



The Convention on Wetlands, signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971, is an intergovernmental treaty which provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the **conservation** and **wise use** of wetlands and their resources.

<http://www.ramsar.org/>



STRP Newsletter – July 2009

The quarterly Newsletter of the Scientific & Technical Review Panel (STRP) of the Ramsar Convention

Dear STRP National Focal Points, this newsletter has been created by the Ramsar Convention Secretariat in collaboration with STRP members and Observer Organizations with the purpose of keeping you informed on the progress of the Panel's work during this new triennium 2009-2012, hopefully to provide you with useful information on wetland conservation for the implementation of the Convention in your own country and to enhance our STRP network throughout the regions.

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- List of STRP National Focal Points. [Click here](#)
- List of Ramsar Administrative Authorities. [Click here.](#)
- STRP Support Service http://www.wetlands.org/_strp/
- The Ramsar Site Information Service <http://ramsar.wetlands.org/>
- The Global Environmental Flows Network eFlowNet www.eflownet.org

Ramsar's International Organization Partners:

- BirdLife International www.birdlife.org
- IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) www.iucn.org
- IWMI (International Water Management Institute) <http://www.iwmi.cgiar.org/>
- Wetlands International www.wetlands.org
- WWF www.panda.org

General Matters

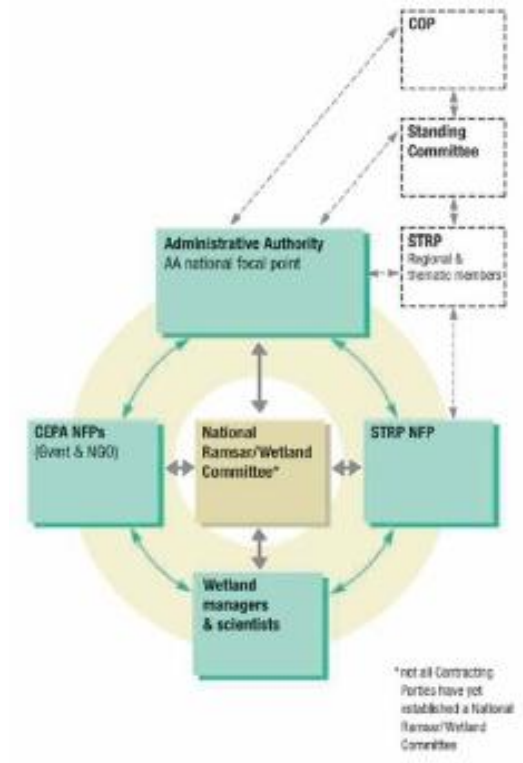
STRP National Focal Point: what is my role?

The STRP National Focal Point is an acknowledged and committed wetland expert from either Government or other organization, appointed by the Administrative Authority of a member country. Amongst several duties, he/she:

- liaises with the STRP Regional Networkers to provide input on in-country matters related to the STRP Thematic Work Areas for the triennium;
- liaises with the Administrative Authority on STRP matters;
- disseminates Ramsar and STRP information to the relevant stakeholders in the country;
- provides input on draft guidance documents prepared by the STRP via STRP Support Service; and
- ensures that key national & regional issues are communicated to STRP through the STRP Regional Networkers;

STRP Regional Networker for:

Africa: Stanley Liphadzi (Stanleyl@wrc.org.za)
Asia: Rebecca D'Cruz (aonyx@po.jaring.my)
Europe: Rebecca Lee (rebecca.lee@wwt.org.uk)
Neotropics: Montserrat Carbonell (poikilotermo@gmail.com)
North America: Randy Milton (miltongr@gov.ns.ca)
Oceania: Philippe Gerbeaux (pgerbeaux@doc.govt.nz)



Full Terms of Reference are provided in the Appendix of [Resolution X.9](#). A very useful Brochure on the roles of National Focal Points was developed by STRP and is available in the three languages from the [Ramsar website](#).

STRP 2009-2012 appointed Members – who are they?

