

# 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:

**UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum**

102 Broadway

Peterborough PE1 1JY

UK

Email: [pienkowski@cix.co.uk](mailto:pienkowski@cix.co.uk)

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Designation date

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Site Reference Number

## 2. Date this sheet was completed/updated:

11 November 2004

## 3. Country:

**UK (Isle of Man)**

## 4. Name of the Ramsar site:

**The Ballaugh Curragh**

## 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):

Centroid: 54d 19m 0s N 4d 31m 0s 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.

8 km W of Ramsey

**Administrative region:** Isle of Man

## 8. Elevation (average and/or max. & min.) (metres): 9. Area (hectares): 227 approx

Min. 10m

Max. 20m

Mean No information available

## 10. Overview:

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

The Ballaugh Curragh consists of a complex mosaic of interrelated peatland habitats dominated by grey willow *Salix cinerea* and birch *Betula pubescens* scrub (known locally as *curragh*). Associated wetland habitats include bog pools, wet woodland, man-made ditch systems and fen grassland. The area supports a huge winter roost of hen harriers *Circus cyaneus* - at times the largest recorded in Europe. It has a very high diversity of breeding birds and a range of mire and aquatic plants including local rarities and species protected under Manx law. The peat deposits of the Ballaugh Curragh are also of importance for the historical pollen record that they provide. The biodiversity of the Ballaugh Curragh is known to have contributed to its cultural importance as an early settlement, and hence to its

considerable value as an archaeological resource. Parts of the area are still farmed, principally for seasonal rough grazing and traditional hay cropping.

### 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

### 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 The site consists of a representative example of a peatland habitat mosaic with a high degree of habitat diversity, dominated by a once-typical but now increasingly rare and fragmented willow scrub habitat, known locally as *curragh*. Other habitats include wet birch woodland, wet grassland, purple moor-grass-dominated fen pasture with good populations of marsh orchids, floating mats of bog vegetation and well-established man-made ditch systems with good collections of aquatic and emergent species.
  
- 2 Corncrake *Crex crex* (SPEC1 – global conservation concern: Vulnerable) settled at Close Sartfield Nature Reserve in the Ballaugh Curragh in 1999, and definitely bred in 2000. The Curragh is known to have been one of the last strongholds for this bird prior to its dramatic population decline throughout the British Isles; the continuing presence of traditionally managed farmland in the area is now important for the return of the corncrake as a Manx breeding species. The asilid fly *Epitriptus cowini* (RDB2 (Vulnerable), pRDBK) has been recorded from the Ballaugh Curragh area.
  
- 3 The Ballaugh Curragh supports the largest hen harrier *Circus cyaneus* winter roost on the Island, with a 5 year mean peak count of 82 (1996/7-2000/01); well over 100 may be seen. This represents a high proportion of all winter roosting hen harriers in the region; in some years it has been recorded as having the highest number in Western Europe.  
  
The Ballaugh Curragh is one of the most biologically diverse sites on the Isle of Man, containing a very high diversity of breeding birds and diverse plantlife. For some rare and threatened plants the Curragh represents the only Manx station; the uncommon habitat types present are in some cases the most diverse examples of their kind on the Island. It is therefore of high importance for the conservation of Manx biodiversity.
  
- 4 Regionally important winter hen harrier roost – see above.

### 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	Peat with an average depth of 2-3m, overlying postglacial limnic mud.
Geomorphology and landscape	Extensive basin mire on the site of a post-glacial hollow which originally contained a lake. Generally flat and poorly-drained, with a distinctive low canopy of dense willow and birch scrub interspersed with small field and ditch systems. Surface altered by extensive peat diggings since at least the Middle Ages; some of these still contain open water and/or swamp.
Nutrient status	Humus-rich but generally low in plant nutrients except where agricultural improvement has taken place.
pH	Acidic. Mean pH of around 6.4, but bog pools may be 5.0 or lower.
Salinity	Unlikely to be affected except by spray carried from storm events on the nearby coast.
Soil	Earthy peat and humic alluvial.
Water permanence	Prevented from functioning as a basin mire by a network of drainage ditches; otherwise very slow drainage along one or two small natural channels. Wet all year, especially October – March.
Summary of main climatic features	cool oceanic lowland; Average rainfall 866mm/year; Average min. temperature: 4.8C Average max. temperature: 17.5C

#### 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).

Cool oceanic lowland; part of catchment is within cool oceanic upland climate, as the northern lowlands of the Isle of Man are fed by the Northern Hills, which rise to a maximum of 620m. Water quality is generally good but acidbase-poor; water supply is relatively steady, although the small catchment area may result in temporary droughts in unusually dry summers. Land use in the catchment is overwhelmingly rural, mostly extensive pasture and moorland.

#### 16. Hydrological values:

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

The Curragh represents a large storage area of water coming off the hills, particularly in winter when the wet pastures are generally flooded at least part of the time. The area has a complex hydrology and a full hydrological assessment is not available.

