Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS)

Categories approved by Recommendation 4.7, as amended by Resolution VIII.13 of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

Note 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. Once completed, the RIS (and accompanying map(s)) should be submitted to the Ramsar Bureau. Compilers are strongly urged to provide an electronic (MS Word) copy of the RIS and, where possible, digital copies of maps.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY.
DD MM YY
Designation date Site Reference Number

1. Name and address of the compiler of this form:

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2. Date this sheet was updated:

January 2005

3. Country:

Finland

4. Name of the Ramsar site:

Söderskär and Långören Archipelago

5. Map of site included:
Refer to Annex III of the Explanatory Note and Guidelines, for detailed guidance on provision of suitable maps.

a) hard copy (required for inclusion of site in the Ramsar List):

Yes.
The Ramsar site boundaries have been redefined and are convergent now with Natura 2000 one.

b) digital (electronic) format (optional):

Yes.

6. Geographical coordinates (latitude/longitude):

60º08' N / 25º38' E

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

The four separate areas are situated in the province of Southern Finland, in the middle part of the Gulf of Finland, in Porvoo city, 24–30 km south of the city centre. The distance between the areas is 1–4 km. The city (654 sq.km of land) has ca. 45 000 residents.

8. Elevation: (average and/or max. & min.)
13 – 0 m

9. Area: (in hectares)

18 219 ha

The Ramsar site area has been redefined and is now convergent with the Natura 2000 one.

10. Overview:
Provide a short paragraph giving a summary description of the principal ecological characteristics and importance of the wetland.
The archipelago forms an important breeding and staging area for archipelago birds and is an important area for the protection of Grey Seal.

11. 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**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**

12. Justification for the application of each Criterion listed in 11. 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).

1) A representative example of a near-natural wetland type (archipelago in shallow marine waters) in the EU Boreal region, including 1 priority natural wetland habitat type (boreal Baltic coastal meadows).

2) Threatened birds (VU in Finnish Red List) include Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*) with 35 pairs and Caspian Tern (*Sterna caspia*) with 40–80 pairs. 3 species of the EU Birds Directive Annex I breed in the area, including Arctic Tern (*S. paradisaeae*) with >500 pairs and Common Tern (*S. hirundo*) with >150 pairs. Finland's responsibility species also include 270 pairs of Black Guillemots (*Cepphus g. grylle*) and 1 200 pairs of Eiders (*Somateria mollissima*) at Söderskär,representing the densest population in the Gulf of Finland.

4) The site is particularly important as a breeding area. The surrounding shallow banks form also a significant staging area for migrating waterfowl but the number of staging waterbirds is more irregular.

13. 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:

Southern boreal forest vegetation zone.

b) biogeographic regionalisation scheme (include reference citation):

Etelä-Suomen ja Pohjanmaan metsien suojelun tarve-työryhmä. Puheenjohtaja: Ruuhijärvi, R., Sihteerit: Kuusinen, M., Raunio, A. and Eisto, K. 2000. Metsien suojelun tarve Etelä-Suomessa ja Pohjanmaalla. Etelä-Suomen ja Pohjanmaan metsien suojelun tarve-työryhmän mietintö. Suomen ympäristö 437. Ympäristöministeriö. Helsinki.

Working group on the need for forest protection in southern Finland and Ostrobothnia. Chairman Ruuhijärvi, R., Secretaries Kuusinen, M., Raunio, A. and Eisto, K. 2000. Forest protection in southern Finland and Ostrobothnia. The Finnish Environment 437. Ministry of the Environment.

14. 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.

Geology: Geochemically included in South Finland high metamorphic area. Bedrock is composed mainly of microline granite, granodiorite, tonalite and quartz diorite.
Origins: Natural.
Soil type: Mainly bedrock terrain.
Water quality: General quality satisfactory, in southern part general quality good. Salinity ca. 5–6 ‰.
Depth of water: Mostly 2–8 m near islands, maximum ca. 42 m in open sea. Water-level usually low in spring and high in autumn and winter.

