

**SEVENTH CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES TO
THE CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran 1971)**

May 1999, San Jose, Costa Rica

REPORT OF THE AUSTRALIAN DELEGATION

Prepared by the Biodiversity Group of Environment Australia in consultation with
the members of the Australian Delegation.

This report should be read in conjunction with the Report of the Conference and
the Resolutions and Recommendations agreed at the Conference.



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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Australian Delegation was headed by Stephen Hunter, Head of the Biodiversity Group of Environment Australia. Representation on the delegation from organisations other than Environment Australia included the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, ANZECC Standing Committee on Conservation and the Australian Wetlands Alliance. A full list of members of the delegation is at page 7.

The delegation secured support for the three resolutions put forward by Australia to the Conference with amendments that were in many cases welcome. Consistent with its brief, Australia's active support for the Convention was emphasised and the nomination of four new Australian Ramsar sites announced.

There was some frustration that the Conference had to devote substantial time to the 'political' issues of regionalisation and Yugoslavia. However it is notable that both were satisfactorily resolved without undue tension or use of time. The emergence of issues and the presence on many delegations of officers of foreign ministries may indicate that the Ramsar Convention is growing in stature and political and policy weight.

Review of Implementation of the Convention in Oceania region

Following the presentation of the report for the Oceania region Australia made the following intervention:

Australia is taking this opportunity to provide the Conference with information on several new developments in relation to Australia's participation in and commitment to the Ramsar Convention.

I am delighted to be able to inform the Conference that the Australian Government has decided to nominate four new Ramsar sites. They include the Gwydir Wetlands, which is especially significant, as it is the first such site voluntarily nominated by the private landholders. I wish to acknowledge in particular the efforts of WWF in promoting this nomination.

The other sites to be nominated are Myall Lakes, Narran Lakes and the Great Sandy Strait. Documentation will be with the Ramsar Bureau shortly. We are confident of further significant nominations in the near future.

I am also able to inform you that in the Australian Government Budget announced on Tuesday in Australia additional funds are being provided for Waterwatch with an additional \$12m over three years, as well as a significant increase for the Wetlands Program Budget.

Finally I would like to reflect on Australia's pledges to the 6th Conference of the Parties. The Asia Pacific Wetland Managers Training Program will be run out of Northern Territory University. The Program will commence this year and facilitate access by wetlands management officials from the Asia Pacific Region.

In partnership with Wetlands International Oceania we have provided management advice and training to a number of Pacific Island countries to promote implementation and accession to the Convention. We assisted in convening a Regional Meeting to assist Oceania countries to prepare a coordinated regional approach to this CoP.



We are funding WWF under the tri national Wetlands Cooperative Program to provide practical training for on ground managers in Kakadu National Park in Australia, Wasur National Park in Indonesia and Tonda Wildlife Management Area in PNG.

Finally we are helping develop the East Asian Australasian Shorebird Reserve Network to advance the protection of important wetlands habitats for migratory shorebirds. We are sponsoring a recommendation at this CoP to strengthen mechanisms for multilateral cooperation on migratory waterbird conservation in the Asia Pacific Region.

There are many other dimensions to Australia's conscientious implementation of the Convention that I could mention but I was particularly concerned to highlight those which related to Australia's pledges at CoP6.

Interventions were also made by the Australian Wetland Alliance, WWF and the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum concerning issues such as the need for further progress to reverse the destruction of wetlands, concern over sites which could be listed on the Montreux Record, the need for the Convention's Small Grant Fund funded projects and other sources of funding to implement the Convention in some countries, the need to promote accession to the Convention by Small Island States, and the desirability of establishing regional contacts within the territories of those Contracting Parties from outside the region.

Key Resolutions and Recommendations Sponsored by Australia

Resolution 15.14 Invasive species and wetlands

The resolution was originally sponsored by Australia, and was joined by Uganda, Norway and USA as co-sponsors. The resolution was very strongly supported, including by NGO partners. Following representations by a number of Contracting parties and Partner organisations the resolution was re-drafted considerably and substantially improved.

The resolution acknowledges that adequate control of invasive species is expensive, that eradication is usually impracticable once these species are established, and that prevention and early intervention are the most cost-effective techniques that can be employed against invasive species.

The resolution advocates a much higher priority be given by the Ramsar Convention in addressing invasive species in wetland ecosystems. It requests Contracting Parties prepare an inventory of alien species in wetlands, and prioritise invasive species for programmes of control or eradication.

The resolution also calls upon Contracting Parties to adopt legislation and programmes to prevent the introduction of new and environmentally dangerous alien species into their jurisdiction, and to take account in their actions of the movement and transport of alien species on the global spread of invasive wetland species.

Resolution 15.25 Multilateral cooperation on the conservation of migratory waterbirds in the Asia-Pacific region

This motion was initially sponsored by Australia alone. Following pre conference approaches to Japan at senior levels and, we are assured, agreement at the highest level between the Japanese



environment and foreign affairs agencies, Japan agreed to co-sponsor the resolution subject to certain amendments to the text. With this co-sponsorship comes a commitment by Japan to work actively with Australia to consider an agreement or other arrangements to secure a long-term conservation framework for migratory waterbirds and their habitats which is inclusive of all Asia-Pacific countries.

The agreement of the Conference to this motion combined with the active support of Japan, and positive interventions by China, Russian Federation, USA, Netherlands, Philippines, Korea, Mongolia and NGO partners, gives the development of a multilateral agreement or other arrangement real momentum.

Resolution 15.26 Defining Ramsar site boundaries and interpretation of Articles 2.5 and 4.2 of the Convention

This resolution was originally sponsored by Australia, and joined by the Netherlands and USA as co-sponsors. The resolution addresses the need for the Convention to provide guidance to Contracting Parties on Articles of the Convention related to *urgent national interest* and compensation provisions.

