (30-40 g/l) ☐

(Update) Changes at RIS update: No change ○ Increase ○ Decrease ○ Unknown ◉

Hyperhaline/Hypersaline (>40 g/l) ☐

(Update) Changes at RIS update: No change ○ Increase ○ Decrease ○ Unknown ◉

Unknown ☐

4.4.8 - Dissolved or suspended nutrients in water

Eutrophic ☐

(Update) Changes at RIS update: No change ○ Increase ○ Decrease ○ Unknown ◉

Mesotrophic ☐

(Update) Changes at RIS update: No change ○ Increase ○ Decrease ○ Unknown ◉

Oligotrophic ☐

(Update) Changes at RIS update: No change ○ Increase ○ Decrease ○ Unknown ◉

Dystrophic ☐

(Update) Changes at RIS update: No change ○ Increase ○ Decrease ○ Unknown ◉

Unknown ☑

4.4.9 - Features of the surrounding area which may affect the Site

Please describe whether, and if so how, the landscape and ecological characteristics in the area surrounding the Ramsar Site differ from the site itself: i) broadly similar ○ ii) significantly different ◉

Surrounding area has greater urbanisation or development ☐

Surrounding area has higher human population density ☐

Surrounding area has more intensive agricultural use ☐

Surrounding area has significantly different land cover or habitat types ☑

Please describe other ways in which the surrounding area is different:

The surrounding areas are high mountains.

4.5 - Ecosystem services

4.5.1 - Ecosystem services/benefits

Provisioning Services

Ecosystem service	Examples	Importance/Extent/Significance
Food for humans	Sustenance for humans (e.g., fish, molluscs, grains)	Low

Cultural Services

Ecosystem service	Examples	Importance/Extent/Significance
Scientific and educational	Important knowledge systems, importance for research (scientific reference area or site)	Medium
Scientific and educational	Major scientific study site	Medium

Other ecosystem service(s) not included above:

Local people collect Angelica archangelica at the homeothermic springs.

Within the site: 10s

Outside the site: 10s

Have studies or assessments been made of the economic valuation of ecosystem services provided by this Ramsar Site? Yes ○ No ◉ Unknown ○

4.5.2 - Social and cultural values

i) the site provides 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) the site has exceptional cultural traditions or records of former civilizations that have influenced the ecological character of the wetland ☐

iii) the ecological character of the wetland depends on its interaction with local communities or indigenous peoples ☐

iv) 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 ☐

<no data available>

4.6 - Ecological processes

<no data available>

5 - How is the Site managed? (Conservation and management)

5.1 - Land tenure and responsibilities (Managers)

5.1.1 - Land tenure/ownership

Public ownership

Category	Within the Ramsar Site	In the surrounding area
Public land (unspecified)	☑	☑

5.1.2 - Management authority

Please list the local office / offices of any agency or organization responsible for managing the site:
Pinngortitamut Avatangiisinullu Naalakkersuisoqarfik
Departementet for Natur og Miljø
Ministry of Nature and Environment

Provide the name and title of the person or people with responsibility for the wetland:
Karen Motzfeldt, Head of Department for Nature, Climate and Research

Postal address:
Pinngortitamut Avatangiisinullu Naalakkersuisoqarfik
Departementet for Natur og Miljø
Ministry of Nature and Environment
Postboks 1015
3900 Nuuk

E-mail address: pan@nanoq.gl

5.2 - Ecological character threats and responses (Management)

5.2.1 - Factors (actual or likely) adversely affecting the Site's ecological character

Biological resource use

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	Changes	In the surrounding area	Changes
Gathering terrestrial plants	Low impact	Low impact	☑	No change	☑	No change
Fishing and harvesting aquatic resources	Low impact	Low impact	☐	No change	☑	No change

Human intrusions and disturbance

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	Changes	In the surrounding area	Changes
Recreational and tourism activities	Low impact	Low impact	☑	No change	☑	No change

Geological events

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	Changes	In the surrounding area	Changes
Unspecified	Low impact	Low impact	☑	No change	☐	No change

Please describe any other threats (optional):

In 1995-1999 the glacier in the head of the valley surged more than 2 km forward and finally covered the uppermost 14% of the Ramsar site. This part was dominated by gravel banks and had very little vegetation, that is why the value as a waterbird habitat was not significantly impacted.

