

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

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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 (Jersey)

4. Name of the Ramsar site:

St Ouen's Bay and Les Mielles

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):

6. Geographical coordinates (latitude/longitude):

49 13 N

2 13 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.

St Ouen's Bay comprises much of the west coast of Jersey, with Les Mielles being the land part of the same coastal system.

Administrative region: Bailiwick of Jersey

8. Elevation (average and/or max. & min.) (metres): 9. Area (hectares): 1280

Min. 0 m

Max. 10m

Mean No information available

10. Overview:

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

St Ouen's Bay comprises much of the west coast of Jersey. The mainly sandy 6-km beach is exposed to the open Atlantic. Rock ledges to the north and south of the bay provide potentially diverse habitat in a generally high energy environment. The sea wall, part dating from the 19th Century and part from the Second World War has had the effect of stopping accretion on the sand dunes which lie inland. The dune complex of Les Blanchés Banques is internationally recognised as of great ecological importance, with rare plants and insects. The area has some similarities with the rare machair systems of the Western Isles of Scotland. La Mare au Seigneur or St Ouen's Pond and its surrounding reedbed

attract a wide variety of resident and migratory birds. The nearby wet meadows are home to wild orchids, including the Jersey Orchid *Orchis laxiflora* and many other wild flowers.

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, 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 The site has the one of the largest tidal ranges in the world which can exceed 12 metres, and a wide range of substrata and wave exposure. Its waters are relatively warm due to the influence of the Gulf Stream and surrounding oceanographic conditions. Habitat-based evaluations using comparisons with the nearby SE coast of Jersey Ramsar site (designated 2000) indicate that due to the diverse range of habitats, communities and species the site has great ecological value which play a substantial ecological role in the natural functioning of the system.
The mainly sandy 6-km beach is exposed to the open Atlantic. Rock ledges to the north and south of the bay provide potentially diverse habitat in a generally high energy environment. The dune and marsh area has some similarities with the rare machair systems of the Western Isles of Scotland.
- 2 The extensive rocky intertidal areas in this site are of international importance because of the rarity and possible threats to this type of habitat and its associated communities.
- 3 Jersey is situated in Le Golfe Normano-Breton between England and France on the boundary between the cold and warm temperate marine biogeographical regions. Overlap between these regions promotes increased species richness and provides assemblages which include species at the limits of their respective distributions. Species associated with warmer southern European waters such as the Ormer *Haliotis tubercula* which are rare or absent from British coasts thus coexist with those normally associated with colder northern waters such as the Beadlet Anenome *Actinia equina*. It has been hypothesised that such limit-of-range populations may eventually, through adaptation to local, more extreme environmental conditions than core populations undergo allopatric speciation which arises through reproductive isolation. Monitoring of these habitats for environmental change is therefore crucial. (Taylor and Cook 1981).
The dune complex of Les Blanchés Banques is internationally recognised as of great ecological importance, with rare plants and insects. La Mare au Seigneur or St Ouen's Pond and its surrounding reedbed attract a wide variety of resident and migratory birds. The nearby wet meadows are home to wild orchids, including the Jersey Orchid *Orchis laxiflora* and many other wild flowers.
- 4 The Baie de St Malo experiences huge diurnal movements of relatively warm, closed waters moved by a residual inshore anti-clockwise current around Jersey. This enhances local recruitment of many species of planktonic larvae, especially Crustacea. The large rocky platforms are important to many invertebrate and vertebrate organisms, providing shelter, protection and food for both larval and adult stages. These areas are important nursery zones for shore and shallow sublittoral fish communities. The wide shallow gullies dividing the rocky platforms also provide critical habitat for many other forms and stages of life as do the extensive and diverse algal assemblages.
- 7 The areas of shallow water and the large number of intertidal pools within the site provide habitat for many species of fish. The enormous water exchanges, strong tidal streams, a wide variety of wave energy conditions and substrate variation provide ideal conditions for the support of a wide diversity of organisms. The combination of biogeographic location, oceanographic

circulation and physical features enhances biodiversity. The site contributes to the biodiversity of the Golfe Normano-Breton and thence to the English Channel.