The resolution calls for the development of a more generalised approach to the revision of Ramsar boundaries in cases other than the urgent national interest, to be brought forward at CoP 8. Australia was supported in bringing forward boundary re-definitions for Coongie Lakes and the Port Phillip Bay (Western shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar sites during the next triennium, and to use these as case studies for the work on boundary re-definitions.

Following considerable debate and discussion in the corridors in the plenary session, and in a special lunchtime meeting on the last day, the resolution was adopted and supported on the floor of the plenary by Spain, Peru, Japan, Netherlands and Brazil.

Budget

Australia had been a member of the Standing Committee's Sub-group on Finance in the previous triennium. Australia supported the increase to the overall budget for the 1999-2002 triennium as put forward to the CoP by the sub-group on finance and the Standing Committee. Australia has not been elected to sit on this Sub-group for the 1999-2002 triennium by virtue of having been appointed to the Chair of Standing Committee. Following extensive discussion the CoP agreed to a very minor increase to this budget.

Australia's annual contribution to the Ramsar Convention for the 1999-2002 triennium is to be Swiss francs \$45,474 (2000), \$47,744 (2001) and \$50,133 (2002). This is met from the budget of the Biodiversity Group of Environment Australia.

Credentials Committee

A Credentials Committee was formed, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure for the Conference, to examine the credentials of delegates. Daniel Tehan from the Australian Delegation represented the Oceania Region on the Committee.

Because of the likelihood of a vote being taken at the Conference the credentials committee examined the credentials of delegations in strict accordance with the rules of procedure and reported back to the conference on 12 May 1999. The credentials of 104 contracting parties were confirmed and the



committee reported appreciation for the efforts made by Contracting Parties, with very few problems encountered.

Standing Committee membership for the next triennium

The head of delegation actively participated in meetings of the Standing Committee and the Conference Committee throughout the Conference. Following agreement with Papua New Guinea and New Zealand Australia is the Oceania representative on Standing Committee for the next triennium.

At its first meeting the Standing Committee elected Stephen Hunter, (Head of the Australian Delegation) as its Chair. Vice Chair is Uganda and head of the Finance Sub Committee is Armenia.

Launch of the East Asian Anatidae Site Network

A successful launch of the East Asian Anatidae Site Network (ducks, geese and swans) was held during the lunch break on 14 May. The launch was organised by the Environment Agency of Japan in conjunction with Wetlands International. Seventeen speakers, including Stephen Hunter and Brendan Edgar from the Australian delegation, made statements supporting the establishment of the Network.

The launch was very well supported by Contracting Parties from the Asia-Pacific region and partner NGO's, as well as a large number of representatives from Japanese local government and Japanese press. In conjunction with the launch 25 sites across seven countries were announced as forming the first stage of the Anatidae site network.

The Anatidae site network brings to three the number of networks established under the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Strategy 1996-2000, with the other two being the East-Asian Australasian Shorebird Site Network and the North East Asian Crane Site Network. The success of the Strategy in focussing on the establishment of site networks, the appointment of flyway officers and the implementation of action plans for management is becoming highly regarded internationally.

The 2002 Conference of Contracting Parties

Spain offered to host the next Conference of the Contracting Parties. This offer was passed by acclamation.



2 AUSTRALIAN DELEGATION AND OBSERVERS

| Delegate | Representing |
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| Mr Stephen Hunter | Head of Delegation Environment Australia Head, Biodiversity Group |
| Mr Brendan Edgar | Environment Australia Biodiversity Group Director, Wetlands Unit |
| Ms Liz Thorburn | Environment Australia Biodiversity Group Acting Assistant Director, Wetlands Unit |
| Dr Max Finlayson | Environment Australia Australian representative on the Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel Head, Wetlands Research, ERISS (Environment Research Institute of the Supervising Scientist) |
| Mr Daniel Tehan | Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Second Secretary, Embassy of Australia, Mexico Attended for the first three days of the conference. |
| Mr Max Kitchell | Australia and New Zealand Environment and Conservation Council (ANZECC) Chair of ANZECC Standing Committee on Conservation Director, Parks and Wildlife Service, Tasmania |
| Ms Michelle Handley | Australian Wetlands Alliance Non-government organisation representative World Wide Fund for Nature, Australia |

Australians who participated in the Conference as representatives of partner organisations or as observers included:

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| Ms Angela Brady | Australian Wetlands Alliance |
| Mr Mike Danaher | Wildlife Preservation Society (Capricornia Branch) |
| Mr David Dillon | FAIRA Aboriginal Corporation |
| Mr Eddie Hegerl | Australian Marine Conservation Society |
| Mr Roger Jaensch | Wetlands International, Oceania |
| Mr Jamie Pittock | WWF Australia |
| Ms Christine Prietto | Shortland Wetlands Centre |
| Mr Ray Sonnenburg | Brisbane City Council |
| Mr Michael Storrs | Northern Land Council |
| Ms Di Tarte | Australian Marine Conservation Society |
| Mr Doug Watkins | Wetlands International, Oceania |