#### 17. Wetland types

Code	Name	% Area
U	Non-forested peatlands	30
W	Shrub-dominated wetlands	60
4	Seasonally flooded agricultural land	9
9	Canals and drainage channels, ditches	1

## 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 Ballaugh Curragh is well known locally for its wetland habitats and bird diversity. The presence of impressive winter hen harrier numbers and traditionally-managed meadows with summer displays of thousands of orchids attracts visitors both for bird-watching and the popular “orchid tours” run by the Manx Wildlife Trust. The Curragh is the largest remaining intact example of a very distinctive Manx habitat which was historically important as a plentiful source of fish, waterfowl and willow. It therefore forms a culturally defined area of the Island as well as a distinct wetland, and as such has provided valuable archaeological and palynological records. Although dominated by willow scrub on peat, the Curragh also has open water, damp neutral to acidic grassland, marshy grassland, dry scrub, hedges, birch woodland with heather, modified and wet bog, tall ruderal and swamp vegetation, semi-natural broadleaved woodland and improved pasture. Of particular significance in the regional context is the presence of habitats on Annex 1 of the EU Habitats Directive (wetbog woodland, natural dystrophic ponds, *Molinia* meadows on peaty soils, and UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats (wet woodland, purple moor-grass and rush pastures, fens, species-rich hedges, eutrophic standing waters).

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## 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.*

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## 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.*

See (12).

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## 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.

The Ballaugh Curragh has some of the oldest evidence of human settlement on the Isle of Man. The presence of abundant willows, fish and wildfowl attracted early hunting and farming activities for which evidence remains in the form of a wide range of archaeological finds. More recent practices have included eel fishing with woven willow pots, egg-collecting, wildfowling, a range of traditional farming, harvesting of willow for a variety of withy work, and the use of dammed areas to power water-driven corn mills. As well as buried artifacts, abundant evidence of past use remains in the form of man-made boundaries such as ditches, banks and hedges. Old slate sluice gates remain in some of the older drainage ditches, which were used to create areas of useable farmland, generally treated as seasonal extra land or “intack”. Farming has continued to the present day, although the central core of the Ballaugh Curragh is no longer open, consisting mostly of dense willow scrub. Rising land costs on the Island have created a recent interest in curragh as “lifestyle land”, with consequent pressure to clear and/or drain the semi-natural areas.

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## 22. Land tenure/ownership:

Ownership category	On-site	Off-site
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Private Note: private ownership is very complex; in some areas it is uncertain, others are owned (often just small individual fields) by private landowners	+	+
Manx National Heritage	+	
Manx Wildlife Trust	+	+

### 23. Current land (including water) use:

Activity	On-site	Off-site	Scale
Rough pasture	+		Around a third of the site, much of it rush pasture (not always very diverse)
Hay meadow	+		Around 10% of the site (mostly within the nature reserve)
silage		+	Adjacent to some parts of the site
Improved pasture		+	Adjacent to over half the perimeter of the site
“lifestyle land” (e.g. domestic pony grazing, garden extensions)	+	+	Small individual fields – around 5% of site but increasing
Nature reserve	+		Around 10% of the site
Curraghs Wildlife Park (zoo)	+	+	
Cultivated land (eg potato fields)	+	+	Occasional small individual fields
Unfarmed curragh (scrub)	+		Around half the area

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

Activity	On-site	Off-site	Scale
Pasture improvement including drainage	+	+	Occasional; scale not known
Deepening of old drainage ditches	+	+	Occasional; scale not known
Scrub clearance eg. for cultivation	+	+	Estimated at around 5% each year
Increasing use as “lifestyle land”, often with associated drainage and clearance and disturbance issues	+	+	Currently less than 5% of site area, but increasing
Spread of Japanese knotweed <i>Fallopia japonica</i>	+	+	Rare but increasing

### 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
Corncrake agreement between DAFF and MWT	+	+
Management of some MWT land is supported by an Agri-environment Scheme agreement	+	
Whole area is protected under the Curraghs Acquisition Act, which regulates activities such as shooting.	+	

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

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

Under consideration as an Area of Special Scientific Interest.

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

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

No research station. Nature reserves in the management of the Manx Wildlife Trust are subject to monitoring; the Curragh area is also subject to bird monitoring by the Manx Bird Atlas.

Current level of archaeological research unknown.

**28. Current conservation education:**

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

A variety of interpretive material is produced by Manx National Heritage and the Manx Wildlife Trust. (Also see 29 below.)

**29. Current recreation and tourism:**

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

Limited public access for walking;

Popular annual "orchid tours" run by Manx Wildlife Trust at its Close Sartfield nature reserve;

Public access and birdwatching hide at Close Sartfield;

Minor roads through the area used for road racing once a year (Manx International Rally).

**30. Jurisdiction:**

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

Isle of Man Government

Wildlife and Conservation Division, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Knockaloe Peel, Isle of Man IM5 3AJ

**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.

Various according to ownership. Includes:

**Manx National Heritage**

Curator - Natural History: Kate Hawkins

Manx Museum,  
Kingswood Grove,  
Douglas  
IM1 3LY

**Manx Wildlife Trust**

Director: Duncan Bridges

Tynwald Mills,  
St Johns,  
Isle of Man  
IM4 3AE

**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**

Pritchard, DE, Housden, SD, Mudge, GP, Galbraith, CA & Pienkowski, MW (eds.) (1992) *Important Bird Areas in the United Kingdom including the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man*. Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Sandy  
 UK Dependent Territories Ramsar Study: Stage 1 (1992)  
 Shirt 1987  
 Falk 1991  
 Fairhurst, J (1998) Ballaugh Curragh Management Plan. Manx National Heritage, unpublished plan.

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# 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.

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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:

**UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum**

102 Broadway

Peterborough PE1 1JY

UK

Email: [pienkowski@cix.co.uk](mailto:pienkowski@cix.co.uk)

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Designation date

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Site Reference Number

## 2. Date this sheet was completed/updated:

11 November 2004

## 3. Country:

**UK (Isle of Man)**

## 4. Name of the Ramsar site:

**The Ayres**

## 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):

Approx. centroid: 54d 24m 0s N 4d 25m 0s 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.

