

**Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
2nd Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
Groningen, the Netherlands
7-12 May 1984**

Recommendation 2.1: Submission of National Reports

RECOGNISING that only 13 of the 35 Parties to this Convention had submitted national reports to the Bureau by 31 March 1984,

AWARE that the submission of timely and detailed national reports is of vital importance for the purpose of monitoring implementation of the Convention and for the purpose of sharing information on wetland conservation measures taken, on any problems which have arisen and on appropriate methods of dealing with them,

CONCERNED that all Parties should submit detailed and timely reports in future,

THE SECOND CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

RECOMMENDS that all Parties should submit detailed national reports to the Bureau at least six months prior to each ordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties; and

FURTHER RECOMMENDS that the Bureau should draft a simplified version of the questionnaire upon which national reports are based with a view to making the reports easier to prepare while at the same time ensuring that they reveal the information desired.

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Recommendation 2.2: Amendment of the Convention

CONSIDERING that any amendment pertaining to the competence of both Conference and Secretariat should be adopted on the broadest possible basis,

THE SECOND CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

RECOMMENDS that the Contracting Parties taking part in the adoption of amendments after the entry into force of the Paris Protocol endeavour, whatever the method of adoption, to adopt these amendments by consensus.

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Recommendation 2.3: Action points for priority attention

RECOGNIZING the obligation of Contracting Parties to the Convention to formulate their planning so as to promote the conservation of the wetlands included in the List of Wetlands of International Importance, and as far as possible the wise use of wetlands in their territory;

STRESSING the importance of international cooperation for the coordination and support of wetland conservation activities,

CONVINCED of the desirability of defining requirements and establishing priorities for activities designed to implement the Convention;

TAKING NOTE of the Framework Document revised following discussion at the present Conference and annexed to this Recommendation, which has guided discussion of the action points presented hereafter;

THE SECOND CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

DETERMINES that the following Action Points should receive priority attention:

1. Elaboration of a system of wetland classification or typology;
2. Preparation of a standard data sheet on wetlands and of guidelines for its use in wetland inventories;
3. Development of common criteria for evaluating the importance of wetlands at local, national or international level; and, in particular, expansion of the existing Cagliari Criteria to cover also ecological factors concerning life other than waterfowl;
4. Development of a common base for recording and evaluating long-term trends in the ecology of wetlands through monitoring of physical and biological parameters, taking into account the different levels of expertise and support in the various Contracting Parties;
5. Quantification of both direct (monetary) and indirect (non-monetary) values of wetlands and formulation of criteria to enable all values to be taken fully into account in the planning of conservation projects and projects which may lead to changes in the ecological character of wetlands;
6. Development of strategies and techniques for wetland management including measures to enable the retention of natural characteristics of wetland areas before, during and after execution of modification or transformation projects; and

7. Promotion of increased international cooperation among the Contracting Parties and interested states; in particular, development of a clearing-house function for special assistance for wetland conservation projects in developing countries.

Framework for Implementing the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar, 1971)

A) Introduction

The fundamental purpose of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat, is to conserve wetlands through international cooperation.

The present document, based on the text of the Convention, the Recommendations of the First Conference of the Contracting Parties (Cagliari, 1980) and the discussions at the present Conference, has been drawn up to facilitate the achievement of the Convention's objectives. It is proposed as a tool to guide in the development of national and international measures to further the conservation of wetlands. Its application should be flexible and adapted to the specific conditions of individual countries.

B) National Measures

One of the principal obligations of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention is to "formulate and implement their planning so as to promote ... as far as possible the wise use of wetlands in their territory" (Art. 3.1). The Cagliari Conference recommended that, in order to achieve this "wise use", comprehensive national policies, based on a nationwide inventory of wetlands and their resources, would be necessary.

Approaches to national wetland policies under the Ramsar Convention can be grouped under five main categories:

1. scientific;
2. policy and law;
3. management;
4. education and public awareness; and
5. special measures for sites on the Ramsar List.

