

(COPs) focus increasingly on policy and administrative issues, so that the Asian Wetland Symposium series provides an increasingly valuable complementary forum for the discussion of scientific and technical issues and priorities for the conservation and wise use of wetlands in the Asia region;

9. ALSO RECOGNIZING that financial support for the Asian Wetland Symposium series has come from a wide variety of donors, including central and local governments, business entities, academic institutions, international organizations including UN bodies, and international NGOs, and that these contributions have been invaluable to securing the continuity of the Asian Wetland Symposia, as well as the series of local workshops, leading to the establishment of effective, diverse and vibrant networks on wetland conservation and wise use in the Asian region; and

10. NOTING that the fifth meeting of a biennial International Symposium on Wetlands was held in Zapata Swamp, Cuba, with the participation of scientists and wetland managers of different countries from the Americas region;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

11. ENCOURAGES all Contracting Parties and non-Contracting Parties in the Asia Region to give full recognition to the Asian Wetland Symposium (AWS) as an effective forum for information exchange and as a source of good practical advice for the conservation and wise use of wetlands in Asia;

12. ENDORSES the continuation of the periodic Asian Wetland Symposia;

13. REQUESTS Contracting Parties, in cooperation with the Ramsar Secretariat and international NGOs, to facilitate the support to and participation in the Asian Wetland Symposia by a wide range of stakeholders, including but not limited to local governments, NGOs, the private sector, and local communities, noting that this will not have any financial implications for the Convention's core budget;

14. REQUESTS the Ramsar Secretariat and the Standing Committee to encourage and develop linkages between Ramsar Regional Meetings, including subregional meetings, and such regional wetland fora, so as to ensure that the outcomes of the fora are made fully available to Contracting Parties and governments in support of their implementation of the Convention through exchange of experiences and innovative practices discussed at such fora; and

15. RECOMMENDS that Contracting Parties, international NGOs, and other relevant scientific and technical organizations consider the usefulness of establishing similar periodic regional scientific and technical fora where they do not already exist, drawing on the experiences of the Asian Wetland Symposia, as a means of increasing scientific and technical support for the implementation of the Convention including, inter alia, any regional initiatives established under the Convention.

Appendix 3: Ramsar Classification System for Wetland Type

The codes are based upon the Ramsar Classification System for Wetland Type as approved by Recommendation 4.7 and amended by Resolutions VI.5 and VII.11 of the Conference of the Contracting Parties. The categories listed herein are intended to provide only a very broad framework to aid rapid identification of the main wetland habitats represented at each site.

To assist in identification of the correct Wetland Types to list in section 19 of the RIS, the Secretariat has provided below a tabulations for Marine/Coastal Wetlands and Inland Wetlands of some of the characteristics of each Wetland Type.

Marine/Coastal Wetlands

A Permanent shallow marine waters in most cases less than six metres deep at low tide; includes sea bays and straits.

B Marine subtidal aquatic beds; includes kelp beds, sea-grass beds, tropical marine meadows.

C Coral reefs.

D Rocky marine shores; includes rocky offshore islands, sea cliffs.

E Sand, shingle or pebble shores; includes sand bars, spits and sandy islets; includes dune systems and humid dune slacks.

F Estuarine waters; permanent water of estuaries and estuarine systems of deltas.

G Intertidal mud, sand or salt flats.

H Intertidal marshes; includes salt marshes, salt meadows, saltings, raised salt marshes; includes tidal brackish and freshwater marshes.

I Intertidal forested wetlands; includes mangrove swamps, nipah swamps and tidal freshwater swamp forests.

J Coastal brackish/saline lagoons; brackish to saline lagoons with at least one relatively narrow connection to the sea.

K Coastal freshwater lagoons; includes freshwater delta lagoons.

Zk(a) Karst and other subterranean hydrological systems, marine/coastal

Inland Wetlands

L Permanent inland deltas.

M Permanent rivers/streams/creeks; includes waterfalls.

N Seasonal/intermittent/irregular rivers/streams/creeks.

O Permanent freshwater lakes (over 8 ha); includes large oxbow lakes.

