NATIONAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RAMSAR CONVENTION ON WETLANDS

National Reports to be submitted to the 12th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, Uruguay, 2015

Please submit the completed National Report in Microsoft Word format (.doc, 97-2003), as an electronic file (not a printed copy) and preferably by e-mail, to Alexia Dufour, Regional Affairs Officer, Ramsar Secretariat (dufour@ramsar.org) by **1 September 2014**.

The structure of the COP12 National Report Format

The COP12 National Report Format (NRF) is in four sections:

Section 1 provides the institutional information about the Administrative Authority and National Focal Points for the national implementation of the Convention.

Section 2 is a 'free-text' section in which the Party is invited to provide a summary of various aspects of national implementation progress and recommendations for the future.

Section 3 provides the 66 implementation indicator questions, grouped under each Convention implementation strategy in the Strategic Plan 2009-2015, and with an optional 'free-text' section under each indicator question in which the Contracting Party may, if it wishes, add further information on national implementation of that activity.

Section 4 is an optional annex to allow any Contracting Party that so wishes to provide additional information regarding any or all of its Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites).

General guidance for completing and submitting the COP12 National Report Format

IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ THIS GUIDANCE SECTION BEFORE STARTING TO COMPLETE THE NATIONAL REPORT FORMAT

1. All Sections of the COP12 NRF should be completed in one of the Convention's official languages (English, French, Spanish).

2. The deadline for submission of the completed NRF is **1 September 2014**. It will not be possible to include information from National Reports received after that date in the analysis and reporting on Convention implementation to COP12.

3. All fields with a pale yellow background must be filled in.

4. Fields with a pale green background are free-text fields in which to provide additional information, if the Contracting Party so wishes. Although providing information in these fields is optional, Contracting Parties are encouraged to provide such additional information wherever possible and relevant, as it helps us understand Parties' progress and activity more fully, to prepare the best possible global and regional implementation reports to COP.

5. The Format is created as a form in Microsoft Word. You are only able to submit replies and information in the yellow or green boxes, as all other parts of the form are locked to ensure that the structure and wording of indicators will remain uniform and comparable for all Parties.

6. To select a yellow or green field you wish to complete, move the cursor over the relevant part of the form and left-click the mouse. The cursor will automatically move to the next field available.

7. To move down through the sequence of fields, you can also use the 'Tab' key on the computer keyboard.

8. For a 'free-text' field, you can type in whatever information you wish. Note that there is only limited facility within the Microsoft 'form' format to make editorial changes in the 'free-text' box once text has been entered. Therefore, if you wish to amend any of the text you have put in a green or yellow 'free-text' box, you should cut and paste the existing text into a separate document, make all the amendments, and then cut and paste the revised text back into the box.

9. Certain keyboard characters interfere with the automatic entry of data into the Secretariat's database. For that reason, please **do not use double quote marks " "** in the 'free-text' fields. Please **only use single quote marks ' '**. For the same reason, please **only use simple text in the 'free-text' fields**: **they cannot accept formatting, colours or objects such as tables and images**.

10. For each of the 'indicator questions' in Section 3, a drop-down menu of answer options is provided. These vary between indicators, depending on the question, but are generally of the form: 'Yes', 'No', 'Partly', 'In progress'. This is necessary so that statistical comparisons can be made of the replies.

11. For each indicator question you can choose only one answer. If you wish to provide further information or clarification, do so in the green additional information box below the relevant indicator question. Please be as concise as possible (**maximum of 500 words** in each free-text box).

12. To select an answer to an indicator question, use the Tab key, or move the cursor over the relevant yellow box and left-click the mouse. The drop-down menu of answer options will appear. Left-click the mouse on the answer option you choose, and this will appear in the centre of the yellow box.

13. An NRF is not usually completed by one person alone: for many indicators it is best for the principal compiler to consult with colleagues in their agency and others within the government and, as appropriate, with NGOs and other stakeholders who might have fuller knowledge of aspects of the Party's overall implementation of the Convention. The principal compiler can save the document at any point and return to it later to continue or to amend answers. Compilers should refer back to the National Report submitted for COP11 to ensure the continuity and consistency of information provided.

14. After each session, **remember to save the file** in Microsoft Word, .doc, 97-2003 format. A recommended filename structure is: COP12NRF [Country] [date], for example: COP12NRFSpain13July2014.doc

15. After the NRF has been completed, please **send it in this format to Alexia Dufour, Regional Affairs Officer, Ramsar Convention Secretariat, preferably by e-mail (dufour@ramsar.org)**.

16. The completed NRF **must be accompanied by a letter or e-mail message in the name of the Head of Administrative Authority, confirming that this is the Contracting Party's official submission of its COP12 National Report**.

17. If you have any questions or problems, please contact the Ramsar Secretariat for advice (e-mail as above).

NATIONAL REPORT TO RAMSAR COP12

SECTION 1: INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION

Important note: the responses below will be considered by the Ramsar Secretariat as the definitive list of your focal points, and will be used to update the information it holds. The Secretariat's current information about your focal points is available at www.ramsar.org/contacts_en.