3 KEY OUTCOMES AND ACTIVITIES

| Title | Discussion |
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| <p>Resolution 15.1 Regional categorisation of countries under the Convention, and composition, roles and responsibilities of the Standing Committee, including tasks of Standing Committee members</p> <p>(Sponsored by Standing Committee)</p> | <p>Following protracted debate including a special plenary, the Conference adopted a new regional structure in which Australia remains in Oceania. The proposal, sponsored by Iran, to establish arrangements along the lines of the United Nations political groupings was finally withdrawn following a vote on procedural matters which made it clear that the Iranian option would have been clearly defeated had it come to a vote. This enabled the adoption by consensus of a formulation sponsored by Germany which leaves Israel as a member of the Asian region but which also allows it to participate in the European region without formal membership of it. Israel indicated it would avail itself of this option.</p> <p>Australia intervened during the discussion to emphasise strongly its wish to maintain membership of the Oceania region consistent with the biographical underpinning of the Ramsar Convention.</p> <p>The vote which took place concerned whether the conference should accept for consideration a motion put forward by Syria when at a previous session the Conference had resolved by consensus not to give consideration to any further proposals on this matter. Australia voted with almost all European and Neotropical states as well as Japan, US and Canada to maintain the previous decision of the Conference.</p> <p>This was the first occasion on which a vote has been taken at Ramsar CoP. It is relevant that in the final analysis the substantive issue was resolved by consensus.</p> <p>Text of Australian intervention in the plenary discussion on this item follows below:</p> <p><i>Australia, as a member of the current Oceania Group in Ramsar believes strongly that a biogeographical rationale should be used as the basis for the regional groupings of the Ramsar Convention. As such Australia supports the changes as proposed by the Standing Committee Chair that would see, in particular six regional groupings with Australia remaining a member of the Oceania Region.</i></p> <p><i>Australia bases its position on the close regional cooperation it enjoys with members of its biogeographical region on the conservation of wetlands.</i></p> |



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| | <p><i>Examples of this close relationship are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The hosting of the office of Wetlands International-Oceania, including funding for the position of an Oceania Ramsar officer</i> • <i>The implementation of the Tri-National Wetlands Cooperative Program, under which Australia is funding WWF to provide practical training for on-ground wetland managers in national parks in Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Australia</i> • <i>Promotion of the East-Asian Australasian Shorebird Site Network to highlight the importance of wetland areas for migratory shorebirds and to promote activities to conserve these areas in the Asia-Pacific region</i> <p><i>Australia also bases its position on the precedent set by its membership on a number of UN specialised agencies. For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The World Health Organisation where Australia is a member of the Western Pacific Group</i> • <i>UNESCO where Australia is a member of the Asia-Pacific group</i> • <i>The ILO where Australia is a member of the Far-east and Pacific group</i> • <i>The IAEA where Australia is a member of the South-east Asia and Pacific group</i> • <i>The FAO where Australia is a member of the South-west Pacific group; and</i> • <i>CITES where Australia is a member of the Oceania group</i> |
| <p>Resolution 15.2 Composition and <i>modus operandi</i> of the Convention's Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP)</p> <p>(Sponsored by Standing Committee)</p> | <p>Adopted with amendments.</p> <p>Following the passing of resolution VII.1 the composition of STRP will now follow that of Standing Committee, in that the number of members for each Region on STRP will be based on the number of Contracting Parties in that region.</p> <p>The resolution was amended at the conference so that regions eligible for only one representative (currently Oceania and North America) would be permitted to nominate a would be permitted to nominate</p> <p>After discussion with New Zealand and Papua New Guinea, the nomination of Dr Max Finlayson from the Environmental Research Institute of the Supervising Scientist (ERISS) as the Oceania delegate was accepted. Ms B Golder from New Zealand was accepted as the substitute representative.</p> |



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| <p>Resolution 15.3 Partnerships with international organisations</p> <p>Sponsored by Standing Committee</p> | <p>Adopted without amendment.</p> <p>The resolution formalised the existing relationship between the Ramsar Convention and four international NGOs – BirdLife International; IUCN; Wetlands International; WWF. The resolution also adopts rules for conferring the status of International Partner Organisation of the Convention on Wetlands to other inter-governmental and non-governmental international organisations</p> |
| <p>Resolution 15.4 Partnerships and cooperation with other Conventions, including harmonised information management infrastructures</p> <p>(Sponsored by Standing Committee)</p> | <p>Adopted with minor amendments.</p> <p>The resolution endorsed the Joint Work Plan between the Ramsar Bureau and CBD; encourages the development of further joint actions with other international environmental Conventions; and encourages the development of harmonisation of information management between international environmental Conventions.</p> |
| <p>Resolution 15.5 Critical evaluation of the Convention's Small Grants Fund for Wetland Conservation and Wise Use (SGF), and its future operations</p> <p>(Sponsored by the Standing Committee)</p> | <p>Adopted with minor amendments.</p> <p>The resolution develops and initiates a mechanism for receiving contributions to the Small Grants Fund; to initiate conditions on funding; and to improve monitoring and evaluation of projects funded.</p> |
| <p>Resolution 15.6 Guidelines for developing and implementing National Wetland Policies</p> <p>(Sponsored by Standing Committee)</p> | <p>Adopted with minor amendments</p> <p>The resolution adopted the <i>Guidelines for developing and implementing National Wetlands Policies</i>.</p> |
| <p>Resolution 15.7 Guidelines for reviewing laws and institutions to promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands</p> <p>(Sponsored by Standing Committee)</p> | <p>Adopted with amendments</p> <p>The resolution adopted the <i>Guidelines for reviewing laws and institutions to promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands</i>.</p> |
| <p>Resolution 15.8 Guidelines for establishing participatory processes to involve local communities and indigenous people in the management of wetlands</p> <p>(Sponsored by Standing Committee)</p> | <p>Adopted with significant amendments</p> <p>The resolution adopted the <i>Guidelines for establishing participatory processes to involve local communities and indigenous people in the management of wetlands</i>. The guidelines were redrafted at the conference because of significant concerns that they did not reflect the wishes and aspirations of local communities and indigenous people.</p> <p>Australia participated in this resolution with a case study</p> |



