

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

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY.

DD MM YY

Designation date Site Reference Number

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

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PO Box 140, FIN-00251 Helsinki, Finland. Timo.Asanti@ymparisto.fi

2. Date this sheet was completed/updated:

January 2004

3. Country:

Finland

4. Name of the Ramsar site:

Björkör and Lågskär Archipelago

5. Map of site included:

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

a) hard copy (required for inclusion of site in the Ramsar List):

Yes.

b) digital (electronic) format (optional):

Yes.

6. Geographical coordinates (latitude/longitude):

Björkör 59 48 / 20 09 and of Lågskär 59 50 / 19 55

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 two separate areas are situated in southern part of the province of Åland, in the Northern Baltic Sea and in the municipalities of Föglö and Lemland, 15–26 km south–southwest of Lemland village and 21–27 km southeast–south of Mariehamn city. The distance between the areas is 6 km. The municipalities (243 sq.km of land) have ca. 2 200 residents. Mariehamn city (12 sq.km of land) has ca. 10 500 residents.

8. Elevation: (average and/or max. & min.)

20–0 m

9. Area: (in hectares)

6 309 ha

10. Overview:

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

The archipelago is a very important feeding area for waterfowl during migration periods and among the few important wintering areas for Steller's Eider in the Northern Baltic.

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 & 4

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	3	<u>4</u>	5	6	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) A representative example of a near-natural wetland type (archipelago in shallow marine waters) in the EU Boreal region, including 1 priority natural wetland habitat type of the EU Habitats Directive (coastal lagoons).

2) Threatened birds (VU in Finnish Red List) include Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*) with about 40 pairs and as well the Birds Directive the White-tailed Eagle

(*Haliaeetus albicilla*) and Caspian Tern (*Sterna caspia*). Five species of the EU Birds Directive Annex I breed in the area, of which the most abundant is Arctic Tern (*S. paradisaeae*) with 200 pairs at Långskär.

Finland's responsibility species also include (at Långskär) more than 1 500 pairs of Eiders (*Somateria mollissima*), 100 pairs of Razorbills (*Alca torda*), 30 pairs of Black Guillemots (*Cepphus g. grylle*) and 20 pairs of Velvet Scoter (*Melanitta fusca*).

Mammals of the EU Habitats Directive Annex II include Ringed Seal (*Phoca hispida bottnica*) and Grey Seal (*Halichoerus grypus*) (EN in Northern Europe).

4) The underwater banks of Långskär Archipelago are important feeding areas for waterfowl during migration periods. In spring ca. 5 000–10 000 of both Eiders and Long-tailed Ducks (*Clangula hyemalis*) (important gamebirds) rest in the area on peak days. Långskär Archipelago is among the few important wintering areas for Steller's Eider (*Polysticta stelleri*) (globally VU) in the Northern Baltic with ca. 100–400 individuals.

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:

Hemiboreal forest vegetation zone.

b) biogeographic regionalisation scheme (include reference citation):

Etelä-Suomen ja Pohjanmaan metsien suojelun tarve-työryhmä. Puheenjohtaja: Ruuhijärvi, R., Sihteerit: Kuusinen, M., Raunio, A. and Eisto, K. 2000. Metsien suojelun tarve Etelä-Suomessa ja Pohjanmaalla. Etelä-Suomen ja Pohjanmaan metsien suojelun tarve-työryhmän mietintö. Suomen ympäristö 437. Ympäristöministeriö. Helsinki.

Working group on the need for forest protection in southern Finland and Ostrobothnia. Chairman Ruuhijärvi, R., Secretaries Kuusinen, M., Raunio, A. and Eisto, K. 2000. Forest protection in southern Finland and Ostrobothnia. The Finnish Environment 437. Ministry of the Environment.

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.

Geology: Geochemically included in South Finland high metamorphic area and in Rapakivi granites area. Bedrock is composed of rapakivi granite, granodiorite, tonalite and quartz diorite.

Origins: Natural

Soil type: Mainly bedrock terrain.

Water quality: General quality good.

Depth of water: Variable. In Lågskär mostly 2–6 m, maximum ca. 50 m. In other areas mostly 3–8 m near islands, maximum ca. 200 m in open sea. Water-level usually low in spring and high in autumn and winter.

Climate: Duration of growing season ca. 175 days, mean annual temperature ca. +5 °C, mean annual rainfall ca. 500 mm. Waters normally ice-covered only partly in northern parts in February. Hemiboreal forest vegetation zone.

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).

The climate and general geological features are much the same in the catchment areas as in the Ramsar sites. Look partly chapter 14.

16. Hydrological values:

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

None significant.

17. 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: Marine: A, J, E & D

<u>A</u>	B	C	<u>D</u>	<u>E</u>	F	G	H	I	<u>J</u>	K	Zk(a)
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Inland: Tp & W

L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	Sp	Ss	<u>Tp</u>	Ts	U	Va	Vt	<u>W</u>	Xf	Xp	Y	Zg	Zk(b)
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Human-made:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Zk(c)
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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.