1) Scientific

1.1 Development of a nationwide inventory of wetlands covering all habitats listed in Article 1.1 to the Convention, and promotion of information dissemination on the importance of the sites;

1.2 Development and application of criteria for the identification, establishment, management and monitoring of wetland reserves (including marine parks);

1.3 Data collection, monitoring and research related to species dependent on wetlands, for the purpose of management and as a contribution to international actions to sustain wetland management efforts;

1.4 Review of the importance of wetlands for species conservation, review of the status of wetland species and identification of endemic, rare, or endangered species and their critical habitat areas.

2) Policy and Law

2.1 Review of impediments, particularly social, legal and fiscal, to the conservation of wetlands;

2.2 Adoption of policies, including preventive environmental policies, to ensure wetland conservation by both public and private parties;

2.3 Development of a planning system for wetland conservation based upon natural catchment areas;

2.4 Adoption of measures to ensure as far as possible the natural quality and quantity of water supplies to wetlands;

2.5 Evaluation of environmental effects before decisions are taken which would significantly transform wetlands, and involvement of ecologists in the development of plans (authorization of transformations should only take place in exceptional circumstances, and in the public interest);

2.6 Provision of measures to mitigate or exclude any adverse effects of wetland transformation, including compensation measures, if transformation of wetlands is planned;

2.7 Monitoring and follow-up of authorized operations affecting wetlands including the adoption and utilization of corrective measures where required.

3) Management

3.1 Definition and implementation of measures required to maintain the ecological character of wetlands;

3.2 Promotion of the sustainable management of wetlands to avoid over-exploitation of wetland resources, and to provide for a firm social and economic basis for wetland conservation;

3.3 Management of man-made wetlands to create habitat for waterfowl and other wetland species when establishing and modifying such wetlands, and if possible rehabilitating degraded wetlands;

3.4 Development of management plans to maintain the populations of wetland species and of recovery plans for endangered species, as well as the regular review of these plans to ensure that their objectives, priorities and actions remain appropriate;

3.5 Strict control of the introduction of exotic species to wetlands, and where appropriate eradication of introduced species.

4) Education and Public Awareness

4.1 Promotion of public education and awareness with regard to the value of wetlands;

4.2 Development of training programmes for wetland conservation managers;

4.3 Encouragement of the participation of local populations in the establishment, management and monitoring of wetland reserves.

5) List of Wetlands of International Importance

5.1 Designation of appropriate wetlands in the light of agreed criteria, national inventories and of international “shadow” lists;

5.2 Effective conservation of listed wetlands, including wardening, development of buffer zones, and other land-use control mechanisms;

5.3 Monitoring of any changes in the ecological character of listed sites, and reporting such changes to the Convention Bureau.

C) International Measures

The purpose of the Ramsar Convention is to promote wetland conservation through international cooperation. In order to achieve this cooperation, the Contracting Parties may wish to consider the following measures, grouped according to the categories of: promotion of the Ramsar Convention, data requirements, financial and technical assistance and international cooperation.

6) Promotion of the Effectiveness of the Convention

6.1 Promotion of adherence to the Convention by developing countries, where many wetlands are still in pristine condition, and where the major opportunities for wetland conservation are likely to occur in the next twenty years;

6.2 Elaboration of the criteria adopted at the Cagliari Conference for the selection of wetlands for the Ramsar List with special reference to wetland types and species habitat insufficiently represented on the List. Criteria must be developed for species other than waterfowl, for limnological and hydrological characteristics, and might also be developed to cover economic aspects of wetlands such as fisheries.

7) Data Requirements

7.1 Coordination of national data collection, research and monitoring in order to provide an up-to-date international overview of wetland issues and priorities, and cooperation in the development of international “shadow” lists and databases.

7.2 Development of international or regional databases to monitor the conservation situation of wetlands, to draw up directories of national and international bodies working on wetlands, to prepare a global hierarchical classification system of wetland types to facilitate international comparison and to elaborate a standard ‘pro-forma’ to describe wetlands, to facilitate information exchange.

