

**Designation date: 31/05/12**

**Ramsar Site no. 2052**

## **Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS) – 2009-2012 version**

Available for download from [http://www.ramsar.org/ris/key\\_ris\\_index.htm](http://www.ramsar.org/ris/key_ris_index.htm).

*Categories approved by Recommendation 4.7 (1990), as amended by Resolution VIII.13 of the 8<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Contracting Parties (2002) and Resolutions IX.1 Annex B, IX.6, IX.21 and IX. 22 of the 9<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Contracting Parties (2005).*

### **Notes 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. Further information and guidance in support of Ramsar site designations are provided in the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance* (Ramsar Wise Use Handbook 14, 3rd edition). A 4th edition of the Handbook is in preparation and will be available in 2009.
3. Once completed, the RIS (and accompanying map(s)) should be submitted to the Ramsar Secretariat. Compilers should provide an electronic (MS Word) copy of the RIS and, where possible, digital copies of all maps.

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

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Designation date

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Site Reference Number

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

May 30 2012

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### **3. Country:**

Faroe Islands, Denmark

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### **4. Name of the Ramsar site:**

The precise name of the designated site in one of the three official languages (English, French or Spanish) of the Convention. Alternative names, including in local language(s), should be given in parentheses after the precise name.

Nolsoy (Nólsoy)

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### **5. Designation of new Ramsar site or update of existing site:**

This RIS is for (tick one box only):

- a) Designation of a new Ramsar site;  or  
b) Updated information on an existing Ramsar site

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6. For RIS updates only, changes to the site since its designation or earlier update:

a) Site boundary and area

The Ramsar site boundary and site area are unchanged:

or

If the site boundary has changed:

- i) the boundary has been delineated more accurately ; or  
ii) the boundary has been extended ; or  
iii) the boundary has been restricted\*\*

and/or

If the site area has changed:

- i) the area has been measured more accurately ; or  
ii) the area has been extended ; or  
iii) the area has been reduced\*\*

\*\* **Important note:** If the boundary and/or area of the designated site is being restricted/reduced, the Contracting Party should have followed the procedures established by the Conference of the Parties in the Annex to COP9 Resolution IX.6 and provided a report in line with paragraph 28 of that Annex, prior to the submission of an updated RIS.

b) Describe briefly any major changes to the ecological character of the Ramsar site, including in the application of the Criteria, since the previous RIS for the site:

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7. Map of site:

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

a) A map of the site, with clearly delineated boundaries, is included as:

- i) a hard copy (required for inclusion of site in the Ramsar List): ;  
ii) an electronic format (e.g. a JPEG or ArcView image) ;  
iii) a GIS file providing geo-referenced site boundary vectors and attribute tables .

b) Describe briefly the type of boundary delineation applied:

e.g. the boundary is the same as an existing protected area (nature reserve, national park, etc.), or follows a catchment boundary, or follows a geopolitical boundary such as a local government jurisdiction, follows physical boundaries such as roads, follows the shoreline of a waterbody, etc.

The Ramsar Site covers the entire island of Nólsoy and it extends from the shores of the island 500 m out into the Sea.

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8. Geographical coordinates (latitude/longitude, in degrees and minutes):

Provide the coordinates of the approximate centre of the site and/or the limits of the site. If the site is composed of more than one separate area, provide coordinates for each of these areas.

62° 00' 33" N, 06° 40' 07" W

### 9. General location:

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

Nólsoy is an island with a village with the same name, which has a population of 260 situated in the northern part of the island. The island is in Tórshavn Municipality and is located 3 km east of the larger Streymoy Island with Tórshavn. Nólsoy is central in the Faroe Islands and is exposed to easterly winds and seas. Only one mountain is on the southern end of the island, Høgoyggi, with its highest peak Eggjarklettur reaching 371 m.

### 10. Elevation: (in metres: average and/or maximum & minimum)

The altitudes on the island are between 0-371 m. Further marine areas are included to 500 m from the shores, which are mostly including marine water extending 6 m depths.

### 11. Area: (in hectares)

2,197 ha (Ramsar site) 1,032 ha (Nólsoy island).

