

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:**Joint Nature Conservation Committee**

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Designation date

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Site Reference Number

2. Date this sheet was completed/updated:

Designated: 31 December 1998 / 12 May 2005

3. Country:

UK (Northern Ireland)

4. Name of the Ramsar site:

Cuilcagh Mountain

5. Map of site included:Refer to Annex III of the *Explanatory Notes and Guidelines*, for detailed guidance on provision of suitable maps.**a) hard copy** (required for inclusion of site in the Ramsar List): yes -or- no **b) digital (electronic) format** (optional): Yes

6. Geographical coordinates (latitude/longitude):

54 13 26 N

07 48 17 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.

Nearest town/city: Enniskillen.

Cuilcagh Mountain is situated in Fermanagh in the west of Northern Ireland along the international border with the Republic of Ireland. It forms the northern side of a large upland block about 14 km south-west of Enniskillen.

Administrative region: Fermanagh

8. Elevation (average and/or max. & min.) (metres): **9. Area** (hectares): 2744.45

Min. 0

Max. 665

Mean 0

10. Overview:

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

Cuilcagh Mountain is one of the largest expanses of blanket bog in Northern Ireland formed on a relatively high elevation upland landscape and bounded by limestone grassland to the north and montane habitats to the south. The blanket bog exhibits a wide range of characteristic vegetation and structural features, with well developed pool, hummock and lawn features, acid flushes and bog bursts. The bog vegetation is locally characterised by luxuriant *Sphagnum* mosses but over most of the site dwarf-shrubs and graminoid species dominate.

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).

Ramsar criterion 1

The site is a large and relatively intact example of a blanket bog and one of the best examples of this habitat in the UK. It also contains a comparatively high-altitude example of an oligotrophic lake.

Ramsar criterion 2

The site supports an appreciable assemblage of rare, vulnerable or endangered species. Cuilcagh Mountain is one of the most important upland breeding sites in Northern Ireland for golden plover *Pluvialis apricaria*, an Irish Red Data Book Species. Other Irish Red Data book bird species occurring on the site include merlin *Falco columbarius*. The bog is also occasionally used for feeding by Greenland white-fronted geese *Anser albifrons flavirostris*. All these species are also listed in Annex I of the Council Bird Directive 79/409/EWG.

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, basic, neutral, peat, nutrient-poor, limestone, sandstone
Geomorphology and landscape	upland, montane, hilly, slope, escarpment, cliffs
Nutrient status	oligotrophic
pH	acidic, strongly acidic
Salinity	fresh

Soil	mainly organic
Water permanence	usually permanent
Summary of main climatic features	Annual averages (Carmoney, 1971–2000) (www.metoffice.com/climate/uk/averages/19712000/sites/carmoney.html) Max. daily temperature: 12.1° C Min. daily temperature: 5.9° C Days of air frost: 27.6 Rainfall: 993.0 mm Hrs. of sunshine: 1179.0

General description of the Physical Features:

Cuilcagh is one of the most extensive areas of upland blanket bogs in Northern Ireland. The area is situated at a relatively high altitude in a high rainfall area and has a wide range of features, including well-developed pool, hummock and lawn complexes, acid flushes and bog bursts.

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).

Cuilcagh is one of the most extensive areas of upland blanket bogs in Northern Ireland. The area is situated at a relatively high altitude in a high rainfall area.

16. Hydrological values:

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

Flood water storage / desynchronisation of flood peaks

17. Wetland types

Inland wetland

Code	Name	% Area
O	Freshwater lakes: permanent	0.1
U	Peatlands (including peat bogs swamps, fens)	83.8
Other	Other	16.1

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 blanket bog exhibits a wide range of characteristic vegetation and structural features, with well-developed pool, hummock and lawn features, acid flushes and bog-bursts. The bog vegetation is locally characterised by luxuriant *Sphagnum* moss but over most of the site dwarf-shrubs and graminoid species such as deer grass *Trichophorum cespitosum* and bog cotton *Eriophorum* spp. dominate.

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.*

Nationally important species occurring on the site.

Lower Plants.

Dicranodontium asperulum, *Marsupella sphacelata*.

20. Noteworthy fauna:

Provide additional information on particular species and why they are noteworthy (expanding as necessary on information provided in 12. Justification for the application of the Criteria) indicating, e.g. which species/communities are unique, rare, endangered or biogeographically important, etc., including count data. *Do not include here taxonomic lists of species present – these may be supplied as supplementary information to the RIS.*

Species Information

Assemblage.

The site supports an assemblage of birds, including:
Pluvialis apricaria, Falco columbarius, Anser albifrons flavirostris.

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.

- Aesthetic
- Environmental education/ interpretation
- Livestock grazing
- Non-consumptive recreation
- Tourism

22. Land tenure/ownership:

Ownership category	On-site	Off-site
Local authority, municipality etc.	+	
National/Crown Estate	+	
Private	+	+

23. Current land (including water) use:

Activity	On-site	Off-site
Nature conservation		+
Rough or shifting grazing	+	
Flood control		+

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

Explanation of reporting category:

1. *Those factors that are still operating, but it is unclear if they are under control, as there is a lag in showing the management or regulatory regime to be successful.*
2. *Those factors that are not currently being managed, or where the regulatory regime appears to have been ineffective so far.*

NA = Not Applicable because no factors have been reported.

Adverse Factor Category	Reporting Category	Description of the problem (Newly reported Factors only)			
			On-Site	Off-Site	Major Impact?
Overgrazing by domestic livestock	1	Overgrazing is localised but does occur throughout site	+		

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For category 2 factors only.
 What measures have been taken / are planned / regulatory processes invoked, to mitigate the effect of these factors?

Is the site subject to adverse ecological change? NO

25. Conservation measures taken:

List national category and legal status of protected areas, including boundary relationships with the Ramsar site; management practices; whether an officially approved management plan exists and whether it is being implemented.

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

26. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:

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

No information available

27. Current scientific research and facilities:

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

The site was subject to detailed habitat and species surveys prior to its designation as an ASSI.

The integrity of the site is regularly monitored.

The blanket bog vegetation was monitored in 1996.

28. Current conservation education:

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

The area is regularly used by a local education centre.

29. Current recreation and tourism:

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

The Ulster Way crosses the site.

30. Jurisdiction:

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

Department of the Environment (Northern Ireland), Environment and Heritage Service,

Commonwealth House, Castle Street, Belfast, Northern Ireland, BT1 1GU

31. Management authority:

Provide the name and address of the local office(s) of the agency(ies) or organisation(s) directly responsible for managing the wetland. Wherever possible provide also the title and/or name of the person or persons in this office with responsibility for the wetland.

Department of the Environment (Northern Ireland), Environment and Heritage Service,

Commonwealth House, Castle Street, Belfast, Northern Ireland, BT1 1GU

32. Bibliographical references:

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

Site-relevant references

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- Whilde, A (1993) *Threatened mammals, amphibians and fish in Ireland – Irish Red data book 2: Vertebrates*. HMSO, Belfast
- Wolfe-Murphy, SA, Lawrie, EW, Smith, SJ & Gibson, CE (1993) *Northern Ireland Lakes Survey*. Unpublished report to Northern Ireland Department of Environment, Countryside and Wildlife, Belfast

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