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| | from Arnhem Land, organised by ERISS, the Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation and the Northern Land Council. |
| Resolution 15.9 [The Ramsar Convention's] Outreach Programme, 1999-2002 (Sponsored by Ghana, Hungary and Australia) | <p>Adopted with amendments</p> <p>This resolution adopts the Outreach Programme 1999-2000 for communication, education and public awareness of the Ramsar Convention.</p> <p>The resolution requires Contracting Parties to nominate, by 31 December 1999, suitable Government and non-government focal points for communication, education and public awareness.</p> <p>The resolution also calls upon Contracting Parties to establish National Wetland CEPA (communication, education and public awareness) Action Plans by 31 December 2000.</p> |
| Resolution 15.10 Wetland Risk Assessment Framework (Sponsored by Standing Committee) | <p>Adopted with minor amendments</p> <p>To resolution adopted revised definitions for '<i>ecological character</i>' and '<i>change in ecological character</i>' and establishes guidance for undertaking '<i>wetland risk assessment</i>' to assess change in ecological character through the use of early warning systems.</p> |
| Resolution 15.11 Strategic framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance (Sponsored by the Standing Committee) | <p>Adopted with amendments</p> <p>The resolution adopted the "<i>Strategic framework and guidelines for the future development of the list of Wetlands of International Importance</i>" and urges Contracting Parties to apply them at the national or regional level, so as to develop a systematic approach to identifying future Ramsar sites for designation to the List of Wetlands of International Importance</p> <p>The resolution adopts representativeness as an approach to be adopted in establishing national networks of Ramsar sites. The resolution calls for the inclusion of at least one suitable representative of each wetland type present in each biogeographic region. Biogeographic regions are as defined globally, regionally or nationally and applied by each contracting party in a form appropriate to that party.</p> |
| Resolution 15.12 Sites in the Ramsar List: official descriptions, conservation status and management planning, including the situation of particular sites in the territories of specific Contracting Parties | <p>Adopted with amendments.</p> <p>The resolution adopts a number of elements including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . to gain agreement for parties to submit, as a matter of priority, Ramsar information sheets and maps for sites listed under the Convention in their Country. |



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| <p>(Sponsored by the Standing Committee)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . to raise the Convention's target for management planning at Ramsar sites to three quarters of all sites having plans completed by CoP 8 (2002). . for those parties that provided information in their National Report on sites that have undergone, are undergoing or may undergo changes in ecological character to consider listing these sites on the Montreux Record (note that this includes Australia). . to replace the term "Management Guidance Procedure" with "Ramsar Advisory Mission" to make the purpose of the term more immediately obvious <p>In addition the following new Clause 31 was inserted in conjunction with reaching agreement on decision 15.26</p> <p>31. NOTES that Australia will bring forward boundary redefinitions for Coongie Lakes and Port Phillip Bay (Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar sites and will use these as case studies for the work on boundary definitions identified in resolution 15.26.</p> |
| <p>Resolution 15.13 Guidelines for identifying and designating karst and other subterranean hydrological systems as Wetlands of International Importance (Sponsored by Slovenia and Hungary.)</p> | <p>Adopted without amendment</p> <p>The resolution adopts Guidelines for identifying karst and other subterranean hydrological systems as Wetlands of International Importance.</p> |
| <p>Resolution 15.14 Invasive species and wetlands (Sponsored by Australia, Uganda, Norway and USA)</p> | <p>Adopted with significant amendments</p> <p>The resolution was originally sponsored by Australia, and was joined by Uganda, Norway and USA as co-sponsors. The resolution was very strongly supported, including by NGO partners. Following representations by a number of contracting parties and partner organisations the resolution was re-drafted considerably and substantially improved.</p> <p>The resolution acknowledges that adequate control of invasive species is expensive, that eradication is usually impracticable once these species are established, and that prevention and early intervention are the most cost-effective techniques that can be employed against invasive species.</p> <p>The resolution advocates a much higher priority to be given by the Ramsar Convention in addressing invasive species in wetland ecosystems. It requests Contracting Parties to prepare an inventory of alien species in wetlands, and to</p> |



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| | <p>prioritise invasive species for programmes of control or eradication.</p> <p>The resolution also calls upon Contracting Parties to adopt legislation and programmes to prevent the introduction of new and environmentally dangerous alien species into their jurisdiction, and to take account in their actions of the movement and transport of alien species on the global spread of invasive wetland species.</p> |
| Resolution 15.15 Incentive measures to encourage the application of the wise use principles (Sponsored by Honduras and New Zealand.) | <p>Adopted with amendments</p> <p>The resolution urges Contracting Parties to support a range of policy and institutional measures that encourage conservation and wise use of wetlands</p> |
| Resolution 15.16 The Ramsar Convention and impact assessment: strategic, environmental and social (Sponsored by Honduras) | <p>Adopted with amendments</p> <p>The resolution calls upon Contracting Parties to strengthen their efforts to improve the effectiveness of environmental impact assessment processes, to protect the ecological character of wetlands.</p> |
| Resolution 15.17 Restoration as an element of national planning for wetland conservation and wise use (Sponsored by Denmark and the Netherlands) | <p>Adopted with amendments</p> <p>The resolution calls upon Contracting Parties to promote national programmes of wetland restoration as providing significant benefits, while recognising that restoration cannot replace the loss of natural wetlands.</p> <p>The resolution also calls upon Contracting Parties to document the extent of wetland losses.</p> |
| Resolution 15.18 A global action plan for the wise use and management of peatlands (Sponsored by Canada) | <p>Adopted with amendments</p> <p>The resolution adopts the <i>Global Action Plan for the Wise Use and Management of Peatlands</i>.</p> |
| Resolution 15.19 Guidelines for integrating wetland conservation and wise use into river basin management (Sponsored by India and Malaysia) | <p>Adopted with amendments</p> <p>The resolution adopts Guidelines which have been designed to assist Parties to integrate wetland conservation into river basin management. The main areas addressed are integrated river basin management; development and strengthening of policy and legislation for integrated water resources management; establishment of river basin management authorities, strengthening of institutional capacity; involvement of stakeholders, community participation and public awareness; assessment and enhancement of the role of wetlands in water management; identification of current and future demands for water;</p> |