Northernmost tip of Isle of Man, 9 km N of Ramsey

**Administrative region:** Isle of Man

## 8. Elevation (average and/or max. & min.) (metres): 9. Area (hectares): approx 600

Min. No information available

Max. No information available

Mean No information available

## 10. Overview:

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

A section of coastline characterised by a broad strip of gravel next to well-developed calcareous dunes and lichen heath. The site extends into the intertidal zone. breeding The seas off the Point of Ayre (the northernmost gravel prominence) are very rich, partly as a result of water-mixing by the tide-race as the strong currents flowing along either side of the Island meet. Large numbers of locally breeding birds, notably little tern *Sterna albifrons* as well as concentrations from elsewhere, notably gannets *Sula bassana*, and migrating sanderlings *Calidris alba*, feed close inshore as well as more scattered locations at sea. Important marine life includes maerl beds and horse mussel *Modiolus modiolus* beds offshore, and a dense subtidal edible mussel bed unusual because it is found in the kelp zone. There is



also a herring spawning ground off the Point of Ayre and maerl is an important nursery ground for fish and shellfish. Gravel pits within the area are being reinstated as ponds important for migrant waterbirds, and part of the surrounding land is being experimentally restored as coastal heathland. Insects take advantage of the short, warm vegetation, notably the Endangered moth *Pyrausta sanguinalis* on thyme (Parsons 1993), and Vulnerable fly *Bombylius minor* on the heath (Falk 1991). The presence of lichen heath with abundant *Usnea articulatus* growing, not on trees as is usual, but on the ground amongst very low coastal heath, is a very unusual habitat feature of the Ayres. The whole area is popular for walking, riding and other outdoor activities. A proportion of the area (272ha) is designated as an Area of Special Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserve.

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## 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, 7, 8**

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## 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 The Ayres is a diverse representative of shingle, vegetated shingle, dune and cobble coastal ecosystems which includes lichen heath on sand/shingle and combination of related habitats. On the east coast, just south of the Point of Ayre, subtidal surveys revealed a dense bed of the edible mussel *Mytilus edulis*, at shallower depths than is normally found. This is considered unusual in the British Isles and is an important habitat to protect as a type of biogenic reef and for its associated diversity. The lichen heath has a rare structure where *Usnea articulata* grows at ground level amongst very low bell heather *Erica cinerea* and burnet rose *Rosa pimpinellifolia*.
- 2 Supports the Endangered moth *Pyrausta sanguinalis* on thyme (Parsons 1993), and Vulnerable fly *Bombylius minor* on the heath (Falk 1991).  
  
Maerl beds and horse mussel beds are both threatened ecological communities that have suffered decline in the British Isles in recent years; both are UK BAP Priority Habitats.  
  
Rare invertebrates: *Smicromyrme rufipes* is a pNotable B velvet ant (Falk 1991) recorded on the NNR. The following nationally notable moths have been recorded: Sand Dart *Agrotis ripae*, Coast Dart *Euxoa cursoria*, Shore Wainscot *Mythimna litoralis*, Portland *Actebia praecox*, White colon *Sideridis albicolon*.
- 3 Important marine habitats – maerl and horse mussel beds offshore, and unusual dense edible mussel bed mixed with kelp of conservation interest.
- 4 Important feeding area for seabirds.
- 7 Important marine habitats – maerl, horse mussels etc offshore, and unusual dense edible mussel bed mixed with kelp of conservation interest.
- 8 Maerl is now recognised as important habitat for fish and shellfish settlement and nursery area, so the extensive maerl beds to the east of the Point of Ayre are likely to be of importance to local populations of fish and shellfish. Herring (*Clupea harengus*) are also known to spawn off the Point of Ayre. Includes areas of importance for salmon (*Salmo salar*) and sea trout (*Salmo trutta*)

on their migratory routes.

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**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]

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**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	
Geomorphology and landscape	
Nutrient status	
pH	
Salinity	
Soil	
Water permanence	
Summary of main climatic features	cool oceanic lowland; Average rainfall 866mm/year; Average min. temperature: 4.8C Average max. temperature: 17.5C

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**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).

No information available

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**16. Hydrological values:**

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

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**17. Wetland types**

Code	Name	% Area
A	Permanent shallow marine waters	30
B	Marine subtidal aquatic beds	10
E	Sand, shingle or pebble shores	40
7	Excavations	20

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**18. General ecological features:**

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

Shingle, dune and cobble coastal ecosystem, which supports the Endangered moth *Pyrausta sanguinalis* on thyme (Parsons 1993), and Vulnerable fly *Bombylius minor* on the heath (Falk 1991). The Ayres also has a colony of little terns *Sterna albifrons*, and supports migrating sanderlings *Calidris alba* and other birds. The seas off the point are very rich, partly as a result of water-mixing by the tide-race as the strong currents flowing along either side of the Isle meet. Large numbers of locally

breeding birds as well as concentrations from elsewhere, notably gannets *Sula bassana*, feed close inshore as well as more scattered locations at sea. Important marine life includes maerl, horse mussels etc offshore, and unusual dense edible mussel bed mixed with kelp of conservation interest. Gravel pits within the area are being reinstated as ponds important for migrant waterbirds, and experimentally as restored dune systems.

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### 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.*

Subtidal beds of maerl (mainly the calcareous algae *Lithothamnion coralloides*)

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### 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.*

A colony of little terns *Sterna albifrons*. colony of approx. 20 pairs, important at a regional level in maintaining distribution.

