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 Secretariat. Compilers are strongly urged to provide an electronic (MS Word) copy of the RIS and, where possible, digital copies of maps.

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

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY.

DD MM YY

Designation date | Site Reference Number

Joint Nature Conservation Committee
Monkstone House
City Road
Peterborough
Cambridgeshire PE1 1JY
UK
Telephone/Fax: +44 (0)1733 – 562 626 / +44 (0)1733 – 555 948
Email: RIS@JNCC.gov.uk

2. Date this sheet was completed/updated:

Designated: 14 December 1999 / update 12 May 2005

3. Country:

UK (Northern Ireland)

4. Name of the Ramsar site:

Slieve Beagh

5. Map of site included:

Refer to Annex III of the *Explanatory Notes and Guidelines*, for detailed guidance on provision of suitable maps.

a) hard copy (required for inclusion of site in the Ramsar List): *yes* ✓ -or- *no* ☐

b) digital (electronic) format (optional): Yes

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

54 20 53 N 07 11 38 W

7. General location:

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

In Counties Tyrone and Fermanagh in the south-west of Northern Ireland, along the international border with the Republic of Ireland.

Administrative region: Dungannon; Fermanagh; Tyrone

8. Elevation (average and/or max. & min.) (metres)**:** **9. Area** (hectares)**:** 1884.68

Min. 0
Max. 380
Mean 290

10. Overview:

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

The peatland exhibits a number of notable structural features, which include occasional well-developed hummock and lawn complexes, a few small localised pool complexes, as well as soakways

and flushes. The general vegetation is characterised by *Sphagnum* mosses, ericoid dwarf-shrubs and sedges, with the composition and abundance of these components dependent on local edaphic conditions, in particular the water table and relief.

The peatland flora includes a number of rare and unusual species including cowberry *Vaccinium vitis-idaea* and the mosses *Sphagnum fuscum* and *S. imbricatum*.

Several upland, base-poor lakes occur within the complex. The most common type is characterised by the aquatic mosses *Sphagnum cuspidatum*, *S. denticulatum*, *Drepanocladus* spp. and the liverwort *Jungermannia* spp. The floating and marginal vegetation associated with these waterbodies tends to be sparse and restricted, and consists of a scattered swamp and poor acid fen fringe.

The area supports a breeding population of red grouse *Lagopus lagopus*. In addition, it is regularly used throughout the year by golden plover *Pluvialis apricaria* and hen harrier *Circus cyaneus*.

Contemporary geomorphological processes include limited piping, sinks and collapsed hollows in the peat and a number of substantial bog-bursts.

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

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).

Criterion 1

The site is a large and relatively intact example of a blanket bog and one of the best examples of this habitat in the UK. It also contains nationally important examples of transitional and alkaline fen and oligotrophic/mesotrophic lakes.

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:

Atlantic

b) biogeographic regionalisation scheme (include reference citation):

Council Directive 92/43/EEC

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.

Soil & geology	acidic, peat, nutrient-poor, basalt
Geomorphology and landscape	upland
Nutrient status	oligotrophic
pH	acidic, strongly acidic
Salinity	fresh
Soil	mainly organic
Water permanence	usually permanent

Summary of main climatic features	Annual averages (Armagh, 1971–2000) (www.metoffice.com/climate/uk/averages/19712000/sites/armagh.html) Max. daily temperature: 12.9° C Min. daily temperature: 5.8° C Days of air frost: 40.4 Rainfall: 795.4 mm Hrs. of sunshine: 1191.6

General description of the Physical Features:

Slieve Beagh is one of the most extensive areas of intact blanket bog in Northern Ireland. It contains a comparatively large undulating upland area of generally *Sphagnum*-rich mire vegetation. It is less markedly oceanic than other Northern Ireland sites but has some limited areas of surface patterning. The peatland complex contains a number of natural dystrophic lakes and ponds that range in size from 5.5 ha to less than 0.5 ha. The site contains the largest concentration of medium- to large-sized dystrophic lakes in Northern Ireland. The smaller lakes and ponds are steep-sided with banks and bed formed by layers of deep peat. The larger lakes have shallow, shelving shores and hard, stony beds. Although the base-poor waters are low in plant nutrients and tend to have a characteristically impoverished flora and fauna, some important communities are present on the site. The floating and marginal vegetation tends to be sparse and restricted, and consists of a scattered swamp and acid poor-fen fringe.