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| | <p>minimising the impacts of land use and water development projects on wetlands and their biodiversity; maintenance of natural water regimes to maintain wetlands; and international cooperation.</p> |
| <p>Resolution 15.20 Guidelines for international cooperation under the Convention (Sponsored by the Standing Committee)</p> | <p>Adopted with amendments</p> <p>The resolution adopts <i>Guidelines for International Cooperation under the Convention on Wetlands</i> which focuses on shared wetland resources and shared wetland species between contracting parties.</p> |
| <p>Resolution 15.21 Priorities for wetland inventory (Sponsored by the United Kingdom)</p> | <p>Adopted with amendments</p> <p>The resolution urges Contracting Parties to complete comprehensive national wetland inventories, and to recognise the role of a national wetlands inventory in supporting policy development and nomination of new Ramsar sites.</p> <p>Preparatory work for this resolution was undertaken by Wetlands International and ERISS with an international CD-ROM report being launched during the conference.</p> |
| <p>Resolution 15.22 Enhancing the conservation and wise use of intertidal wetlands (Sponsored by Philippines)</p> | <p>Adopted with amendments</p> <p>The resolution draws attention to the critical situation facing intertidal wetlands in many regions of the world, and urges Contracting Parties to undertake actions to conserve intertidal wetlands.</p> |
| <p>Resolution 15.23 Collaborative structure for Mediterranean wetlands (Sponsored by Albania, France, Greece, Spain, Portugal and Slovenia)</p> | <p>Adopted with amendments</p> <p>The resolution endorses MedWet, which has resulted in a coordinated and concerted effort to conserve Mediterranean wetlands.</p> |
| <p>Resolution 15.24 Small Island Developing States and the Ramsar Convention (Sponsored by Papua New Guinea)</p> | <p>Adopted with amendments</p> <p>The resolution draws attention to the special needs of Small Island Developing States; communicates the outcomes of the First Oceania Regional meeting to the Ramsar Convention; and identifies actions for the Standing Committee, Bureau, Contracting Parties, and agencies with a role in supporting wetland initiatives in the Oceania region.</p> <p>Australia and New Zealand worked closely with PNG in supporting this recommendation.</p> |
| <p>Resolution 15.25 Multilateral cooperation on the conservation of</p> | <p>Adopted with amendments</p> |



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| <p>migratory waterbirds in the Asia-Pacific region (Sponsored by Australia and Japan)</p> | <p>This motion was initially sponsored by Australia alone. Following pre conference approaches to Japan at senior levels and, we are assured, agreement at the highest level between the Japanese environment and foreign affairs agencies, Japan agreed to co-sponsor the resolution subject to certain amendments to the text.</p> <p>These lessen slightly the tightness of a commitment to a multi lateral agreement to provide a long term conservation framework for migratory waterbirds and their habitats which is inclusive of all Asia Pacific countries. On the other hand Japan provided assurances that it will work actively with Australia to enable active consideration of such an agreement. This assurance was given substance when, as a result in part of Japanese efforts, the following intervened to support the motion: China, Russian Federation, USA, Netherlands, Philippines, Korea, Mongolia and NGO partners.</p> <p>The agreement of the Conference to this motion combined with the active support of Japan and other relevant regions give the development of a multilateral agreement or other arrangement real momentum.</p> |
| <p>Resolution 15.26 and 15.27 Defining Ramsar site boundaries and interpretation of Articles 2.5 and 4.2 of the Convention (Sponsored by Australia, the Netherlands and USA)</p> | <p>Resolutions 15.26 and 15.27 were combined into a single resolution and adopted with significant amendments.</p> <p>The resolutions address the need for the Convention to provide guidance to Contracting Parties on Articles of the Convention related to <i>urgent national interest</i> and compensation provisions. The resolution also addresses situations where site boundaries may need further definition, but are not in the urgent national interest.</p> <p>Australia brought this resolution to the conference and it resulted in considerable debate, particularly among NGO partner organisations who were concerned that if passed it could open the way for contracting parties to inappropriately excise areas from their Ramsar sites.</p> <p>The resolution was passed on the final afternoon of the conference following a special lunch time meeting to reach consensus on the text.</p> <p>The key outcome was that, with the endorsement of the CoP itself, Australia will bring forward boundary redefinitions for Coongie Lakes and Port Phillip Bay (Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar sites, and will use these as case studies for the development of a more generalised approach to the revision of Ramsar site boundaries in cases other than the urgent national interest.</p> |



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| | The final resolution was supported on the floor of the plenary by Spain, Peru, Japan, Netherlands and Brazil and was then passed without further discussion or amendment. |
| Resolution 15.28 Compensation on wetland habitats (Sponsored by Australia, Ghana Netherlands, Uganda and the USA) | Adopted with amendments The resolution urges Contracting Parties to take all practicable measures for compensating for wetland loss, and to develop criteria and guidelines for compensation of wetland habitats and their functions. |
| Resolution 15.29 Measuring water quality in wetlands (Sponsored by Spain, Sweden, United States and Great Britain) | Adopted with amendments This resolution requests Contracting Parties to intensify studies on the presence of toxic substances in the water, sediments and biota of wetlands. |
| Resolution 15.30 Creation of a Regional Ramsar Centre for Training and Research on Wetlands in the Western Hemisphere (Sponsored by Panama) | Adopted without amendment This resolution supports the efforts of the Government of Panama to establish a Regional Ramsar Centre for Training and Research on Wetlands in the Western Hemisphere. |
| Resolution 15.31 Greek Ramsar sites (Sponsored by Greece) | Has become Doc 15.12.1 and no longer exists as a separate document. Passed with amendments |
| Resolution 15.32 The Wetlands for the Future Initiative (Sponsored by the United States of America) | Adopted with amendments This resolution urges Contracting Parties to undertake programmes on wetland training, similar to the model provided by the Wetlands for the Future Initiative funded by the USA. |
| Resolution 15.33 The Convention Work Plan 2000-2002 (Sponsored by the Standing Committee) | Adopted with amendments |
| Resolution 15.34 Financial and Budgetary Matters (Sponsored by the Standing Committee) | Adopted with amendments This resolution adopts the budget for the Ramsar Bureau for the next tri-ennium, with a 5%, 2% and 2% increase for each year from 2000-2002. Australia's annual contribution to the Ramsar Convention for the 1999-2002 triennium is to be accordingly \$45,474 (2000), \$47,744 (2001) and \$50,133 (2002). This is met from the budget of the Biodiversity Group of Environment Australia The budget was the subject of significant discussions with a number of Contracting Parties and NGO partners calling for |