A – Permanent shallow marine waters

D – Rocky marine shores
J – Coastal brackish lagoons
E – Shingle and pebble shores
Tp – Permanent freshwater pools
W – Shrub-dominated wetlands

18. General ecological features:

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

Björkör and Långören Archipelago covers 6 908 ha and Lågskär 1 056 ha. The area includes >250 ha of land. The site is located in the outer archipelago close to the open sea, and is characterized by three small forested islands and >150 treeless skerries and rocky islets. The vegetation of Lågskär Island has recovered after the cessation of grazing in the early 1960s, and is exceptionally diverse considering the harsh archipelago conditions, including e.g. Juniper (*Juniperus communis*) meadows and a lagoon flanked by reeds.

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.**

None significant.

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.**

The breeding bird fauna is characterized by species of outer archipelago. Threatened birds (VU in Finnish Red List) include White-tailed Eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*), Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*) with >40 pairs and Caspian Tern (*Sterna caspia*). 5 species of the EU Birds Directive Annex I breed in the area, of which the most abundant is Arctic Tern (*S. paradisaeae*) with 200 pairs at Lågskär. Finland's responsibility species also include (at Lågskär) >1 500 pairs of Eiders (*Somateria mollissima*), 100 pairs of Razorbills (*Alca torda*), 30 pairs of Black Guillemots (*Cephus g. grylle*) and 20 pairs of Velvet Scoter (*Melanitta fusca*).

The underwater banks of Lågskär Archipelago are important feeding areas for waterfowl during migration periods. In spring ca. 5 000–10 000 of both Eiders and Long-tailed Ducks (*Clangula hyemalis*) (important gamebirds) rest in the area on peak days. Lågskär Archipelago is among the few important wintering areas for Steller's Eider (*Polysticta stelleri*) (globally VU) in the Northern Baltic with ca. 100–400 individuals. Mammals of

the EU Habitats Directive Annex II include Ringed Seal (*Phoca hispida botnica*) and Grey Seal (*Halichoerus grypus*) (EN in Northern Europe).

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.

Significant values include bird-watching. The site includes valuable traditional rural biotopes.

22. Land tenure/ownership:

(a) within the Ramsar site:

Åland Provincial Government and Finnish Government.

(b) in the surrounding area:

Private-owned.

23. Current land (including water) use:

(a) within the Ramsar site:

None significant. Fishing may occur in certain areas.

(b) in the surroundings/catchment:

Fishing, shipping routes.

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

Oil pollution damage is the main threat. Increased boating in the breeding season causes disturbance to birds.

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.

The site is included in the Natura 2000 Network, designated as SPA. Björkör was protected in 1966. Lågskär is not officially protected, but in practice the area is considered a bird sanctuary.

26. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:

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

The conservation of the Natura 2000 sites will be carried out under the Nature Conservation Act.

27. Current scientific research and facilities:

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

A bird station, concentrated on the study of migratory birds, has been in operation at Långskär Island since 1964, and also the breeding bird fauna is surveyed regularly. The vascular plants of Långskär Island were surveyed in the early 1980s. The carabid beetles were studied in the late 1980s.

28. Current conservation education:

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

None significant.

29. Current recreation and tourism:

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

Boating is intense in summer.

30. Jurisdiction:

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

a) Åland's government and administrative board, **b)** Ministry of the Environment.

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.

Åland's government and administrative board, PO Box 60, FIN-22101 Mariehamn, Finland.

Please add an e-mail address? Thank you.

32. Bibliographical references:

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

Rassi, P., Alanen, A., Kanerva, T. & Mannerkoski, I. (eds.) 2001: The 2000 Red List of Finnish Species. Ministry of the Environment & Finnish Environment Institute, Helsinki.

Hildén, O. & Hario, M. 1993. Muuttuva saaristolinnusto. Forssan kirjapaino Oy.

Hägström, C-A. 1985. Björkör, Ålands största naturreservat. Nordenskiöldssamfundets tidsskrift 45.

Leivo, M. 2000. Suomen kansainvälisesti tärkeät lintualueet. Linnut-vuosikirja 1999. (English summary: Important Bird Areas in Finland).

Leivo, M., Asanti, T., Koskimies, P., Lammi, E., Lampolahti, J., Mikkola-Roos, M. & Virolainen, E. 2002. Suomen tärkeät lintualueet FINIBA. BirdLife Suomen julkaisuja 4, Suomen graafiset palvelut, Kuopio.

Niemelä, J., Haila, Y. & Halme, E. 1988. Carabid beetles on isolated Baltic islands and on the adjacent Åland mainland: variation in colonization success. Ann. Zool. Fennici 25.

Sulander, M. 1982. Lemlannin Lågskärin putkilokasvit. Manuscript. Jyväskylän yliopisto, Biologian laitos.

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