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).

Slieve Beagh is one of the most extensive areas of intact blanket bog in Northern Ireland. It contains a comparatively large undulating upland area of generally *Sphagnum*-rich mire vegetation. It is less markedly oceanic than other Northern Ireland sites but has some limited areas of surface patterning. The peatland complex contains a number of natural dystrophic lakes and ponds that range in size from 5.5 ha to less than 0.5 ha, the largest concentration of medium- to large-sized dystrophic lakes in Northern Ireland. The smaller lakes and ponds are steep-sided with banks and bed formed by layers of deep peat. The larger lakes have shallow, shelving shores and hard, stony beds. Although the base-poor waters are low in plant nutrients and tend to have a characteristically impoverished flora and fauna, some important communities are present on the site.

16. Hydrological values:

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

No special values known

17. Wetland types

Inland wetland

Code	Name	% Area
O	Freshwater lakes: permanent	1
U	Peatlands (including peat bogs swamps, fens)	99

18. General ecological features:

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

The area is of special scientific interest because of its geology, physiography and peatland flora and fauna. In geological terms, the area lies within an ancient depositional syncline, extending through much of the Upper Palaeozoic. Physiographical interest is related to contemporary geomorphological processes within the peat mass. Biological interest is associated with the presence of the third-largest

intact expanse of upland peatland in Northern Ireland. The peatland complex includes a number of oligotrophic water bodies as well as a number of raised and soligenous bog units, all within an enveloping bog mantle. Together these support an array of associated plant and animal communities.

The stratigraphy includes a limited inlier of Upper Limestone - part of the Dartry Limestone Formation. These consist of D2, coral and brachiopod zone, series sediments, representing clear water marine shelf conditions. As the water became more shallow, a major phase of deltaic sedimentation resulted in the Slieve Beagh Formation of the Leitrim Group. These are mainly fine- to coarse-grained sandstones, notable at Shane Barnagh's Stables, with a high proportion of black shaly goniatite-bearing mudstones in the lower beds, outcropping south of Crockbane. These 580 m of Yoredale type rocks do not pre-date P1 or post-date P2 goniatite stages.

Contemporary geomorphological processes include limited piping, sinks and collapsed hollows in the peat and a number of substantial bog-bursts.

The peatland exhibits a number of notable structural features, which include occasional well-developed hummock and lawn complexes, a few small localised pool complexes, as well as soakways and flushes. The general vegetation is characterised by *Sphagnum* mosses, ericoid dwarf-shrubs and sedges, with the composition and abundance of these components dependent on local edaphic conditions, in particular the water table and relief.

Flat, waterlogged ground is characterised by the presence of such species as cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix*, cranberry *Vaccinium oxycoccos*, bog asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum* and common cottongrass *Eriophorum angustifolium*, over a lush *Sphagnum* moss mat of predominantly *S. papillosum* with occasional *S. magellanicum*. On more freely-draining slopes, heather *Calluna vulgaris*, bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus* and hare's-tail cottongrass *Eriophorum vaginatum* are more typical, over a more mixed bryophyte mat. The presence of weak flushing of acidic water through the surface peat layer is indicated by the occurrence of scattered purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* or sharp-flowered rush *Juncus acutiflorus*. Where flushing is concentrated over thinner peats or on peaty gley soils, the vegetation is characterised by a small sedge community where yellow-sedge *Carex viridula*, carnation sedge *C. panicea* and star sedge *C. echinata* predominate, while the presence of more mesotrophic water is indicated by the presence of tawny sedge *C. hostiana*, dioecious sedge *C. dioica* and flea sedge *C. pulicaris*.

The peatland flora includes a number of rare and unusual species including cowberry *Vaccinium vitis-idaea* and the mosses *Sphagnum fuscum* and *S. imbricatum*.