### 12. General overview of the site:

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

The Ramsar site at Nólsoy comprises grassy and stony slopes, which provides the breeding habitat for the large concentration of the European Storm-petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus* as well as extensive sea cliffs with seabird colonies usually containing important breeding populations of Atlantic Puffin *Fratercula arctica*, Black-legged Kittiwakes *Rissa tridactyla* and Northern Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis* as well as Black Guillemot *Cepphus grylle*. Nólsoy has more than 80,000 breeding pairs of seabirds and the island is regarded to contain one of the largest populations of European Storm-petrel in the world with an approximately 50,000 pairs.

### 13. Ramsar Criteria:

Tick the box under 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). All Criteria which apply should be ticked.

1	•	2	•	3	•	4	•	5	•	6	•	7	•	8	•	9
<input type="checkbox"/>		X		X		X		X		X		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

### 14. Justification for the application of each Criterion listed in 13 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).

3a iv 3a v, 5c, 5d, 6b, 6d, 6e,

**Criteria 2:** The seabird community at Nólsoy (species listed under Ann. II or III of the Berne Convention) is at risk from climate related ecological changes, which may have disrupted the food web of marine birds in North Atlantic waters. Thus comprehensive and complex changes seem to happen in the surrounding marine ecosystem (Frederiksen 2010). For bird species

information see point 12 and 22. The European Storm Petrel (*Hydrobates pelagicus*) and Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea* are also listed under Ann. I of the EU Birds Directive

**Criteria 3:** The Nólsoy population of an estimated 50,000 pairs of European Storm-petrel is one of the largest on the Faroe Islands and the population comprises a significant proportion of that species adapted to the special environment of the North Atlantic and that are particularly characteristic for the temperate North Atlantic Biogeographic Region.

**Criteria 4:** Nólsoy provides critical habitat for populations of especially European Storm-petrel as well as other seabirds during the critical breeding cycle where large concentrations are gathered in very small areas on sea cliffs and grassy or stony slopes.

**Criteria 5:** Nólsoy contains more than 80,000 pairs of seabirds comprising most notably the European Storm-petrel (50,000 pairs) and the Atlantic Puffin the latter estimated at about 30,000 pairs (Olsen in Grimmet and Jones 1989). However, recent information from local ornithologists indicates that the populations of European Storm-petrel and Atlantic Puffin may be in decline and that the breeding of Atlantic Puffin has become much more irregular.

**Criteria 6:** The breeding population of European Storm-petrel in Europe (which covers >95% of the breeding range), is estimated to be 430,000-510,000 breeding pairs, equating to 1,290,000-1,530,000 individuals (BirdLife International 2004) in another estimate Brooke (2004) estimated the total world population to number around 1,500,000. Between 30 and 80% of the known breeding population is concentrated in the Faroe Islands (150,000-400,000 pairs, Olsen in Grimmet and Jones 1989, Olsen unpublished, BirdLife International (2011). Thus the colony at Nólsoy of an estimated 50,000 pairs hosts about 11 % of the world population of European Storm-petrel.

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**15. 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:**

Western Palearctic.

Temperate, Northern Atlantic, Marine Ecoregion no. 21

**b) biogeographic regionalisation scheme** (include reference citation):

A classification of the biogeographical provinces of the world (Udvardy, 1975)  
Marine Ecoregions of the World (MEOW)

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**16. 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: thin mineral soil on basalt bedrock.

Geomorphology and landscape: lowlands and vertical bird cliffs.

pH : no information.

Salinity: Ocean, 34‰

Soil: mainly mineral.

Water permanence: Permanent, but smaller waterbodies may be intermittent.

Summary of main climatic features :

Annual average temperature: 7.1°C

Average July temperature: 11°C

Average January temperature: 3 °C

Days of air frost: 41

Rainfall: 1284 mm/year

Hrs. of sunshine: 840 hrs/year

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### 17. Physical features of the catchment area:

Describe the surface area, general geology and geomorphological features, general soil types, and climate (including climate type).

The surface area of the island comprises basalt bedrock with thin layer of soil covered with grasses and sedges. The vertical cliffs are barren, with little or no soil and sparse vegetation. The climate is mild and oceanic with high average winter temperatures and low average summer temperatures.

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### 18. Hydrological values:

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

Not applicable

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### 19. Wetland Types

#### a) presence:

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

Marine/coastal: A • B • C • D • E • F • G • H • I • J • K • Zk(a)

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

Human-made: 1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 • 7 • 8 • 9 • Zk(c)

#### b) dominance:

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

D, A, B, M, N, Tp.