5.2.2 - Legal conservation status

National legal designations

Designation type	Name of area	Online information url	Overlap with Ramsar Site
Area important to wildlife (Anon. 2000)		https://www.govmin.gl/images/stories/minerals/rules_for_fieldwo rk.pdf	whole
Ramsar site	Kuannersuit Kuussuat	http://lovgivning.gl/lov?rid={15 CBC689-E3AD-470D-B32A-947A250D70 62}	whole

5.2.3 - IUCN protected areas categories (2008)

Ia Strict Nature Reserve ☐

Ib Wilderness Area: protected area managed mainly for wilderness protection ☐

II National Park: protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation ☐

III Natural Monument: protected area managed mainly for conservation of specific natural features ☐

IV Habitat/Species Management Area: protected area managed mainly for conservation through management intervention ☑

V Protected Landscape/Seascape: protected area managed mainly for landscape/seascape conservation and recreation ☐

VI Managed Resource Protected Area: protected area managed mainly for the sustainable use of natural ecosystems ☐

5.2.4 - Key conservation measures

Legal protection

Measures	Status
Legal protection	Implemented

Other:

Low level flying is regulated over the site.

5.2.5 - Management planning

Is there a site-specific management plan for the site? No

Has a management effectiveness assessment been undertaken for the site? Yes ○ No ◉

If the site is a formal transboundary site as indicated in section Data and location > Site location, are there shared management planning processes with another Contracting Party? Yes ○ No ◉

5.2.6 - Planning for restoration

Is there a site-specific restoration plan? No need identified

5.2.7 - Monitoring implemented or proposed

Monitoring	Status
Animal community	Proposed

Monitoring proposed by Egevang & Boertmann 2001a.

6 - Additional material

6.1 - Additional reports and documents

6.1.1 - Bibliographical references

Anonymous 2000. Rules for fieldwork and reporting regarding mineral resources (excluding hydrocarbons) in Greenland. – Government of Greenland, Bureau of Minerals and Petroleum.
Bay, C. 1997. Floristic division and vegetation zonation of Greenland in relevance to a circumpolar arctic vegetation map: 27-31. In: Proceedings of the second circumpolar arctic vegetation mapping workshop, Arendal, Norway, 19.-24. May 1996. Walker, S. & A.C. Lillie, eds.). – Occasional Paper No. 52, 1997. Institute of Arctic and Alpine Research, University of Colorado.
Egevang, C. & Boertmann, D. 2001a. The Greenland Ramsar Sites, a status report. – National Environmental Research Institute (NERI), Technical Report No. 346, 96 pp.
Egevang, C. & Boertmann, D. 2001b. The Ramsar sites of Disko, West Greenland. A survey in July 2001. ¬– National Environmental Research Institute (NERI), Technical Report No. 368, 68 pp.
Greenland Red List 2007. (Boertmann, D., 2008). Rødliste 2007 over planter og dyr i Grønland. ¬– Danmarks Miljøundersøgelser, Grønlands Hjemmestyre.

6.1.2 - Additional reports and documents

i. taxonomic lists of plant and animal species occurring in the site (see section 4.3)
<no file available>

ii. a detailed Ecological Character Description (ECD) (in a national format)
<no file available>

iii. a description of the site in a national or regional wetland inventory
<2 file(s) uploaded>

iv. relevant Article 3.2 reports
<no file available>

v. site management plan
<no file available>

vi. other published literature
<no file available>

6.1.3 - Photograph(s) of the Site

Please provide at least one photograph of the site:


Central part of the valley. (*David Boertmann, 23-07-2001*)


The surging glacier in the head of the valley. (*David Boertmann, 23-07-2001*)


The lush vegetation at a homeothermic spring. (*David Boertmann, 23-07-2001*)


Central part of the site. (*David Boertmann, 23-07-2001*)

6.1.4 - Designation letter and related data

Designation letter
<1 file(s) uploaded>

Date of Designation: 1988-01-27