P Seasonal/intermittent freshwater lakes (over 8 ha); includes floodplain lakes.

Q Permanent saline/brackish/alkaline lakes.

R Seasonal/intermittent saline/brackish/alkaline lakes and flats.

Sp Permanent saline/brackish/alkaline marshes/pools.

Ss Seasonal/intermittent saline/brackish/alkaline marshes/pools.

Tp Permanent freshwater marshes/pools; ponds (below 8 ha), marshes and swamps on inorganic soils; with emergent vegetation water-logged for at least most of the growing season.

Ts Seasonal/intermittent freshwater marshes/pools on inorganic soils; includes sloughs, potholes, seasonally flooded meadows, sedge marshes.

U Non-forested peatlands; includes shrub or open bogs, swamps, fens.

Va Alpine wetlands; includes alpine meadows, temporary waters from snowmelt.

Vt Tundra wetlands; includes tundra pools, temporary waters from snowmelt.

W Shrub-dominated wetlands; shrub swamps, shrub-dominated freshwater marshes, shrub carr, alder thicket on inorganic soils.

Xf Freshwater, tree-dominated wetlands; includes freshwater swamp forests, seasonally flooded forests, wooded swamps on inorganic soils.

Xp Forested peatlands; peat swamp forests.

Y Freshwater springs; oases.

Zg Geothermal wetlands

Zk(b) Karst and other subterranean hydrological systems, inland

Note: "floodplain" is a broad term used to refer to one or more wetland types, which may include examples from the R, Ss, Ts, W, Xf, Xp, or other wetland types. Some examples of floodplain wetlands are seasonally inundated grassland (including natural wet meadows), shrublands, woodlands and forests. Floodplain wetlands are not listed as a specific wetland type herein.

Human-made wetlands

1 Aquaculture (e.g., fish/shrimp) ponds

2 Ponds; includes farm ponds, stock ponds, small tanks; (generally below 8 ha).

3 Irrigated land; includes irrigation channels and rice fields.

4 Seasonally flooded agricultural land (including intensively managed or grazed wet meadow or pasture).

5 Salt exploitation sites; salt pans, salines, etc.

6 Water storage areas; reservoirs/barrages/dams/impoundments (generally over 8 ha).

7 Excavations; gravel/brick/clay pits; borrow pits, mining pools.

8 Wastewater treatment areas; sewage farms, settling ponds, oxidation basins, etc.

9 Canals and drainage channels, ditches.

Zk(c) Karst and other subterranean hydrological systems, human-made

Appendix 4: Criteria for Identifying Wetlands of International Importance

Adopted by the 7th (1999) and 9th (2005) Meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, superseding earlier Criteria adopted by the 4th and 6th Meetings of the COP (1990 and 1996), to guide implementation of Article 2.1 on designation of Ramsar sites.

Group A of the Criteria. Sites containing representative, rare or unique wetland types

Criterion 1: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it contains a representative, rare, or unique example of a natural or near-natural wetland type found within the appropriate biogeographic region.

Group B of the Criteria. Sites of international importance for conserving biological diversity

Criteria based on species and ecological communities

Criterion 2: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it supports vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered species or threatened ecological communities.

Criterion 3: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it supports populations of plant and/or animal species important for maintaining the biological diversity of

a particular biogeographic region.

Criterion 4: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it supports plant and/or animal species at a critical stage in their life cycles, or provides refuge during adverse conditions.

Specific criteria based on waterbirds

Criterion 5: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it regularly supports 20,000 or more waterbirds.

Criterion 6: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it regularly supports 1% of the individuals in a population of one species or subspecies of waterbird.

Specific criteria based on fish

Criterion 7: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it supports a significant proportion of indige-

nous fish subspecies, species or families, life-history stages, species interactions and/or populations that are representative of wetland benefits and/or values and thereby contributes to global biological diversity.

Criterion 8: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it is an important source of food for fishes, spawning ground, nursery and/or migration path on which fish stocks, either within the wetland or elsewhere, depend.

Specific criteria based on other taxa

Criterion 9: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it regularly supports 1% of the individuals in a population of one species or subspecies of wetland-dependent non-avian animal species.