Several upland, base-poor lakes occur within the complex. The most common type is characterised by the bog-mosses *Sphagnum cuspidatum*, *S. denticulatum*, *Drepanocladus* spp. and the liverwort *Jungermannia* spp. The floating and marginal vegetation associated with these water bodies tends to be sparse and restricted, and consists of a scattered swamp and poor acid fen fringe.

The area supports a breeding population of red grouse *Lagopus lagopus*. In addition, it is regularly used throughout the year by golden plover *Pluvialis apricaria* and hen harrier *Circus cyaneus*.

The upland lakes support a species-poor but notable upland insect fauna. The characteristic upland water beetle *Agabus arcticus* and the water bug *Callicorixa wollastoni* are common in the lakes and pools and the concentration of records of both species is the greatest recorded in Northern Ireland. Acidophile species and those typical of oligotrophic waters are also common, reflecting the prevailing conditions including *Hydroporus gyllenhali*, *H. obscurus* and *Sigara scotti*. The most notable species are found in the highest lake, Lough Sallagh, where the rare upland beetle *Potamonectes griseostriatus* and corixid *Glaenocorisa propinqua* are found. The natural acid flushes and the shallow pools associated with the many bog-bursts support a different suite of species including the local water beetles *Agabus guttatus*, *Stictonectes lepidus* and the corixid *Sigara nigrolineata*.

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.*

Internationally important species occurring on the site
Habitat:
Blanket bog

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.*

Species Information

None reported

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.

No special values known

22. Land tenure/ownership:

Ownership category	On-site	Off-site
National/Crown Estate	+	+
Private		+

23. Current land (including water) use:

Activity	On-site	Off-site
Nature conservation	+	
Rough or shifting grazing		+
Mineral exploration (excl. hydrocarbons)	+	

24. Factors 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?
Overgrazing by domestic livestock	2		+		+

For category 2 factors only.
What measures have been taken / are planned / regulatory processes invoked, to mitigate the effect of these factors?
Overgrazing by domestic livestock - Conservation objectives for the site have been developed. These highlight the need to address overgrazing. Positive Grazing Management schemes are being introduced. A new cross-border management initiative is currently being planned. This will also address the overgrazing issue.

Is the site subject to adverse ecological change? YES

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.

Conservation measure	On-site	Off-site
Site/ Area of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI/ASSI)	+	
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	+	
Management agreement	+	
Site management statement/plan implemented	+	
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	+	

26. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:

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

No information available

27. Current scientific research and facilities:

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

· The site was subject to detailed habitat and species surveys prior to its designation as an ASSI
· The integrity of the site is regularly monitored.

28. Current conservation education:

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

None reported

29. Current recreation and tourism:

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

None reported

30. Jurisdiction:

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

Department of the Environment (Northern Ireland), Environment and Heritage Service, Commonwealth House, Castle Street, Belfast, Northern Ireland, BT1 1GU

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.

Department of the Environment (Northern Ireland), Environment and Heritage Service, Commonwealth House, Castle Street, Belfast, Northern Ireland, BT1 1GU

32. Bibliographical references:

Scientific/technical references only. If biogeographic regionalisation scheme applied (see **13** above), list full reference citation for the scheme.

Site-relevant references

Corbett, P. McM & Seymour, GR (1997) The conservation of peatland in Northern Ireland. In: *Conserving peatlands*, ed by L Parkyn, RE Stoneman & HAP Ingram. CAB International, Wallingford, for Scottish Wildlife Trust

Crowe, O (2005) *Ireland's wetlands and their waterbirds: status and distribution*. BirdWatch Ireland, Newcastle, Co. Wicklow

Frazer, JS, Cruickshank, MM & Tomlinson, RW (1988) *Northern Ireland Peatland Survey*. Unpublished report to Department of the Environment (Northern Ireland), Countryside and Wildlife Branch, Belfast

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

---

Please return to: **Ramsar Secretariat, Rue Mauverney 28, CH-1196 Gland, Switzerland**
Telephone**: +41 22 999 0170** • Fax: **+41 22 999 0169** • email: **ramsar@ramsar.org**