In February 2009, the STRP Oversight Committee appointed the new STRP members for the 2009-2012 triennium under the refinements of the STRP *modus operandi* adopted by COP10 ([Resolution X.9](#)). The Committee has also recognized two additional special categories, “Invited Expert” and “Member at-large”. The Panel is so formed:

STRP Role	Name
Chairperson (and lead for Thematic Work Area 2: Strategic, emerging and ongoing issues)	Dr Heather MacKay
Vice-Chairperson (and lead for Thematic Work Area 1: Regional networking)	Ms Rebecca D'Cruz
Regional Networkers	
for Africa	Dr Stanley Liphadzi
for Asia	Ms Rebecca D'Cruz
for Europe	Ms Rebecca Lee
for Neotropics	Dr Montserrat Carbonell
for North America	Mr Randy Milton
for Oceania	Dr Philippe Gerbeaux
Thematic Work Area experts	
Wetland Inventory, Assessment, Monitoring & Reporting (TWA3)	Mr Dave Pritchard
Wetlands & Human Health (TWA4)	Dr Pierre Horwitz
Wetlands & Climate Change (TWA5)	Prof Max Finlayson
Wetlands & Water Resources Management (TWA6)	Prof Mike Acreman
Wetlands of International Importance (TWA7)	Mr David Stroud
Wetland Management - Restoration, Mitigation & Compensation (TWA8)	Mr Kevin Erwin
Wetland & Agriculture (TWA9)	Mr George Lukacs
Communication, Education, Participation & Awareness (CEPA) (TWA10)	Ms Christine Prietto

Invited experts	
	Dr Cui Lijuan (China)
	Prof Chris Gordon (Ghana)
	Prof Royal Gardner (USA)
	Prof Sang-Don Lee (Rep. of Korea)
	Prof Andrej Sirin (Russian Federation)
	Dr Ernesto Briones (Ecuador)
	Prof Kassim Kulindwa (Tanzania)
	Dr Ebenizário Chonguiça (Mozambique)
	Dr Lucy Emerton (United Kingdom)
	Prof Colin Lloyd (United Kingdom)
Member at-large	Mr Teresita Borges Hernández (Cuba)
International Organization Partner (IOP) members	
BirdLife International	Dr Vicky Jones
IUCN (the International Union for Conservation of Nature)	Dr Mark Smith
IWMI (Integrated Water Management Institute)	Dr Matthew McCartney
Wetlands International	Mr Ritesh Kumar
WWF	Mr Archana Chatterjee

COP10 – insights

Recognizing the close involvement of STRP in the preparation and review of draft Resolutions in the lead-up to COP10....



In November 2008, the city of Changwon in the Republic of Korea hosted the 10th Conference of the Contracting Parties ([COP10](#)), gathering together hundreds of people from Contracting Parties' Governments, UN Agencies, NGOs, international organizations and the water sector. Ten members of the 2006-2008 STRP and a number of invited experts were also able to participate in COP10 for its full duration. STRP members and experts actively supported Parties in the discussions related to several key scientific and technical Resolutions, and they also presented STRP technical briefings to assist the Parties in their negotiations. Amongst others, COP10 adopted technical [Resolutions](#)

addressing the strategic global issues of climate change, biofuels, river basin management, extractive industries and Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza that will shape the STRP's work for some years to come. The negotiations on these Resolutions were intense but productive. Parties recognized the need for action on these issues at global and national levels and strove to find consensus within the constraints of a very tight agenda.



A highlight of COP10, the **Changwon Declaration** ([Res. X.3](#)) sets out the Convention's views on the role and importance of wetlands across many other sectors such as water resources, agriculture, spatial planning, economic development, poverty reduction, and infrastructure development. This Declaration provides a useful vehicle to deliver these messages to our colleagues in other sectors and in other international and national policy-making processes;

we hope we will all, National Administrative Authorities, STRP members and Ramsar Partners, raise awareness of this Declaration in our own countries!

Updates from STRP15 meeting

The first meeting of the STRP for the 2009-2012 cycle - STRP15 - was held from 30 March to 3 April 2009, in Gland, Switzerland. Over fifty participants, including STRP appointed members, International Organization Partner representatives and Observer Organization delegates contributed to the development of the approaches to delivering each of the Panel's Tasks set out by the COP10 in [Resolution X.10](#). Working groups for each of the ten Thematic Work Areas met in parallel sessions and discussed the scientific and technical tasks, agreeing on the approach to take for execution and delivery each of the tasks, and refined the estimates of resources needed to complete each task.



The STRP work plan for 2009-2012 is, as ever, broad in scope and addresses a number of interconnected issues. A range of products are proposed, including guidance for Parties on issues related to management of Ramsar sites and other wetlands, but also importantly including development of scientific wetland-related information for input to other international processes, primarily those on climate change mitigation and adaptation, water resources, human health and agriculture. Highlights of the 2009-2012 work plan include a second phase of collaboration with the European Space Agency on their GlobWetland II programme, based on the very successful [GlobWetland I project](#) which delivered remote

sensing products for wetland management to managers of over 50 Ramsar sites and other wetlands, as well as development of further collaboration with the Japanese Space Agency JAXA using the capabilities of their ALOS 2 programme. In addition, the STRP is directing significant energy and resources into supporting our Contracting Parties in ongoing global discussions around the role and importance of wetlands in climate change mitigation and adaptation.