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| | <p>a significant increase to the budget. The increase was sought on the basis of the workload expected of the secretariat, the work plan adopted at the conference and the size of the Ramsar budget when compared with other International environment Conventions.</p> <p>It was not possible to reach consensus on an increase in the budget beyond that put forward by the Standing Committee and the sub-group on finance, despite a number of attempts to reach consensus and the establishment of a contact group chaired by Ireland.</p> <p>With the adoption of a minimum fee of \$1000 SFR for all Contracting Parties the budget was increased modestly because of the extra fees generated by those Contracting Parties who had been paying less than \$1000 SFR.</p> |
| Resolution 15.35 Thanks to the Host Country | <p>Adopted</p> <p>Resolution congratulates Costa Rica on hosting the 7th Conference of the Contracting Parties.</p> |
| <p>Resolution 15.36 Status of Yugoslavia in the Ramsar Convention</p> <p>(Sponsored by Albania, Croatia, Czech Republic, Pakistan, Slovenia, Turkey, United States and Nicaragua)</p> | <p>Following extensive informal negotiations over the entire length of the Conference the Conference, a resolution was adopted by consensus on this matter. The resolution notes that the Contracting Party "The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia" has ceased to exist and has been replaced by five successor states and that in general such states continue to be bound by the treaty obligations of the predecessor state. In the operative element of the resolution the Conference "calls upon Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to submit to the Depository a notification of succession to the Ramsar Convention as the other successor states have done."</p> <p>The resolution was sponsored by Albania, Croatia, Czech Republic, Pakistan, Slovenia, Turkey, United States and Nicaragua. The Russian Federation, India, China, Armenia, Zambia, and Algeria all indicated that they viewed the motion as political in character rather than of practical significance since Yugoslavia did not attend the CoP. On this basis they all advised that if the matter came to a vote each would abstain.</p> <p>Over the latter days of the Conference the Australian delegation kept track of the progress of negotiations on this matter but did not participate actively. As the resolution was adopted virtually without debate it was not necessary to express a position in plenary.</p> |





Attachment 1

Ramsar COP7 DOC. 15.14

“People and Wetlands: The Vital Link”
**7th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971),
San José, Costa Rica, 10-18 May 1999**

**Proposal No. 14
Resolution**

Invasive Species and Wetlands

Sponsored by Australia, Norway, Uganda and USA

1. AWARE of the severe threat that alien species pose to the ecological character of wetlands, and to wetland species, terrestrial and marine, if they become invasive;
2. ACKNOWLEDGING that adequate control of invasive species is often expensive and eradication is usually impracticable once these species are established, and that prevention and early intervention are the most cost-effective techniques that can be employed against invasive species;
3. ACKNOWLEDGING the role that the accidental or deliberate movement and transport of alien species plays in the global spread of new invasive species problems;
4. RECALLING Resolution 5.6 on the implementation of the Wise Use concept and Resolution 5.7 on Guidelines for Management Planning for Ramsar sites and other Wetlands which include references to control of the introduction of invasive species, measures to avoid accidental introductions, eradication of introduced species and damage for unlawful introductions;
5. NOTING Background Document 24, Outline of a Keynote Presentation on *Invasive Species and Wetlands* presented at this Conference, which included definitions for alien and invasive species, the effects of invasive species on the ecological character and functions of wetlands, examples of organisms that can become invasive, methods of control and solutions for combating invasive species;
6. ACKNOWLEDGING the Memorandum of Cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Joint Ramsar-CBD Work Plan agreed at the 4th CBD Conference of the Parties, and the obligation in the Convention on Biological Diversity to “prevent the introduction of, control or eradicate those alien species which threaten ecosystems, habitats or species” (Article 8(h));
7. NOTING that the 4th Conference of Contracting Parties to CBD made a number of relevant decisions on invasive species including decision IV/4 which called for the compilation of case studies on the impact and management of invasive species for inland waters, and decision IV/5 which sets out to achieve a better understanding of alien species and their impact on marine and coastal ecosystems;



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8. NOTING that the 4th Conference of Contracting Parties to CBD requested the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice to develop guiding principles for the prevention, introduction and mitigation of impacts of alien species and to report on those principles and any related work programme to the Conference of Contracting Parties at the 5th meeting;
 9. NOTING the work of the Global Invasive Species Program (GISP), coordinated by the Scientific Committee for Problems of the Environment, which is developing a global strategy and action plan, and a set of practical tools to deal with invasive species; and the work of the IUCN in preparing draft Guidelines for the Prevention of Biological Diversity Loss due to Biological Invasion;
 10. APPLAUDING significant invasive initiatives being undertaken in a wide range of regions by Contracting Parties and partner organisations, including as examples the U.S. Presidential Executive Order on Invasive Species (Feb 3, 1999), the current project in the five Nordic Countries on evasive and alien species under the Nordic Council of Ministers, and the IUCN/Ramsar Invasive Species Awareness Programme for Africa; and
 11. ALSO NOTING the outcomes of the 13th session of the Global Biodiversity Forum on invasive species which immediately preceded this Conference;