- 8 The topographical diversity of the site creates a range of sheltered areas which provide conditions favouring recruitment of planktonic larvae. Many species of fish feed and grow in the warm fertile shallows before commencing their autumn migration to spawn elsewhere. Conversely, other species winter in the area and leave during the summer. The site also provides habitat for the entire life cycle of many smaller marine organisms. This wide diversity provides feeding for dolphins and seabirds.

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, alluvium, basic, boulder, clay, cobble, granite, gravel, igneous, maerl, metamorphic, mud, nutrient-rich, peat, pebble, sand, sandstone/mudstone, sedimentary, shingle, slate/shale
Geomorphology and landscape	Coastal, crags/ledges, enclosed coast (including embayment), geos (rocky inlets), intertidal rock, intertidal sediments (including sandflat/mudflat), islands, lowland, open coast (including bay), pools, shingle bar, subtidal rock (including rocky reefs), subtidal sediments (including sandbank/mudbank), surge gullies, tidal rapids, dune and marsh system
Nutrient status	mesotrophic
pH	circumneutral
Salinity	saline / euhaline; freshwater marrshes
Soil	
Water permanence	12m tidal range in marine area; permanent in ponds; seasonal in meadows
Summary of main climatic features	temperate oceanic

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.

Shoreline stabilisation and dissipation of erosive forces, Sediment trapping

17. Wetland types

Code	Name	% Area
A	Shallow marine waters	
B	Marine beds (e.g. sea grass beds)	
D	Rocky shores	
E	Sand / shingle shores (including dune systems)	
Tp	Permanent freshwater marshes/pools	

18. General ecological features:

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

St Ouens Bay comprises much of the west coast of Jersey. The mainly sandy 6-km beach is exposed to the open Atlantic. Rock ledges to the north and south of the bay provide potentially diverse habitat in a generally high energy environment. The sea wall, part dating from the 19th Century and part from the Second World War has had the effect of stopping accretion on the sand dunes which lie inland. The dune complex of Les Blanchés Banques is internationally recognised as of great ecological importance, with rare plants and insects. The area has some similarities with the rare machair systems of the Western Isles of Scotland. La Mare au Seigneur or St Ouen's Pond and its surrounding reedbed attract a wide variety of resident and migratory birds. The nearby wet meadows are home to wild orchids, including the Jersey Orchid *Orchis laxiflora* and many other wild flowers.

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.*

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.*

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 area has historic features ranging from Norse to 20th Century periods. The whole area has been subject to local-community-led conservation initiatives and appeals for over 50 years, involving the National Trust for Jersey and others.

22. Land tenure/ownership:

Ownership category	On-site	Off-site
Non-governmental organisation		
Local authority, municipality etc.		
National/Crown estate		
Private		
Public/communal		

23. Current land (including water) use:

Activity	On-site	Off-site	Scale
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Nature conservation			
Tourism			
Recreation			
Research			
Collection of non-timber natural products: (unspecified)			
Fishing: (unspecified)			
Fishing: commercial			
Fishing: recreational/sport			
Fishing: subsistence			
Marine/saltwater aquaculture			
Gathering of shellfish			
Shell collection			
Bait collection			
Permanent arable agriculture			
Grazing (unspecified)			
Rough or shifting grazing			
Industrial water supply			
Industry			
Sewage treatment/disposal			
Harbour/port			
Mineral exploration			
Transport route			
Urban development			
Military activities			
Other			

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
No factors reported			

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
Other		

The St Ouen's Bay planning Framework (Planning and Environment Committee 1999) states: "The marine environment is of high value, possibly SSI status, for its large tidal range and its marine fauna and rock habitats, although there is no detailed information to confirm this." This was also referred to in the Jersey Island Plan 2002 which confirms the potential value of the area.

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.

28. Current conservation education:

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

29. Current recreation and tourism:

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

30. Jurisdiction:

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

States of Jersey,

Policy and Resources Department, South Hill, St Helier, Jersey, JE2 4US

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.

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

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- States of Jersey, Planning and Environment Committee (1995) *Project 12: Marine Protection Zone*. States Greffe
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