You can read the full report and list of STRP15 Participants [here](#).
The full work plan for 2009-2012 can be found [here](#).

STRP Support Service

The work of the Panel is assisted by the STRP Support Service (also called SuSe), a web-based platform that allows STRP National Focal Points, STRP Members and additional contacts among the expert networks of the International Organization Partners and other groups to view and exchange information and opinions related to the Panel's ongoing work. In particular it gives the opportunity to review and comment on the various new guidance, Ramsar Technical Reports, information papers and technical advisory notes that will be developed by the STRP in this triennium.

The Support Service, accessible at http://www.wetlands.org/_strp/ through a username and password, is operated by Wetlands International (WI) under contract with the Ramsar Convention. All STRP National Focal Points are subscribed. If for any reason you didn't receive your log in information, please contact stp@ramsar.org

The SuSe supports a number of fora dealing with different Thematic Work Areas. Each forum contains separate discussion threads and a library where all the posted documents are archived. You receive email alerts each time someone participates in a discussion of a forum you are subscribed to.

Some fixes currently under way....

Unfortunately - as you might have noticed - some of SuSe's sections are still out of date and we are still using the old "2006-2008 General Matters" forum for our general discussions; this is due to some problems with Wetlands International's Server; Hopefully all the fixes and the creation of new fora will be completed by the mid September – for the moment we have to be a bit patient!

Six special fora dedicated to the Ramsar Regions: **AFRICA, ASIA, EUROPE, NEOTROPICS, NORTH AMERICA AND OCEANIA** for the STRP National Focal Points and other members to develop, discuss and share matters relevant to their region.

Topic of the Quarter

"Wetland Restoration"

A story from our STRP member Kevin Erwin....

At the time the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands was ratified (1971) the community of wetland scientists and conservationists were focused on understanding how wetlands functioned and what values did they provide to society. Wetlands were being lost at an astonishing rate with little means for protection and no thoughts of restoration. I know as during that time I was finishing university and working for the National Marine Fisheries Service in Florida, USA. Florida's runaway growth, usually the highest in the nation, also put us at the forefront of regulating wetland impacts, mitigating the damage and thus the need for restoration. Early projects were often fairly simple and usually failed due to the problems associated with a new science and the fact that regulations were often guiding our efforts. My first wetland restoration was a mangrove project in 1974 and at that time you could count the number of qualified restoration ecologists and practitioners on one hand. Today, wetland restoration science is well founded with many competent practitioners, excellent research and numerous successful projects implemented around the world.



The 10th Conference of Parties in Changwon has mandated the STRP to provide new guidance on wetland restoration and mitigation as a result of the Parties ever growing needs to undertake these activities as they seek to reduce and replace the loss of important functions and values. As a result, wetland restoration is now taking larger forms in more complex scales from watershed management to mitigating the impacts of climate change. In the early 1970s, the main obstacle confronting wetland restoration efforts was developing the science for successful wetland restoration projects. Although we have made much progress on that front, I believe the issue of climate change may present greater challenges to wetland conservation and restoration. Earlier this year we published a revised policy paper originally produced at the request of the STRP entitled "[Wetlands and global climate change: the role of wetland restoration in a changing world](#)" (Wetlands Ecology & Management (2009) 17:71–84). Climate change will make future efforts to restore and manage wetlands more complex. Wetland systems are vulnerable to changes in quantity and quality of their water supply, and it is expected that climate change will have a pronounced effect on wetlands through alterations in hydrological regimes with great global variability.

Globally, there are many significant opportunities for large-scale, cost effective wetland restoration that would stabilize water supplies, regulate base flows, attenuate floods, etc. Vast areas of hydric soils have been impacted by agricultural conversion and drainage. Restoring degraded hydric soils and ecosystems also has a high potential for sequestering soil carbon. Most degraded soils have lost a large fraction of the antecedent Soil Organic Carbon pool, which can be restored through the restoration of wetland hydrology (e.g., plugging drains) often a critical component of restoration. The fact that carbon storage is enhanced under anoxic conditions is important because flooded wetlands provide optimal conditions for accretion of organic matter.