8) Financial and Technical Assistance

8.1 Provision of special assistance to developing countries in the elaboration of their national wetlands policies, in conservation and management of listed wetlands and other aspects of wetland conservation including data collection, monitoring, research, public awareness, education and training,

8.2 Ensuring that conservation measures are included in development projects where bilateral or multilateral aid programmes to developing countries affect wetlands, especially through evaluation of environmental effects before any wetland transformation is carried out (payment for the necessary conservation measures must be the responsibility of those carrying out the development projects).

9) International Cooperation

9.1 Cooperation in wetland management for the purpose of 1) migratory species conservation, 2) control of harmful influences that may affect wetlands in other countries, and 3) conservation of trans-frontier wetlands, through mutual consultation and coordination of policies.

9.2 Promotion of cooperation with other global and regional conservation conventions or other mechanisms providing additional means for wetland conservation.

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Recommendation 2.4: Possibilities of financial or other support for the interim secretariat

RECALLING Recommendation 1.10 of the Cagliari Conference;

RECOGNIZING the effective contribution of the interim secretariat in the preparation and servicing of the Groningen Conference;

INFORMED of the serious shortfall in voluntary contributions provided by the Contracting Parties towards the costs of interim secretariat arrangements since the Cagliari Conference;

RECONFIRMING the need for permanent arrangements for administrative, scientific and technical support for the effective promotion and implementation of the Convention;

WELCOMING the offer made by the Government of the Netherlands to convene a Task Force with the mandate, inter alia, to examine the options available for such permanent arrangements and the ways they should be financed, so as to ensure that they will be as cost-effective as possible;

CONSIDERING the urgent need in the meantime to improve the financial situation of the interim secretariat;

THE SECOND CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

URGES the Contracting Parties and interested international organizations to give careful consideration to the possibilities of finding financial or other means to support the interim secretariat to the Convention.

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Recommendation 2.5: Designation of the Wadden Sea for the List of Wetlands of International Importance

NOTING the vital link between the Banc d'Arguin in Mauritania and the Wadden Sea for migratory waterfowl such as *Limosa lapponica* and *Calidris canutus*;

APPLAUDING the announcement by the Government of the Netherlands of the designation for the List of Wetlands of International Importance of that part of the Wadden Sea under the jurisdiction of the Netherlands;

RECALLING that the Governments of the Netherlands, the Federal Republic of Germany and Denmark committed themselves in the joint Declaration of 1982 to protect the Wadden Sea;

THE SECOND CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

RECOMMENDS that the Federal Republic of Germany and Denmark designate for the List the whole of the parts of the Wadden Sea under their jurisdiction, thereby making a significant contribution to the chain of reserves in the western Palearctic flyway.

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Recommendation 2.6: Conservation and management of Sahel wetlands

INFORMED of the catastrophic drought currently prevailing throughout the Sahel and of the severe degradation of natural habitats which it has provoked;

RECOGNIZING that, despite the best efforts of Governments of Sahel states, external assistance in conservation matters will be decisive in enabling them to fulfil obligations accepted under the Convention;

INFORMED of recent scientific work which emphasizes the importance of Sahel wetlands for Afrotropical birds and - even in years of extreme drought - for Palearctic migrants;

WELCOMING the active participation in the present Conference by delegates and observers from a number of Sahel states (which has contributed to focus attention on Sahel wetlands), and looking forward to adhesion to the Convention by further states of the region;

THE SECOND CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

RECOMMENDS that national bodies from the developed countries and international bodies, working under the aegis of CILSS, should cooperate with one another and with states of the region to establish a plan to conserve and manage Sahel wetlands.

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Recommendation 2.7: Conservation of Djoudj National Bird Park, Senegal

AWARE of the catastrophic drought currently prevailing throughout the Saheli

INFORMED of the measures taken by the Government of Senegal for the conservation of the Djoudj National Bird Park;

DRAWING ATTENTION to the severity of the threats to the future of Djoudj, which figures on both the Ramsar and World Heritage Lists, and is thus of symbolic significance;

THE SECOND CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

RECOMMENDS that special measures be rapidly taken to safeguard the future of Djoudj.