THE CONFERENCE OF CONTRACTING PARTIES

12. CALLS UPON Contracting Parties to wherever possible address the environmental, economic and social impact of invasive species on wetlands within their jurisdictions;
13. ALSO CALLS UPON Contracting Parties to take account of the methods of control and solutions for combating invasive species outlined in the special intervention on *Wetlands and Invasive Species* presented at this Conference for the management of invasive species;
14. INVITES Contracting Parties to provide the Bureau with information on databases which exist for invasive species, information on invasive species which pose a threat to wetlands and wetland species, and information on the control and eradication of invasive wetland species;
15. DIRECTS the Bureau, subject to the availability of funds and human resources, to:
 - (a) advocate the high priority given by the Ramsar Convention in addressing invasive species in wetland ecosystems to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Global Invasive Species Program, global trade and transport organisations and other relevant organisations and initiatives, to ensure that the impact on wetlands from invasive species is prominently addressed;
 - (b) bring this resolution to the attention of other Convention secretariats and international organisations, to ensure cooperation with existing programmes and to initiate new partnerships;
 - (c) work with existing programmes in establishing a practical data system that identifies invasive species which pose a threat to wetlands and wetland species, and includes methods for and advice on the control and eradication of invasive wetland species; and
 - (d) prepare case studies where invasive species have adversely affected the ecological character, social and economic benefits of wetlands and Ramsar sites.



16. DIRECTS the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), subject to the availability of funds and human resources, to:
- (a) prepare wetland specific guidelines for identifying, establishing priorities for action, and managing alien species which potentially pose a threat to wetlands and wetland species, in cooperation with the Biodiversity Convention's SBSTTA, the Global Invasive Species Program and other programmes established under international conventions, as well as taking account of the IUCN draft Guidelines for the Prevention of Biological Diversity Loss due to Biological Invasion; and
 - (b) consult with relevant parties to prepare, for the benefit of the Contracting Parties, guidance on legislation and best practice management approaches that incorporate 'risk assessment', in order to minimise the introduction of new and environmentally dangerous alien species into a jurisdiction, and the movement or trade of such species within a jurisdiction.
17. INVITES Contracting Parties to make voluntary contributions to undertake the activities of the Bureau and STRP outlined in this resolution, noting that the implementation of this resolution is subject to the provision of adequate financial and human resources;
18. URGES Contracting Parties to prepare, within their jurisdictions, an inventory of alien species in wetlands and to assess them so as to identify and prioritise those which pose a threat to wetlands and wetland species ('risk assessment'), and those which may be adequately controlled or eradicated;
19. URGES Contracting Parties to formulate programmes to target invasive species with a view to control or eradication, as well as implement existing training programmes;
20. URGES Contracting Parties to wherever possible in their actions, address the environmental, economic and social impact of the movement and transport of alien species on the global spread of invasive wetland species;
21. URGES Contracting Parties, pursuant to Resolution 15.7, to review existing legal and institutional measures and where necessary adopt legislation and programmes to prevent the introduction of new and environmentally dangerous alien species into their jurisdiction, and the movement or trade of such species within their jurisdiction;
22. URGES Contracting Parties to develop capacity for the identification of new and environmentally dangerous alien species (including those being trialed for agricultural and horticultural use) and the promotion and enforcement of legislation and best practice management;
23. URGES Contracting Parties to facilitate awareness of, and resource the identification and control of, new and environmentally dangerous alien species; and
24. URGES collaboration between Contracting Parties with a view to exchanging information and experience, increasing overall capacity to deal with wetland invasive species and promoting regional coordination of invasive species programmes.



Attachment 2

Ramsar COP7 DOC. 15.25

“People and Wetlands: The Vital Link”
**7th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971),
San José, Costa Rica, 10-18 May 1999**

Proposal No. 25 Recommendation

Multilateral cooperation on the conservation of migratory waterbirds in the Asia-Pacific region

Sponsored by Australia and Japan

1. RECALLING Article 5 of the Ramsar Convention, which calls for international consultation and coordination in the conservation and management of shared wetland resources;
2. NOTING Recommendations 4.4, which calls for networks of wetland reserves to be established, and 4.12, which recognises the Flyway concept for the conservation of wetland bird species;
3. NOTING Action 7.2.5 of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 1997-2002 to ‘Enhance Ramsar’s contribution to international cooperation on shared wetland species, notably through cooperative arrangements with the Convention on Migratory Species, Flyway agreements, networks and other mechanisms dealing with migratory species’;
4. RECALLING the “Kushiro Initiative” of December 1994, which called for enhanced mechanisms for collaborative action to conserve waterbird species in the Asia-Pacific region, establishment of a network of sites critical for waterbird conservation, and sustainable management of waterbirds, which also recommended the development of a regional multilateral waterbird agreement;
5. NOTING that pursuant to Recommendation 6.4 (the ‘Brisbane Initiative’) of the 6th Conference of the Contracting Parties, an East Asian-Australasian Shorebird Reserve Network has been established and continues to expand;
6. FURTHER NOTING the development of the North East Asian Crane Site Network and the Anatidae Site Network in the East Asian Flyway;
7. RECALLING that the *Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy 1996-2000* calls for development of an Asia-Pacific multilateral migratory waterbird conservation agreement;
8. NOTING the guidelines for Contracting Parties on International Cooperation under the Convention on Wetlands, being considered for adoption at this Conference of Parties (Ramsar COP7 DOC. 15.20);