Subtidal beds of *Modiolus modiolus* the horse mussel

Wintering divers offshore. Little terns 1999-2003 mean of 18 pairs nesting (Annual wardens' reports). This area includes most colonies, but some also settle to nest further west along the coast. Arctic terns: 8-9 nesting pairs 1999 (only site), 13 in 1985. Common terns have been recorded previously, but none nesting in 1999. Common Gull only recorded nesting at the Point of Ayre, with 0-6 pairs annually (only site in 1999). Black-headed gull have declined to 0-6 pairs annually (only site in 1999). There were 3 nest sites of great black-backed gulls on this site in 1999, but none recorded in 1985/6. Only 1 herring gull nests was recorded in 1985/6 but 117 in 1999. The total is likely to decline if landfill tipping stops at the Point of Ayre. 38 lesser black-backed gull nests were found here in 1999, whereas none had been found in the 1986 survey.

*Smicromyrme rufipes* is a pNotable B velvet ant (Falk 1991) recorded on the NNR.

The following nationally notable moths have been recorded: Sand Dart *Agrotis ripae*, Coast Dart *Euxoa cursoria*, Shore Wainscot *Mythimna litoralis*, Portland *Actebia praecox*, White colon *Sideridis albicolon*.

On the east coast, just south of the Point of Ayre, subtidal surveys revealed an unusual dense bed of the edible mussel, at shallower depths than is normally found. This is considered unusual in the British Isles and is an important habitat to protect as a type of biogenic reef and for its associated diversity.

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### 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.

The north west and north east coasts of the Island (from Peel round to Ramsey Bay, including the Ayres coast) have recently been proposed as a fisheries conservation zone where fishing with static nets will be banned to protect migratory species of fish such as salmon and seatrout.

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### 22. Land tenure/ownership:

Ownership category	On-site	Off-site

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

Activity	On-site	Off-site	Scale
Angling	+	+	
Static net fishing (for sand eel?)	+	+	

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

Activity	On-site	Off-site	Scale
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**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
Reserve [elaborate this and below]	NNR/ASSI	
Wardening	On NNR	
Restoration		

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

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

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

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

Proposed fisheries conservation zone banning static net fishing and all capture of migratory fish (salmon and sea trout) from Peel to Ramsey – currently out for consultation (November 2004).

**28. Current conservation education:**

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

Visitor Centre and guided walks. Site leaflet.

**29. Current recreation and tourism:**

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

Angling from beach, fishing from boats, static nets

**30. Jurisdiction:**

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

No information available

**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.

No information available

**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**

Falk 1991 [details?] Flies I & Bees, wasps and ants

NNR Wardens' annual reports 1999-2003

Parsons 1993 [details?]

Pritchard, DE, Housden, SD, Mudge, GP, Galbraith, CA & Pienkowski, MW (eds.) (1992) *Important Bird Areas in the United Kingdom including the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man*. Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Sandy

Sharpe, CM & Sapsford, AM (1999). Report on a survey of breeding seabirds of the Isle of Man 1999. Manx Bird Atlas, Laxey. [incorporating a review of previous records, including comparable data from Moore, AS (1987) The numbers and distribution of seabirds breeding on the IoM during 1985-86. *Peregrine* 6(2): 64-80.

*UK Dependent Territories Ramsar Study: Stage 1* (1992)

Veale, L., R. Thompson and M. Bates. 1998. Isle of Man Sublittoral Survey. Port Erin Marine Laboratory, Port Erin, Isle of Man.

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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](mailto:ramsar@ramsar.org)

# 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:

**UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum**

102 Broadway

Peterborough PE1 1JY

UK

Email: [pienkowski@cix.co.uk](mailto:pienkowski@cix.co.uk)

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DD MM YY

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Designation date

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Site Reference Number

## 2. Date this sheet was completed/updated:

11 November 2004

## 3. Country:

**UK (Isle of Man)**

## 4. Name of the Ramsar site:

**Southern Coasts & Calf of Man**

## 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):

d m s N

d m s 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.

The coast from Peel southward, including the Calf of Man and Chicken Rock, and eastward along the southern coast to Santon Burn mouth, including the Langness peninsula. The site passes (and excludes) the small towns of Port Erin, Port St Mary and Castletown.

**Administrative region:** Isle of Man

## 8. Elevation (average and/or max. & min.) (metres): 9. Area (hectares): 2326 approx

Min. No information available

Max. No information available

Mean No information available

## 10. Overview:

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

Important complexes of coastal and marine habitats, including: marine, subtidal beds of priority ecosystem seagrass as well as kelp and knotted wrack, rocky shores, cliffs, sea caves and coastal heath. The Calf has a good diversity of fauna and flora underwater and is important regionally. Good examples of rocky marine shores, with good examples at the Calf, Spanish Head, and Niarbyl, and small wooded river ravines entering the sea at several places. The cliffs and coastal waters support important breeding populations of seabirds. The heath on Langness is the only site in the British Isles

for the grasshopper *Stenobothrus stigmaticus*.. Langness is the main site in the Isle of Man for waterbirds. In a recent survey of intertidal habitats, 8 of the 10 most species rich sites were found in this area. According to this survey, the most species rich intertidal site is Ronaldsway, in a bay area due to be infilled for a runway extension for Ronaldsway Airport.