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Recommendation 2.8: Establishment of a protected area in the River Senegal Basin in Mauritania

CONFRONTED by the prospect that, following the development of the River Senegal basin between now and the year 2000, only sites specifically designated as areas for conservation of natural resources will be excluded from development as grazing or irrigated areas;

AWARE of the need to safeguard a specimen of natural habitat in the lower Senegal delta (in particular of the estuarine type which will disappear after the Diama Dam has come into operation in 1986);

THE SECOND CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

RECOMMENDS that an area including an artificial estuary be protected in Mauritania to complement the Djoudj Park in Senegal.

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Recommendation 2.9: Conservation action and protection of wetlands not designated for the List of Wetlands of International Importance

RECALLING that the Preamble to the Ramsar Convention points out the fundamental ecological functions of wetlands as regulators of water regimes; their status as a resource of great economic, cultural, scientific and recreational value; the desirability of stemming encroachment on wetlands; the need to regard waterfowl as an international resource; and the possibility of conserving wetlands by continuing far-sighted national policies with coordinated international action;

AWARE that the Ramsar Convention requires Contracting Parties to designate suitable wetlands within their territories for inclusion in a List of Wetlands of International Importance as well as to formulate and implement their planning so as to promote the conservation of the wetlands included in the List;

RECALLING Recommendation 1.3 of the Cagliari Conference that in order to achieve the aims of the Convention, Contracting Parties should designate as many as possible of their wetlands of international importance for the List;

NOTING that conservation action has been taken at many wetlands mentioned in the report and Recommendations of the Cagliari Conference, such as the Oostvaardersplassen in the Netherlands, Blar nam Faioileag in the United Kingdom, and Stagno di Molentargius, Italy;

WELCOMING statements at this Conference from numerous Contracting Parties on their intention to designate for the List and ensure conservation action at many wetlands of international importance such as the Macquarie Marshes Nature Reserve in Australia, the St Clair National Wildlife Area and the Chignecto in the Bay of Fundy in Canada;

THE SECOND CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

RECOMMENDS that appropriate conservation action be taken by the Contracting Parties including where possible designation for the List of the unlisted sites mentioned in Conference document C.2.6 and in the Record of the present Conference, notably Oued Massa (Morocco), Gulf of Gabès (Tunisia), Lake Izunuma (Japan), the Venice Lagoon, the northern part of the Po Delta and Lake Trasimene (Italy), Lake Tata (Hungary), Lake Aleg and Lake of Mâl (Mauritania);

FURTHER SUGGESTS that effective protection is ensured of wetlands of international importance mentioned by observers and in the Record of the present Conference such as Rio Pilcomayo National Park (Argentina), the Inner Niger Delta (Mali), Lake Chad (Chad) and the Marais de l'ouest (France).

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Recommendation 2.10: Thanks to the Government of the Netherlands and appreciation of wetland conservation measures taken in the Netherlands

CONSCIOUS of the notable progress made in the work of the Convention thanks to the present Conference;

PAYING tribute to the Government of the Netherlands for its generous financial support to the interim secretariat and for organization of the present Conference;

GRATEFUL to the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries of the Netherlands, and the Queen's Commissioner for the Province of Groningen, both for their hospitality and for their inspiring opening addresses which outlined the national wetlands policy and gave details of conservation measures under consideration at the wetlands of international importance of Oostvaardersplassen, Oosterschelde, Markizaatsmeer and Zwanenwater,

THE SECOND CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

EXPRESSES its warmest thanks and congratulations to the many governmental and non-governmental bodies in the Netherlands who contributed to the success of the present Conference;

EXPRESSES its conviction that the Government of the Netherlands will take fully into account the international importance of the Markermeer as a wetland when balancing the different interests before a final decision is taken on the future of this area; and

THANKS the Government of the Netherlands for its continuing involvement in the development of the Convention through its leading role in the special Task Force established at Groningen.