Climate: Duration of growing season ca. 170 days, mean annual temperature ca. +4 ºC, mean annual rainfall ca. 600 mm. Waters ice-covered normally only in February–March. Southern boreal forest vegetation zone.

15. 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).

General geology and geomorphological features as well as soil types and climate are of same type than in the site. General land use in mainland includes mainly private forestry and agriculture.

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

As a sea bay the site has no particular hydrological values. As an estuary it functions with sediment trapping (reducing e.g. agricultural nutrient load).

17. Wetland Types

a) presence:
Circle or underline the applicable codes for the wetland types of the Ramsar "Classification System for Wetland Type" present in the Ramsar site. Descriptions of each wetland type code are provided in Annex I of the *Explanatory Notes & Guidelines.*

Marine/coastal: Marine: A, D & E

A	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**	**F**	**G**	**H**	**I**	**J**	**K**	**Zk(a)**

Inland:

L	**M**	**N**	**O**	**P**	**Q**	**R**	**Sp**	**Ss**	**Tp**	**Ts**	**U**	**Va**	**Vt**	**W**	**Xf**	**Xp**	**Y**	**Zg**	**Zk(b)**

Human-made:

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**Zk(c)**

b) dominance:
List the wetland types identified in a) above in order of their dominance (by area) in the Ramsar site, starting with the wetland type with the largest area.

A – Shallow marine waters
D – Rocky offshore islands
E – Sand and shingle shores of offshore islands

18. General ecological features:

Provide further description, as appropriate, of the main habitats, vegetation types, plant and animal communities present in the Ramsar site.

Söderskär covers 2 119 ha, Långören 10 376 ha, Sandkallan 5 542 ha and Pellinki 182 ha. The area includes ca. 18 070 ha of water and ca. 149 ha of land.
Söderskär is composed of ca. 25 small islands and islets in the outer archipelago. Långören is composed of a low esker island together with >60 small islands and islets and the open sea area southwards. Most of the islands are treeless in Söderskär and Långören. Common Juniper (*Juniperus communis*) and few small growths of Aspen (*Populus tremula*) and Spruce (*Picea abies*) grow on largest islands. Sandkallan is formed by an open sea area with a few skerries and islets. Pellinki is composed of a group of small islands, a part of which are forested; Tunnholmen Island is characterized by sandy beaches and herb-rich forests.

19. 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.***

Threatened vascular plants include Prickly Saltwort (*Salsola kali*) (EN in Finnish Red List) at Långören Island.

20. 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.***

Mammals of the EU Habitats Directive Annex II and V include Grey Seal (*Halichoerus grypus*-EN in Northern Europe). A major population of the Gulf of Finland stays at Sandkallan from spring to autumn, the highest counts reaching >200 individuals.

21. Social and 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.

Significant values include scientific research and birdwatching. The main islands of Söderskär form a valuable traditional landscape area with a lighthouse and several timbered houses from 19th century.

22. Land tenure/ownership:

(a) within the Ramsar site:
State-owned for the most part. Pellinki Archipelago is private-owned.

23. Current land (including water) use:
a) and **b)** Fishing and hunting of waterfowl occurs in certain areas. The site is used as a training area by Finnish Defence Forces.

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

Oil pollution damage is the main threat. The planned harbour of Vuosaari would increase shipping near the area. American Mink (*Mustela vison*) has caused notable damage to the breeding of birds. The unguarded Långören Archipelago has suffered from increased boating. Hunting of waterfowl in autumn causes disturbance in several places.

The impact of training of Defence Forces is not significant

25. 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.

The site is included in the Natura 2000 Network designated as SPA under the name "Söderskärin ja Långörenin saaristo" (code FI01 00077), and proposed as Baltic Sea Protected Areas of the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) network.