What is the STRP Working Group on Wetlands Restoration, Mitigation and Management currently working on?

- preparing proposals for updating and expanding existing Ramsar guidance on restoration and rehabilitation of lost or degraded wetlands, in the context of [Resolution X.16](#) on *A Framework for processes of detecting, reporting and responding to change in wetland ecological character*, including approaches to prioritization and links with other Ramsar tools and guidance, such as those on climate change and on economic values of ecosystem services;
- developing guidance on mitigation of and compensation for losses of wetland area and wetland values, in the context of Resolution X.16 including lessons learned from available information on implementation of “no net loss” policies, the “urgent national interest” context, and other aspects relating to situations in which [Article 2.5 and 4.2](#) and/or Resolution VII.24 are relevant;
- working with The Danone Group and IUCN investigating the ability of restored wetlands to sequester carbon, developing guidelines and evaluating restoration projects;
- developing a questionnaire for Ramsar site managers to ascertain where they need help with restoration, mitigation and management issues;
- drafting a Ramsar Technical Report on wetland restoration and climate change; and
- updating the Ramsar website with current information and links on wetland restoration.

As a National Focal Point you can help the Restoration Working Group by sharing information on wetland restoration projects in your country. We are also collecting information on wetland mitigation or “no net loss” of wetlands policies. You can contact Kevin Erwin at klerwin@environment.com

Meetings

Recent meetings

- ***GEF International Waters Indicators Review Workshop, 3-4 December 2008, Paris, France.***

The International Waters Programme of the GEF has been engaged in development of a suite of indicators to help them in prioritizing their work in international (transboundary) river basins. These indicators might be used to “express potential global benefits for GEF investments in international waters”. Three thematic working papers were tabled for discussion at the workshop, addressing the potential for various indicators associated with transboundary surface water basins, transboundary groundwater systems, and large marine ecosystems. Ramsar’s Secretary General, Anada Tiega and the STRP Chair, Heather MacKay represented Ramsar at the workshop, providing input on wise use of wetlands and the role of wetlands in the management of water resources.

The meeting documentation, including the thematic working papers and the final report, can be found at: http://stapgef.unep.org/activities/technicalworkshops/IW/IndicatorsWorkshop_2008

- ***Business and Biodiversity Offsets Programme (BBOP) 29 June-2 July 2009, Paris, France***

The Business and Biodiversity Offset Program (BBOP) is a partnership between companies, governments and conservation experts to explore biodiversity offsets. BBOP’s goal is to create a programme in which biodiversity offsets are globally applied to achieve no net loss and preferably a net gain of biodiversity relative to development impacts. BBOP convened a workshop on conservation banking and aggregated offsets. Kevin Erwin, STRP expert, attended for Ramsar. During the meeting the BBOP Secretariat and the 60 participants successfully closed its Phase 1 work plan and adopted a new governance model for BBOP, which includes an Executive Committee of the members of the BBOP Advisory Group with decision-making responsibility. Participants discussed BBOP’s priority areas of work from now until the end of 2011. These include: i) assurance of the quality of biodiversity offsets; ii) developing a broader portfolio of biodiversity offset experiences; iii) preparing better guidelines on biodiversity offset design and implementation; iv) working at the national level in a number of countries to support policy-makers in the field of biodiversity offsets, v) landscape-level and regional planning; vi) aggregated offsets and conservation banking; vii) training and capacity building; and viii) communications.

A number of Working Groups will be established to help make progress on these topics. A document summarising the outcomes of the meeting will be posted on the BBOP website. All BBOP Phase 1 publications are now available at:

<http://bbop.forest-trends.org/guidelines/index.php> and presentations will soon be posted on: http://bbop.forest-trends.org/in_meetings.php . Approaches being developed for Ramsar's own restoration and mitigation strategies could be of significance to BBOP as they must develop guidance on avoidance and minimization of impacts, restoration and enhancement. BBOP will also need to investigate functional assessment methods to apply to habitat impacts as well as proposed mitigation.

- **4th Meeting of the Group of Experts on Biodiversity and Climate Change of Bern Convention, 2-3 July Strasbourg, France**

The Secretariat of the Bern Convention on the Conservation of the European Wildlife and Natural Habitats has called its Group of Experts on Biodiversity and Climate Change to provide recommendations to put forward to Standing Committee this autumn. Ramsar was officially invited and Monica Zavagli attended the meeting and also reported on the works of STRP under this issue. The Group of Experts – made of about 30 people from the Convention's Member States, other International Conventions such as CMS and CBD, and international organizations such as UNEP WCMC and IUCN - revised and commented on the reports prepared specifically for invertebrates, plants and Protected Areas. Draft Recommendations and other documents are available [here](#).