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### 20. General ecological features:

Provide further description, as appropriate, of the main habitats, vegetation types, plant and animal communities present in the Ramsar site, and the ecosystem services of the site and the benefits derived from them.

European Storm-petrels breed in burrows underground and the entrance areas are usually covered by piles of stone. While feeding birds are spread at sea away from the colony and far outside the Ramsar site. The birds come to land during night time, where the change in feeding / incubation roles between the birds takes place. In contrast to the other seabirds Black Guillemot does also feed along the coast and partly within the Ramsar site. However, some seabird species

may use the sea adjacent to the sea cliffs such as e.g. Atlantic Puffin and Black-legged Kittiwake to rest, and newly fledged Northern Fulmars may rest here as well and would be temporarily vulnerable to disturbance after leaving the nest sites i.e. an extraordinary critical stage in their life cycles. During the non-breeding season most of the birds disperse from the breeding colonies to open sea. The breeding success of several seabird species is highly variable from year to year (Bergur Olsen pers. comm. and [http://www.jenskjeld.info/DK\\_side/indexdk.htm](http://www.jenskjeld.info/DK_side/indexdk.htm) .)

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### 21. Noteworthy flora:

Provide additional information on particular species and why they are noteworthy (expanding as necessary on information provided in 14. 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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### 22. Noteworthy fauna:

Provide additional information on particular species and why they are noteworthy (expanding as necessary on information provided in 14. 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.*

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea* breeds in a few colonies on Nólsoy and in 2009 about 2,000 pairs were breeding (Bergur Olsen unpublished). Moreover, an estimated 100 pairs of Black Guillemots are present as well as 660 pairs of Black-legged Kittiwake ( Bergur Olsen unpublished).

The non-native European frog *Rana temporaria* has recently been introduced to the island.

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### 23. Social and cultural values:

**a)** Describe if the site has any general social and/or 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:

Traditional hunting of Northern Fulmar and Atlantic Puffin is practised.

**b)** Is the site considered of international importance for holding, in addition to relevant ecological values, examples of significant cultural values, whether material or non-material, linked to its origin, conservation and/or ecological functioning?

If Yes, tick the box **X** and describe this importance under one or more of the following categories:

- i) sites which provide a model of wetland wise use, demonstrating the application of traditional knowledge and methods of management and use that maintain the ecological character of the wetland:
- ii) sites which have exceptional cultural traditions or records of former civilizations that have influenced the ecological character of the wetland: **X**

Historically large numbers of seabirds were caught and eggs collected on the Faroe Islands, however, in most cases quantitative data is lacking. On Nólsoy Puffins have been protected from hunting between 2007 and 2010 due to a decline in their numbers. Landowners decided in 2011

to lift the hunting ban, however, only a few birds were caught because the birds did not attend the colony this year.

- iii) sites where the ecological character of the wetland depends on the interaction with local communities or indigenous peoples:
- iv) sites where relevant non-material values such as sacred sites are present and their existence is strongly linked with the maintenance of the ecological character of the wetland:

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**24. Land tenure/ownership:**

- a) within the Ramsar site: Private and public. (no real difference is in land use of private and public owned land)
- b) in the surrounding area: The sea around the site is public.

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

- a) within the Ramsar site: Agriculture, sheep pastures, bird hunting, tourism and fishing.
- b) in the surroundings/catchment: Fishing and tourism near to the sea cliffs.

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

- a) within the Ramsar site:

A potential risk to the colony of European Storm-petrels would come from the predation by rats and should be highlighted. At present Nólsoy is probably free of rats, however, there are rats on many of the mainly larger islands in the Faroese Archipelago including nearby Streymoy and the possibly invasion of rats to Nólsoy would have a devastating affect on the breeding colony of European Storm-petrel. The effect from the presence of cats on the island is not known.

Hunting of birds and especially Atlantic Puffins may have had a negative effect on the numbers of breeding pairs. Disturbance from small scale tourist sailing tours going close to the island by motorboats may also have a negative effect locally. However, quantitative data is lacking.

- b) in the surrounding area:

The seabird community at Nólsoy is at risk from climate related ecological changes, which may have disrupted the food web of marine birds in Nordic waters. A decreasing number of seabirds such as Atlantic Puffin have shown up in the colonies, and local populations are in trouble with few chicks being raised. The population of Black-legged Kittiwake was counted to 852 active nests in 1987 and 660 in 1998 (Olsen unpublished). Thus comprehensive and complex changes seem to happen in the marine ecosystem underlining the need to manage other factors, which may affect the populations such as commercial fisheries, oil spill, seabird harvest and pollutants (Frederiksen 2010).