### 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, 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 Important complex of coastal and marine habitats, including: marine, subtidal beds of priority ecosystem seagrass as well as kelp and knotted wrack, mearl, rocky shores, cliffs, sea caves and coastal heath. The subtidal marine life of the Calf of Man is considered to be unusually rich for the Irish Sea and species have been identified around the Calf which are new records for the Irish Sea and in some cases for the British Isles. Sugarloaf caves between Port St Mary and the Sound have diverse subtidal flora and fauna.
- 3 The heath on Langness is the only site in the British Isles site for the grasshopper *Stenobothrus stigmaticus*.. Langness is the main site in the Isle of Man for waterbirds.
- 4 The cliffs and coastal waters support important breeding populations of seabirds, with value in terms of maintenance of range. Puffins, kittiwakes and guillemots breed only on the Southern Coasts & Calf and at Maughold. The Isle of Man is considered to be the main breeding area for black guillemots within Britain & Ireland, outside of Scotland. Between 3672 and 4568 herring gull nests were counted in 1985/6 and 2778 in 1999, giving the site British importance for this species. Manx shearwaters have been confirmed as nesting on the Calf once again; this is likely to be the result of successful control of brown rats over recent years by Manx National Heritage. The Calf of Man is an important breeding colony for grey seals. Wart Bank, to the south east of the Calf of Man is a shallow submerged sandbank which is recognized as an important fish and bird feeding ground.
- 7 The southern coasts of the Isle of Man are important summer feeding grounds for basking sharks.
- 8 Port Erin Bay is an important plaice nursery ground.

### 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	
Geomorphology and landscape	
Nutrient status	
pH	
Salinity	
Soil	
Water permanence	
Summary of main climatic features	No information available.

**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).

No information available

**16. Hydrological values:**

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

**17. Wetland types**

Code	Name	% Area
A	Permanent shallow marine waters	40
B	Marine subtidal aquatic beds	10
D	Rocky marine shores	40
E	Sand, shingle or pebble shores	3
H	Intertidal marshes	1
M	Permanent rivers/streams/creeks	1
4	Seasonally flooded agricultural land	5

**18. General ecological features:**

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

Important complexes of coastal and marine habitats, including: marine, subtidal beds of priority ecosystem seagrass as well as kelp and knotted wrack, rocky shores, cliffs, sea caves and coastal heath. The Calf has a good diversity of fauna and flora underwater and is important regionally. Good examples of rocky marine shores, with good examples at the Calf, Spanish Head, and Niarbyl, and small wooded river ravines entering the sea at several places. The cliffs and coastal waters support important breeding populations of seabirds. The heath on Langness is the only site in the British Isles for the grasshopper *Stenobothrus stigmaticus*. Langness is the main site in the Isle of Man for waterbirds. [something on importance of Scarlett?]

**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.*

Beds of eelgrass *Zostera marina* off Langness (*Z. marina* is a protected plant under the Wildlife Act). Maerl beds are found in the area, including off Niarbyl.

## 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.*

Puffins, kittiwakes and guillemots breed only on the Southern Coasts & Calf and at Maughold with the former site judged to have held 107 birds in 1985, 57 in 1986 and 48 adults in 1999. The Isle of Man is considered to be the main breeding area for black guillemots within Britain & Ireland, outside of Scotland. The Southern Coasts & Calf held 211 birds in 1986 and 343 adults in 1999. The 1986 guillemot count was 1879 birds, with a total of colony means of 3656 adults on potential breeding ledges in 1999 (total of peak counts in 1999, 4157). 1193 adult razorbills were counted on potential breeding ledges in 1999 compared with an equivalent estimate of 664-682 for 1986. Kittiwakes occupied 765 nest sites in 1986 and 840 in 1999. There were 245-256 nest sites of great black-backed gulls at this site in 1985/6 and 258 sites (plus a further 8 pairs in suitable habitat) in 1999, indicating a level of British importance if this is considered a single site. Between 3672 and 4568 herring gull nests were counted in 1985/6 and 2778 in 1999, giving the site British importance for this species. 35-45 lesser black-backed gull nests were found in 1986, and 31 in 1999. 386-466 shag nests were counted in 1985/6 and 492 in 1999, giving the site British importance. Fulmars have increased from 1151 apparently occupied sites in 1985/6 to 1634 in 1991. Manx shearwaters have been confirmed as nesting on the Calf once again. 4 nests were found in 2000, 17 in 2001, and 17 (tape response) in 2002 plus 10 more burrows with droppings. This is likely to reflect an increase in success of nest finding rather than an increase in the number of nests and is likely the result of successful control of brown rats over recent years by Manx National Heritage.

The Calf of Man is an important breeding colony for grey seals. Other sites which have been reported as important for pup production are at Langness and Contrary Head.

Subtidally the Calf of Man has exceptionally high faunal diversity, much higher than areas surveyed to a similar level other areas of the British Isles. For some species the Calf of Man is their only British Isles record.

There are extensive kelp forests in Bay ny Carrickey and Castletown Bay.

The area is important for basking sharks which have been seen in large schools around the Calf of Man, in Port Erin Bay and up the west coast to Peel. Niarbyl Bay is reported to be the only place in the British Isles where a basking shark has been seen to give birth.

The area has diverse intertidal habitats, including many of the most species rich rocky intertidal areas on the island. The limestone ledges at Kallow Point, Bay ny Carrickey and north of Derby Haven are of interest. Cray fish (*Palinurus elephas*) has been reported from Kallow Point ledges – this is a species with restricted distribution in the British Isles.

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## 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.

The Calf of Man has great historical and ecological significance to the Isle of Man. The whole land area is owned by Manx National Heritage. The only inhabitants are bird wardens and visiting scientists. Other historically important coastal sites in this area include St Michael's Isle...