- **Expert Workshop on 2010 Biodiversity Indicators 6-8 July 2009, Reading, UK**

From 6-8 July 2009 in Reading, UK, the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre and the Convention on Biological Diversity convened an international expert workshop on the indicators being used to track progress towards the globally adopted target of significantly reducing the rate of biodiversity loss by the year 2010, and on ideas for a post-2010 indicators regime. Nick Davidson and Dave Pritchard attended for Ramsar. The 75 participants reviewed experiences of development and operation so far of the existing indicator framework, and synthesised a document on "lessons learned". Those lessons were then applied in a series of concentrated exercises to generate and prioritise a suite of recommendations for the scientific, policy and administrative actions required to have a fit-for-purpose framework of targets and indicators in the period after 2010 (when, as well as a rolled forward/updated global biodiversity target, there will be a revised Strategic Plan for the CBD). The approaches developed for Ramsar's own indicators were influential in the discussions, and the importance of coordinated approaches across Multilateral Environmental Agreements (where Ramsar plays a key role) was reinforced. A report of the meeting and its recommendations will be issued in due course, and this will form an important basis for decisions under the CBD and elsewhere on the biodiversity targets and indicators to be used in the post-2010 period. Meanwhile meeting papers (including one on Ramsar indicators) may be consulted [here](#).

Upcoming meetings

- *Stockholm Water Week 16-21 August 2009 in Stockholm, Sweden (STRP attendants: Nick Davidson and Heather MacKay)*
- *19th Conference of the Society for the ecological Restoration International, 23-27 August in Perth, Australia (STRP attendants: Nick Davidson, Kevin Erwin, Max Finlayson, Pierre Horwitz, Christine Prietto)*
- *The Skukuza Freshwater Group Meeting 7-11 September 2009 meeting in South Australia. (STRP attendants: Nick Davidson, Heather MacKay, Max Finlayson, Rebecca D'Cruz)*
- *The 3rd meeting of the Chairs of the Subsidiary Advisory Bodies (CSAB-3) of the biodiversity –related Conventions and 2nd Meeting on an Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) 4-9 October in Nairobi, Kenya (STRP attendants: Nick Davidson and Heather MacKay)*

Announcements

The New Ramsar Website

As many of you might know, the Ramsar Convention's Website is being redesigned thanks to the funds provided by the Danone Group. The content migration and editorial re-linking are underway and we are expecting our more attractive and user-friendly website to be ready sometime in July!

The web address remains the same as before: www.ramsar.org – however, you should be aware that some of the hyperlinks used in this Newsletter (such as Resolutions, etc.) will change URL with the new website and therefore the old addresses will become inaccessible. The newsletter with the updated hyperlinks will be posted it in the Ramsar website and STRP Support Service as soon as possible. Sorry for the inconvenient.

Publications

[Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in developing countries \(REDD\) – the link with Wetlands.](#) David Pritchard, *FIELD*

[A vulnerability assessment method for Wetlands in the Himalayan region.](#) Charlie Stratford, Mike Acreman, Gwyn Rees and Rajendra Shilpakar.

[Travelling through a warming world - climate change and migratory species.](#) Robinson, R.A., Crick, H.Q.P., Learmonth, J.A., Maclean, I.M.D., Thomas, C.D., Bairlein, F., Forchhammer, M.C., Francis, C.M., Gill, J.A., Godley, B.J., Harwood, J., Hays, G.C., Huntley, B., Hutson, A.M., Pierce, G.J., Rehfisch, M.M., Sims, D.W., Santos, M.B., Sparks, T.H., Stroud, D.A. & Visser, M.E. (2008) *Endangered Species Research*. doi: 10.3354/esr00095

[Avian Influenza surveillance in wild birds in the European Union in 2006.](#) Hesterberg, U.W., Harris, K., Stroud, D.A., Guberti, V., Busani, L., Pittman, M., Piazza, V., Cook, A. & Brown, I.H. (2009). *Influenza and Other Respiratory Viruses* 3: 1-14. DOI: 10.1111/j.1750-2659.2008.00058.x

Your suggestions on additional sections of your interest to improve the features of the Newsletter's future editions are very welcome - as well as any STRP-related query. You can send your comments to Ms Monica Zavagli at Zavagli@ramsar.org