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**27. Conservation measures taken:**

a) List national and/or international category and legal status of protected areas, including boundary relationships with the Ramsar site:

In particular, if the site is partly or wholly a World Heritage Site and/or a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, please give the names of the site under these designations.

The Ramsar Site includes the Important Bird Area IBA Nólsoy

b) If appropriate, list the IUCN (1994) protected areas category/ies which apply to the site (tick the box or boxes as appropriate):

Ia ; Ib ; II ; III ; IV ; V ; VI

c) Does an officially approved management plan exist; and is it being implemented?: No.

d) Describe any other current management practices:

Hunting is regulated according to the Hunting Act from 1954 (Dam 1974) and later revisions.

Hunting overall has been regulated and collection of Atlantic Puffin on nest or the eggs has been banned since 1954.

From 2007-2010 a local hunting ban for Atlantic Puffins was implemented on Nólsoy, but was lifted in 2011, however, only a few puffins were hunted because when breeding fails, the number of adult birds attending the colony is very low.

A dog to control invasive rats is hosted in the Nólsoy village from autumn 2011.

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

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

Monitoring for the presence of rats.

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

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

Ornithological research from the Marine Research Institute and Faroese Museum of Natural History includes a planned census of the population of European Storm-petrel on Nólsoy.

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**30. Current communications, education and public awareness (CEPA) activities related to or benefiting the site:**

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

A local bird specialist, Jens-Kjeld Jensen, at Nólsoy arranges guided tours to the European Storm-petrel colonies: <http://www.jenskjeld.info>. He has also published two books on Puffins and Fulmars. A leaflet has also been produced and an information board on the European Storm-petrel is placed at the ferry point.

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**31. Current recreation and tourism:**

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



Guided tourist tours visit Nólsoy both on land and sea as well as tourists visiting the island and undertaking shorter trekking tours. The island is fairly easy to visit because it is easy accessible from Torshavn where from the ferry takes about 20 min.

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### 32. Jurisdiction:

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

Includes land owners, municipality (Tórshavnar Kommuna). Also legislation on bird hunting and legislation on nature protection, which are the jurisdiction of various state agencies.

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### 33. 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.

Tórshavn Municipality (Tórshavnar Kommuna)  
Postbox 32  
FO-110 Tórshavn  
Tel:+298 302010  
Email: Torshavn@torshavn.fo

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### 34. Bibliographical references:

Scientific/technical references only. If biogeographic regionalisation scheme applied (see 15 above), list full reference citation for the scheme.

BirdLife 2004. Detailed species account from Birds in Europe: population estimates, trends and conservation status.

BirdLife International 2010. BirdLife IBA Factsheet FO0011 Nólsoy  
<http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/sitefactsheet.php?id=93>  
Downloaded from the Data Zone at <http://www.birdlife.org>. on 22/06/2012.

Cappelen, J. 2010. Danmarks klima 2006 med Tórshavn, Færøerne og Nuuk, Grønland. Teknisk rapport 07-01. DMI, Copenhagen 66 pp.

Dam, Ove Nolsøe. 1974. *Veidilógin*. Tórshavn.

Frederiksen, M. 2010. A review of status, trends and anthropogenic impact. Appendix 1 in Action plan for seabirds in Western Nordic areas. TemaNord 587, 47-122

Gaard, E., Hansen, B., Jacobsen, J.A., Magnussen, E., Mikkelsen, B., Olsen, B., Steingrund, P. and Sørensen, J. 2006. Havid kring Føroyar. Pp 38-69 in Føroya Náttúra. Lívfrøðiligt margfeldi. Føroya Skúlabókagrunnur, Tórshavn.

Grimmett, R. F. A. and T. A. Jones. 1989. Important bird areas in Europe. Technical Publication No. 9. International Council for Bird Preservation. Cambridge, U.K

Mitchell P.I., S.E. Newton, N. Ratcliffe & T.E. Dunn (ritstj.)2004.Seabird populations of Britain and Ireland. T & AD Poyser, London.

Udvardy, M.D.F. 1975. A classification of biographical provinces of the World. IUCN Occasional paper no. 18, Morges, 50 pp

Wetlands International 2004. Waterbird Population Estimates. 4th Edition.

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