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## 22. Land tenure/ownership:

Ownership category	On-site	Off-site

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

Activity	On-site	Off-site	Scale

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

Activity	On-site	Off-site	Scale
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**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
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**26. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:**

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

The waters around the Calf of Man were suggested as a marine nature reserve in 1992 but the protected area was never designated because of difficulties encountered in the consultation process.

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

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

The area has been extensively studied over the past 100 years because of the nearby location of the Port Erin Marine Laboratory. Extensive subtidal and intertidal surveys have been completed around the coast and particularly around the Calf of Man.

The limestone ledges at Kallow Point are particularly well studied intertidal areas.

**28. Current conservation education:**

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

Marine and coastal information is provided at the Sound Café – part of Manx National Heritage.

**29. Current recreation and tourism:**

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

Boat trips to visit the Calf and for seal and seabird watching are a regular occurrence in the Summer months. The SCUBA diving around the Calf is said to be the best around the Isle of Man.

**30. Jurisdiction:**

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

No information available

**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.

No information available

**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**

- Bagworth, T (2000, 2001, 2002). The Calf of Man Bird Observatory, Annual Reports. Manx National Heritage.
- Morrow, C.C., B.E. Picton and J.D.D. Bishop. 1993. A sublittoral survey of the Calf of Man. Calf Marine Trust, Isle of Man.
- Pritchard, DE, Housden, SD, Mudge, GP, Galbraith, CA & Pienkowski, MW (eds.) (1992) *Important Bird Areas in the United Kingdom including the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man*. Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Sandy
- UK Dependent Territories Ramsar Study: Stage 1* (1992)
- Sharpe, CM & Sapsford, AM (1999). Report on a survey of breeding seabirds of the Isle of Man 1999. Manx Bird Atlas, Laxey. [incorporating a review of previous records, including comparable data from Moore, AS (1987) The numbers and distribution of seabirds breeding on the IoM during 1985-86. *Peregrine* 6(2): 64-80.

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# 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:

**UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum**  
102 Broadway  
Peterborough PE1 1JY  
UK  
Email: [pienkowski@cix.co.uk](mailto:pienkowski@cix.co.uk)

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DD MM YY		

Designation date

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Site Reference Number

## 2. Date this sheet was completed/updated:

11 November 2004

## 3. Country:

**UK (Isle of Man)**

## 4. Name of the Ramsar site:

**Central Valley Curragh**

## 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):

d m s N d m s 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.

Central valley from near Peel to near Douglas

**Administrative region:** Isle of Man

## 8. Elevation (average and/or max. & min.) (metres): 9. Area (hectares): 164 approx

Min. 20  
Max. 40  
Mean No information available

## 10. Overview:

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

Lowland flat river-valley curraghs (carrs), somewhat broken up by intensification or building, but retaining characteristic nature as one of the best remaining examples of a river-valley curragh. Most of the site is along the eastward flowing Greeba River/ River Dhoo but the site continues, with no highland intervening into the westward flowing River Neb valley.

## 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).

- 1 Particularly good surviving example of shrub-dominated riverside curraghs (carrs), characteristic of the island and formerly much more widespread in Atlantic Europe but now rather restricted

Others?

**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	
Geomorphology and landscape	
Nutrient status	
pH	
Salinity	
Soil	
Water permanence	
Summary of main climatic features	No information available.

**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).

No information available

**16. Hydrological values:**

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

**17. Wetland types**

Code	Name	% Area
M	Permanent rivers/streams/creeks	5
Ts	Seasonal/intermittent freshwater marshes/pools on inorganic soils	30
W	Shrub-dominated wetlands	25
4	Seasonally flooded agricultural land	30

**18. General ecological features:**

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

Lowland flat river-valley curraghs (carrs), somewhat broken up by intensification or building, but retaining characteristic nature as one of the best remaining examples of a river-valley curragh. Most of the site is along the eastward flowing Greeba River/ River Dhoo but the site continues, with no highland intervening into the westward flowing River Neb valley.

**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.*

No information available

**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.*

No information available

**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.

[suggest add something about Tynwald Hill site and any other soio-cultural value.]

**22. Land tenure/ownership:**

Ownership category	On-site	Off-site

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

Activity	On-site	Off-site	Scale

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

Activity	On-site	Off-site	Scale
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**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
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**26. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:**

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



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

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

No information available

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**28. Current conservation education:**

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

No information available

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**29. Current recreation and tourism:**

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

No information available

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**30. Jurisdiction:**

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

No information available

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**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.

No information available

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**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**

Pritchard, DE, Housden, SD, Mudge, GP, Galbraith, CA & Pienkowski, MW (eds.) (1992) *Important Bird Areas in the United Kingdom including the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man*. Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Sandy  
*UK Dependent Territories Ramsar Study: Stage 1* (1992)

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# 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:

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UK

Email: [pienkowski@cix.co.uk](mailto:pienkowski@cix.co.uk)

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DD MM YY

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Designation date

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Site Reference Number

## 2. Date this sheet was completed/updated:

11 November 2004

## 3. Country:

**UK (Isle of Man)**

## 4. Name of the Ramsar site:

**Gob ny rona, Maughold Head & Port Cornaa**

## 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):

d m s N

d m s 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.

Coast southward from Ramsey

**Administrative region:** Isle of Man

## 8. Elevation (average and/or max. & min.) (metres): 9. Area (hectares): 209 (approx)

Min. No information available

Max. No information available

Mean No information available

## 10. Overview:

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

Rocky marine shore, cliffs and coastal waters. A good diversity of fauna and flora on the coast and underwater. Permanent, shallow marine waters with good beds of kelp, knotted wrack and in places, including at Gob ny Rona, Ramsey Bay. There are also rocky marine shores. The cliffs and coastal waters support important breeding populations of seabirds and the coast is important for seals.