9. ACKNOWLEDGING that the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) Resolution 5.4 lists development of Regional Agreements as a key priority and calls for continued support for the *Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy 1996-2000*;
10. AWARE of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ramsar Bureau and the CMS Secretariat, through which they have agreed to intensify their cooperation in implementation of both conventions, as well as Agreements concluded under CMS;
11. CONVINCED of the need for a concerted multilateral approach to the conservation of migratory waterbirds within each of the major Flyways of the globe;
12. RECOGNISING the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement as a useful model for international cooperation in the conservation of migratory waterbird species; and
13. CONVINCED that the Ramsar Convention, through the cooperative actions of its Contracting Parties along the major Flyways, can facilitate the development of a multilateral approach to waterbird conservation in the Asia-Pacific region;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

14. REQUESTS Contracting Parties to extend their support to the *Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy 1996-2000*, and to work on having in place a secure and extended framework of international cooperation for the conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats in the Asia-Pacific region beyond 2000;
15. URGES Contracting Parties in the Asia-Pacific region to nominate additional sites to the Networks established under the *Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy* and to participate fully in the Action Plans developed under the *Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy*;
16. COMMENDS the *Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy* to other parties within the Asia-Pacific Region who are not yet Contracting Parties, and urges their full participation in the *Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy*; and
17. CALLS UPON Contracting Parties to consider actively the development of a multilateral agreement or other arrangement, to provide a long-term conservation framework for migratory waterbirds and their habitats which is inclusive of all Asia-Pacific countries.



Attachment 3

Ramsar COP7 DOC. 15.26, Rev. 1

“People and Wetlands: The Vital Link”
**7th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971),
San José, Costa Rica, 10-18 May 1999**

**Proposal No. 26
Resolution**

Issues concerning the boundary definitions of Ramsar sites and compensation of wetland habitats

Sponsored by Australia the Netherlands and the USA

1. AWARE that Article 2.1 of the Convention obliges Contracting Parties to describe precisely and delimit on a map the boundaries of the wetlands designated for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance, and RECALLING Resolution 5.3 which recognised that some wetlands were designated for the List before any criteria or information recording system had been developed under the Convention;
2. ALSO RECALLING Article 2.5 which states that *“any Contracting Party shall have the right . . . because of its urgent national interests, to delete or restrict the boundaries of wetlands already included by it in the List”*, and Article 4.2 which states that *“where a Contracting Party in its urgent national interest, deletes or restricts the boundaries of a wetland included in the List, it should as far as possible compensate for any loss of wetland resources, and in particular it should create additional nature reserves for waterfowl and for the protection, either in the same area or elsewhere, of an adequate portion of the original habitat”*;
3. CONSCIOUS that the Conference of the Contracting Parties does not wish to encourage the deletion or restriction of the boundaries of a Listed site, preferring to see all feasible alternatives examined through rigorous and transparent assessments, in consultation with all stakeholders, before Contracting Parties exercise their right to take such action;
4. NOTING that at present there is no guidance provided by the Convention to assist Contracting Parties considering the deletion or restriction of the boundaries of a Ramsar site to establish a true and internationally acceptable case of urgent national interest, and thereafter how to meet their obligations under Article 4.2 in terms of listing suitable compensatory habitat;
5. RECOGNIZING that some Contracting Parties have extensive case law relating to aspects of the determination of urgent national interest, habitat compensation and mitigation;
6. NOTING ALSO the advances in technology which have allowed for a higher resolution of site boundaries than previously available, and the continuing increase in both quantity and quality of data available for Ramsar sites which increases our understanding of their ecological character; and



7. NOTING COP VII Resolution 15.28 which addresses the need for compensation for lost wetland habitats and other functions;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

8. RECOGNISES that there are situations, other than the urgent national interest provision of article 2.5 of the Convention text, where Ramsar site boundaries may warrant further definition, for example, where boundaries were erroneously or inaccurately defined at the time of listing;
9. REQUESTS the Standing Committee to develop and propose to COP VIII a procedure for the review of Ramsar site boundaries for reasons other than urgent national interest, without prejudice to other international obligations;
10. Recognises that Australia will prepare two case studies (as referred to in Resolution 15.12) for the development of a more generalised approach to the revision of Ramsar boundaries in cases other than the urgent national interest, and will provide the outcomes of these case studies in time for consideration at COP VIII.
11. REQUESTS the Standing Committee, with support from the Bureau, and in consultation with the STRP, experts familiar with the Habitats Directive of the European Union, appropriate legal and other experts, and interested Contracting Parties, to develop for consideration and possible adoption at COP8 guidance for the Contracting Parties in interpreting Articles 2.5 and 4.2, if resources allow;
12. CALLS UPON any Contracting Parties that consider the deletion or restriction of the boundaries of a Ramsar site in the urgent national interest prior to COP8, to exercise the highest levels of environmental, economic and social impact assessment which take into consideration the full range of functions, services and benefits offered by the wetland;
13. URGES those Contracting Parties or organizations with experience in issues of urgent national interest or similar determinations and habitat compensation and mitigation issues to provide any relevant information and materials to the Bureau for consideration by the Standing Committee by no later than 30 September 1999.



Attachment 4

Ramsar COP7 DOC. 15.12, Rev. 1

“People and Wetlands: The Vital Link”
7th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971),
San José, Costa Rica, 10-18 May 1999

Proposal No. 12
Resolution

Sites in the Ramsar list of Wetlands of International Importance: official descriptions, conservation status, and management plans, including the situation of particular sites in the territories of specific Contracting Parties

Sponsored by the Standing Committee

The following new Clause 31 was inserted in conjunction with reaching agreement on decision 15.26

31. NOTES that Australia will bring forward boundary redefinitions for Coongie Lakes and Western Shoreline of Port Phillip Bay Ramsar sites and will use these as case studies for the work on boundary definitions identified in resolution 15.26.