

## Giske wetlands system

### Information sheet on Ramsar wetlands

1. Country: Norway 2. Date: 3. Ref: 7NO 018
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5. Name of wetland: Giske wetlands system. Consists of 6 different reserves: 1) Rørvikvatn and 2) Synesvågen nature reserves, and 4 bird protection areas: 3) Giske, 4) Blind-heimsvik, 5) Roaldsand and 6) Rørvikvågen.
6. Date of Ramsar designation: 19/03/1996
7. Geographical coordinates: 62<sup>0</sup> 33' N, 6<sup>0</sup> 5' E
8. General location: Situated in Giske municipality, Møre og Romsdal county, near Ålesund city.
9. Area: The reserves cover a total area of 544,5 ha: 1) Rørvikvatn (38 ha), 2) Synesvågen (101,1 ha), 3) Giske (142,5 ha), 4) Blindheimsvik (113, 3 ha), 5) Roaldsand (86,3 ha) and 6) Rørvikvågen (73,3 ha).
10. Wetland type: Locality 1): S,U; localities 2-6): A, D, E, G.
11. Altitude: Locality 1): 16 masl., and localities 2-6): 0-4 masl.
12. Overview: The wetland system consists of several shallow bays, with extensive tidal seaweed zones, mudflats and wet meadows, and a freshwater marsh including mires.
13. Physical features: Situated on two islands on the outermost part of the coast. This area is characterised by a flat landscape formed by the ice-age and by quarternary deposits. The area has an Atlantic climate, with relatively cool summers and mild winters. Annual precipitation is relatively high exceeding 1200 mm.
14. Ecological features: Extensive marine shallow waters with bays with mud and sandflats allows large quantities of seaweed to accumulate, and thus create rich feeding opportunities for birds. Stretches of round shorestones is typical. Wet meadows create a zone between the shoreline and the ericaceous dominated inland mires. One locality is a eutrophicated fresh water marsh, with lush water vegetation surrounded by mires. A smaller area of dunes exists. The extent of the wetlands and the geographic position make this area internationally important in particular for migratory birds. Fossil shorelines is also a characteristic element of the area.
15. Land tenure/ownership of:
  - a) site: Private.
  - b) surrounding area: Private.

16. Conservation measures taken: All established as reserves 27 May 1988. Nos 1-2 as nature reserves, nos 3-6 as bird protection areas.

17. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented: None.

18. Current land use:

a) Site: Nature conservation, airport activity and grazing.

b) Surrounding/catchment: Principal human activities: Agricultural use, fishing and hunting, recreation and camping, airport activity, excavation of sand and construction of roads and houses.

19. Disturbances/threats, including changes in land use and major development projects:

a) At the site: Mainly change in agricultural practices, ie end of grazing by husbandry.

b) In the surroundings/catchment: Agricultural, security measures in connection with the airport, gravel quarries, rubbish dump, a power line across the area, boating activity, planting of alien coniferous trees as wind shelter, and development for housing and industry.

20. Hydrological and physical values:

21. Social and cultural values: This area is important for leisure activities such as birdwatching. A bird observatory has been established in the area. Some rocky outcrops inside the reserves have been used for drying fish.

22. Noteworthy fauna: These wetlands is famed for its rich birdlife with more than 220 species registered. The area holds breeding populations of nationally rare birds such as *Tachybaptus ruficollis* and *Crex crex*. Waterfowl winters in high numbers with >10,000 birds, these include 4 species of *Gaviidae*, *Podicipedidae*, *Anas* spp. and diving ducks. *Haliaeetus albicilla* and *Aquila chrysaetos* occur regularly. These wetlands are possibly most famed for their numbers of migrating waders. The bird observatory here takes part in a joint European network on the study of wader migration. As an example *Calidris alpina* may on some days number >5,000 birds and *Calidris maritima* >750. *Plectrophenax nivalis* (1-2,000) and *Sturnus vulgaris* (>10,000) is also common on migration. Numerous reports have been published from the bird observatory and others. *Lutra lutra* is common, and ca. 100 *Phoca vitulina* frequent the area.

23. Noteworthy flora: The shallow tidal waters is ideal for extensive beds of seaweed and mussels. Dead seaweed also creates shorevegetation typical for the Atlantic coast, where *Atriplex* species dominates. *Juncus*, *Carex* and *Blysmus* plant societies is typical for the wet and salt influenced meadows. Further inland ericaceous mires dominates. The eutrophic Rørvikvatn is dominated with stands of *Carex rostrata* and *Schoenoplectus lacustris*.

24. Current scientific research and facilities: Vigra bird observatory records the bird migration in the area.

25. Current conservation education: None.

26. Current recreation and tourism: Camping sites, hunting, windsurfing and boating.

27. Management authority: Fylkesmannen i Møre og Romsdal, Fylkeshuset, N-6400 Molde.

28. Jurisdiction: Dept. of Environment.

29. Bibliographical references: Numerous reports (in Norwegian) and studies have been published on the natural history of the area. The inventory of wetlands in this county lists an extensive bibliography (in Norwegian): Fylkesmannen i Møre og Romsdal 1982: "Utkast til verneplan for våtmarksområde i Møre og Romsdal fylke." Botanical report on a survey of wet marine meadows in the county: Holten, J.I., Frisvoll, A.A. & Aune, E.I. 1986. Havstrand i Møre og Romsdal. Flora vegetasjon og verneverdier. *Økoforsk Rapp.* 1986, 3A. 253 pp. *Økoforsk Rapp.* 1986, 3B. 184 pp. (with English abstract).

30. Reasons for inclusion: 1 b, c, 2 a, c, 3 b

31. Map of site: Enclosed.