## 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, 4, 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 Rocky marine shore ecosystem including cliffs, maerl, kelp and knotted wrack beds and priority seagrass beds. Important for grey seals too.
- 2 Supports vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered species or threatened ecological communities, in the form of: the Poylldooey Saltmarsh area; and, in subtidal areas between Ramsey Bay and the Point of Ayre, extensive areas of living maerl, a very important habitat with highly diverse associated flora and fauna, and further offshore a large horse mussel beds that is one of only a few such beds around the British Isles. The Poylldooey saltmarsh area has been identified as important for conservation because of the presence of rare and notable plant species. From a larger ecosystem perspective there is likely to be important interactions between the Sulby estuary area and the wide intertidal and marine habitats of Ramsey Bay.
- 4 The cliffs and coastal waters support important breeding populations of seabirds and Grey Seals. Choughs breed around the cliffs. Puffins, kittiwakes and guillemots breed only on the Southern Coasts & Calf and at Maughold. The Isle of Man is considered to be the main breeding area for black guillemots within Britain & Ireland, outside of Scotland. Several other seabird species breed.
- 8 The Sulby River is considered important as a salmon and sea trout river.

**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	
Geomorphology and landscape	
Nutrient status	
pH	
Salinity	
Soil	
Water permanence	
Summary of main climatic features	No information available.

**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).

No information available

## 16. Hydrological values:

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

## 17. Wetland types

Code	Name	% Area
A	Permanent shallow marine waters	50
B	Marine subtidal aquatic beds	20
E	Rocky marine shores	29
G	Intertidal mud, sand or salt flats	1

## 18. General ecological features:

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

Rocky marine shore, cliffs and coastal waters. A good diversity of fauna and flora underwater and is important regionally. Permanent, shallow marine waters, with good beds of kelp, knotted wrack and in places, including at Gob ny Rona, Ramsey Bay. There are also rocky marine shores. The cliffs and coastal waters support important breeding populations of seabirds, the main areas being at Maughold Head, with further nesting stretching down the east coast, and fulmars on the sand cliffs to the north. Seagrass beds off Gob ny Rona – exact extent and location unknown.

## 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.*

No information available

## 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.*

Grey seals and breeding seabirds at Maughold Head. Choughs around the cliffs. Puffins, kittiwakes and guillemots only breed on the Southern Coasts & Calf and at Maughold with the latter site judged to have held 9 birds in 1985, 6 in 1986 and 37 adults in 1999. The Isle of Man is considered to be the main breeding area for black guillemots within Britain & Ireland, outside of Scotland. Maughold Head held 27 birds in 1986 and 96 adults in 1999. The 1986 guillemot count was 213 birds, with a mean count of 358 adults on potential breeding ledges in 1999 (peak count 409). 206 adult razorbills were counted at potential breeding ledges in 1999, compared with an equivalent estimate of 87 adults for 1986. Kittiwakes occupied 492 nest sites in 1986 and 205 in 1999. There were an estimated 55 nest sites of great black-backed gull in this site in 1985/6 and an estimated 44 in 1999. 840-970 herring gull nests were recorded for 1985/6 and 978 in 1999. 4 lesser black-backed gull nests were found in 1986, but 20 recorded in 1999. 93 shag nests were counted in 1985/6 and an equal number in 1999. Three recent cormorant counts in 1994, 1998 and 1999 gave totals of 42, 71 and 84 nests respectively (mean 66 nests). Fulmars have risen from 177 apparently occupied sites at Maughold in 1985/6 to 231 in 1999.

There is a haul-out site for grey seals between Maughold Head and Port Mooar which may be also be important for breeding.

Recent subtidal surveys between Ramsey Bay and the Point of Ayre have identified extensive areas of living maerl, a very important habitat with highly diverse associated flora and fauna, and further offshore a large horse mussel beds that is one of only a few such beds around the British Isles. The extent of the seagrass beds identified in the Gob ny Rona area is not currently known and it is highly

possible that they extend further north into Ramsey Bay. The Poylldooey saltmarsh area has been identified as important for conservation because of the presence of rare and notable plant species. From a larger ecosystem perspective there is likely to be important interactions between the Sulby estuary area and the wide intertidal and marine habitats of Ramsey Bay.

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### 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.

A wealth of archaeological evidence has come from this area of the Island, mostly from early settlements and fishing activities. Gob ny Rona has long been associated with seals (*Gob ny Rona* = Seal Point)

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### 22. Land tenure/ownership:

Ownership category	On-site	Off-site

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### 23. Current land (including water) use:

Activity	On-site	Off-site	Scale
Farmland – mostly extensive pasture			

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

Activity	On-site	Off-site	Scale
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### 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
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### 26. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:

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

Parts of the site are under consideration as Areas of Special Scientific Interest.

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### 27. Current scientific research and facilities:

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

No information available

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### 28. Current conservation education:

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

No information available

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### 29. Current recreation and tourism:

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

A popular area for walking.

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### 30. Jurisdiction:

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

No information available

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**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.