Söderskär Archipelago (2 109 ha) was established as a bird sanctuary in 1930. The area is guarded and landing is prohibited in the breeding season of birds. Trapping of American Minks (*Mustela vison*) has been intensified. Långören Archipelago (26 ha of land) was established as a bird sanctuary in 1970, and landing is prohibited in the breeding season of birds. The area of Sandkallan – Stora Kölhällen was established as Protected Area for Grey Seal (7 543 ha) in 2001. Restricted professional fishing is permitted, hunting is prohibited. Pellinki Archipelago includes the protected area of Tunnholmen Islands (148 ha), established in 1932.

26. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:
e.g. management plan in preparation; official proposal as a legally protected area, etc.

Conservation of the Natura 2000 site outside the already protected areas will be carried out under the Nature Conservation Act.

27. Current scientific research and facilities:
e.g., details of current research projects, including biodiversity monitoring; existence of a field research station, etc.

A field station of Finnish Game and Fisheries Research Institute has been in operation at Söderskär since 1965. Bird populations have been monitored regularly since 1949. The population dynamics of Eider and ecology of gulls have been studied intensively since

the 1960s. The field station also functions as a research and ringing station of migratory birds. Lepidopteran fauna was studied in the 1970s. At Långören, the breeding bird fauna has been monitored quite regularly since the 1980s, and at Sandkallan the population of Grey Seals has been monitored during the 1990s.

28. Current conservation education:
e.g. visitors' centre, observation hides and nature trails, information booklets, facilities for school visits, etc.

None significant.

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

Situated near the main metropols, boating is very intense during summer months. A few small islands in Pellinki Archipelago are popular birdwatching sites during the migration of arctic waterfowl and waders in May.

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

a) Metsähallitus – Forest and Park Service, Natural Heritage Services, Southern Finland; Uusimaa Regional Environment Centre, **b)** Ministry of the Environment.

31. 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.

Metsähallitus – Forest and Park Service, Natural Heritage Services, Southern Finland, PO Box 94, FIN-01301 Vantaa, Finland.

Uusimaa Regional Environment Centre, PO Box 36, FIN-00521 Helsinki, Finland.

32. Bibliographical references:
scientific/technical references only. If biogeographic regionalisation scheme applied (see 13 above), list full reference citation for the scheme.

Hario, M. 1990. Breeding failure and decline of some seabird colonies on the northern coast of the Gulf of Finland. Baltic Birds 5.

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Hario, M. & Selin, K. 1988. Thirty-year trends in an eider population: timing of breeding, clutch size, and nest site preferences. Finnish Game Research 45.

Hario, M., Kilpi, M. & Selin, K. 1991. Parental investment by the sexes in Herring Gull: the use of energy reserves during early breeding. Ornis Scandinavica 22.

Hildén, O. & Hario, M. 1993. Muuttuva saaristolinnusto. Forssan kirjapaino Oy.

Laurila, T. & Hario, M. 1988. Environmental and genetic factors influencing clutch size, egg volume, date of laying and female weight in the Common Eider *Somateria mollissima*. Finnish Game Research 45.

Leivo, M. 2000. Suomen kansainvälisesti tärkeät lintualueet. Linnut-vuosikirja 1999. (English summary: Important Bird Areas in Finland).

Leivo, M., Asanti, T., Koskimies, P., Lammi, E., Lampolahti, J., Mikkola-Roos, M. & Virolainen, E. 2002. Suomen tärkeät lintualueet FINIBA. BirdLife Suomen julkaisuja 4, Suomen graafiset palvelut, Kuopio.

Pietiläinen, M. 1983. Porvoon maalaiskunnan luontoinventointi 1982–83. Manuscript. Porvoon kaupunki.

Rusanen, P. 1996. Suomenlahden yleisten vesialueiden harmaahyljelaskenta 1996. Manuscript. Metsähallitus, Etelärannikon puistoalue.

Suomalainen, E. 1979. The Lepidopteran fauna of an isolated island in the outermost archipelago of the Gulf of Finland. Notulae Entomologicae 59.

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