No information available

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**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**

Pritchard, DE, Housden, SD, Mudge, GP, Galbraith, CA & Pienkowski, MW (eds.) (1992) *Important Bird Areas in the United Kingdom including the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man*. Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Sandy Sharpe, CM & Sapsford, AM (1999). Report on a survey of breeding seabirds of the Isle of Man 1999. Manx Bird Atlas, Laxey. [incorporating a review of previous records, including comparable data from Moore, AS (1987) The numbers and distribution of seabirds breeding on the IoM during 1985-86. Peregrine 6(2): 64-80. and also Craine, GD and Moore, AS (1997). The Manx Bird Report for 1994. Peregrine 7(4): 296-356.

*UK Dependent Territories Ramsar Study: Stage 1* (1992)

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# 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:

**UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum**

102 Broadway

Peterborough PE1 1JY

UK

Email: [pienkowski@cix.co.uk](mailto:pienkowski@cix.co.uk)

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY.

DD	MM	YY

Designation date

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Site Reference Number

## 2. Date this sheet was completed/updated:

11 November 2004

## 3. Country:

**UK (Isle of Man)**

## 4. Name of the Ramsar site:

**Dalby Peatlands**

## 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):

54d 9m N 4 d 43 m 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.

7 km S of Peel

**Administrative region:** Isle of Man

## 8. Elevation (average and/or max. & min.) (metres): 9. Area (hectares): 58 (approx)

Min. No information available

Max. 225m

Mean No information available

## 10. Overview:

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

An area of wet heath and bog adjacent to the West coast of the Isle of Man and situated at the base of the hill Cronk ny Eary Laa (437m) and the coastal slope known as Eary Cushlin. The area contains a very good representative of this typical Manx habitat, with conspicuous shows of cotton grass, bog asphodel and heath-spotted orchids. Much of the bog area is a nature reserve managed by the Manx Wildlife Trust. The whole site is a popular area for coastal walks. The site provides a habitat for birds such as linnet, stonechat, meadow pipit and hen harrier.



**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

**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 Dalby Peatland is a representative of a wet heath and bog habitat in a near-natural condition, with a good range of associated plant species typical of Manx heathlands.
- 2 Both heathland and bog are limited in their European distribution and known to be subject to a range of threats, particularly in the case of bog habitats, which are recognised in both the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and the EC Habitats Directive as important habitats to conserve.

**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	Peat soils
Geomorphology and landscape	
Nutrient status	Nutrient poor
pH	Low
Salinity	Adjacent to coast but not affected by spray except in severe storm events
Soil	
Water permanence	Some areas may dry out in summer; otherwise generally very wet but with no actual standing water
Summary of main climatic features	cool oceanic lowland; mild winters and cool summer, high rainfall.

**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).

(including climate type).

Coastal slope rising to the base of the hill Cronk ny Eary Laa (437m). Several small streams run off the hill, one of which disperses onto a slight basin at the base of the hill, in which a peat bog has formed. The climate is cool oceanic lowland (relatively high rainfall, rare frost and even rarer snows). The whole area has a complex hydrology with much surface movement of water and generally very slow drainage. Drier parts of the site have heather heath and/or acid grassland.

**16. Hydrological values:**

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

**17. Wetland types**

Code	Name	% Area
U	Non-forested peatlands	100

**18. General ecological features:**

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

An area of wet heath and bog adjacent to the West coast of the Isle of Man and situated at the base of the hill Cronk ny Eary Laa (437m) and the coastal slope known as Eary Cushlin. The area contains a very good representative of this typical Manx habitat, with conspicuous shows of cotton grass, bog asphodel and heath-spotted orchids. Much of the bog area is a nature reserve managed by the Manx Wildlife Trust. The whole site is a popular area for coastal walks. The site provides a habitat for birds such as linnet, stonechat, meadow pipit and hen harrier.

**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.*

Good populations of cotton grass *Eriophorum* spp. And bog asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum*, along with other bog species including round-leaved sundew *Drosera rotundifolia* and orchids *Dactylorhiza* spp (the latter are protected by law on the Isle of Man).

**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.*

Limited information currently available; however, hen harriers are known to use the area and are thought likely to nest here.

**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.

**22. Land tenure/ownership:**

Ownership category	On-site	Off-site
Manx Wildlife Trust	+	
Private farmland	+	+
DAFF – own plantation		+

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

Activity	On-site	Off-site	Scale
Sheep grazing	+		Most of the site
Public footpaths	+		Two popular routes through the coastal side of the site

Small residential field centre in old farmhouse	+		
Wildlife Trust nature reserve	+		The majority of the bog area – 26ha
Forestry		+	Small plantation adjacent to the peatland

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

Activity	On-site	Off-site	Scale
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**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
Manx Wildlife Trust have management plans for their nature reserves	+	

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

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

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

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

Manx Wildlife Trust monitor species on the nature reserve area; limited facilities are available for groups using the farmhouse (see below).

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**28. Current conservation education:**

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

There is a small residential field centre in a converted farmhouse (Eary Cushlin) which is occasionally used for educational purposes. The Manx Wildlife Trust provide interpretive material such as nature reserve leaflets and an interpretation board in the car park.

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**29. Current recreation and tourism:**

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

A popular area for walking; the farmhouse is used for recreational outdoor activities as well as educational stays.

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**30. Jurisdiction:**

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

No information available

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**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.

Part private ownership; part managed by Manx Wildlife Trust as a nature reserve.

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**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**

Manx Wildlife Trust: Nature in Mann (nature reserves handbook)

Pritchard, DE, Housden, SD, Mudge, GP, Galbraith, CA & Pienkowski, MW (eds.) (1992) *Important Bird Areas in the United Kingdom including the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man*. Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Sandy  
*UK Dependent Territories Ramsar Study: Stage 1* (1992)

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