NAME OF CONTRACTING PARTY: UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DESIGNATED RAMSAR ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY	
Name of Administrative Authority:	**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Interior {in consultation with }** **Bureau Oceans, International Environmental & Scientific Affairs, U.S. Department of State [OES/DOS]**
Head of Administrative Authority - name and title:	Mr. Daniel M. (Dan) Ashe Director U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Mailing address:	1849 C Street, NW, 312 MIB Washington D.C. 20240 dan_m_ashe@fws.gov
Telephone/Fax:	Ms. Judith Garber
Email:	Acting Assistant Secretary for Oceans, Environment and Science HST Room 7831 Department of State 2201 C St. NW Washington DC 20520
DESIGNATED NATIONAL FOCAL POINT FOR RAMSAR CONVENTION MATTERS	
Name and title:	Krishna K. Roy, Chief Global Branch U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
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Telephone/Fax:	703-358-2645; 703-358-2115
Email:	Krishna_Roy@fws.gov Barbara De Rosa-Joynt, Chief of Biodiversity, OES, HST Room 2658, Department of State, 2201 C Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20520
DESIGNATED NATIONAL FOCAL POINT FOR MATTERS RELATING TO THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL REVIEW PANEL (STRP)	
Name and title:	Gilberto Cintron-Molero Project Officer Global Branch
Name of organisation:	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
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DESIGNATED GOVERNMENT NATIONAL FOCAL POINT FOR MATTERS RELATING TO THE PROGRAMME ON COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION, PARTICIPATION AND AWARENESS (CEPA)	
Name and title:	Krishna K. Roy

Name of organisation:	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service……..
Mailing address:	5275 Leesburg Pike, MS: IA, Falls Church, Va 22180
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DESIGNATED NON-GOVERNMENT NATIONAL FOCAL POINT FOR MATTERS RELATING TO THE PROGRAMME ON COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION, PARTICIPATION AND AWARENESS (CEPA)	
Name and title:	William J. Mitsch, Eminent Scholar and Director, Everglades Wetland Research Park, Juliet C. Sproul Chair for Southwest Florida Habitat Restoration and Management
Name of organisation:	Florida Gulf Coast University
Mailing address:	110 Kapnick Center, 4940 Bayshore Drive, Naples, FL 34112
Telephone/Fax:	
Email:	wmitsch@fgcu.edu

SECTION 2: GENERAL SUMMARY OF NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES

REMINDER: Please do not use double quote marks " ": use single quotes ' ' instead.

In your country, in the past triennium (i.e., since COP11 reporting):

A. What have been the five most successful aspects of implementation of the Convention?

1) There is an increasing national awareness of the importance of wetlands and greater concern for their conservation as wetlands are increasingly perceived as key components of the global life support systems that maintain quality of life and sustain societies and economies.
2) There is greater awareness about environmental change and how it is influenced by wetland functions such as hydrologic regulation and coastal protection. Advances in information tecnology have increased the means and opportunities for education, societal engagement and collaborative decision making.
3) The scale of environmental change as driven by human activity and climate now makes imperative that wetland issues be framed at broader scales and diversity of stakeholders and concerned parties. Information technology now allows broad networking for decision making at low cost and allowing swift updating.
4) Societal engagement continues to increase and new problem framing methodologies such as collaborative structured decisionmaking have been developed to frame problems at landscape scale while incorporating broader participation of collaborative communities for more effective, context relevant problem solving.
5) Wetland conservation has become a shared national goal as wetlands are increasingly perceived as a vital part of the Nation's ecological infrastructure

B. What have been the five greatest difficulties in implementing the Convention?

1) The greatest difficulty in implementation is presented by the size of the country. The United States is the world's third largest country by size. It is slightly larger than China and twice the size of the European Union.
2) Geographic size brings ecological diversity. The nation extends from the subtropics to the Boreal zones and includes continental as well as insular settings, terrestrial and marine domains in the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans.Eighty five distinct ecoregions are found within the continental U.S alone. Implementing ecosystem management strategies requires harmonization of efforts accross federal agencies, state agencies, and nongovernmental organizations that are responsible or involved in the management of the different types of resources within each of these geographical areas.
3) A further complexity is that the nation is a Federated State. The United States is a federation of 50 semi-sovereign states that are not directly subordinated to federal authorities. States are not mere provinces of subdivision of a federal government. States are relatively powerful and have their own laws and regulations for administering natural resources. the division of power between them and the central government, are constitutionally entrenched and may not be altered by unilateral decisions of either party.The Constitution's principle of federalism provides that powers not granted to the federal government by the Constitution, nor prohibited to the States, are reserved to the States or the people.
4) Wetland conservation takes place within the context of a diversity of pressing environmental issues which requires extremely careful allocation of effort and limited resources. Pressing environmental issues include Endangered Species conservation(domestic and international),Air and Water pollution,Land use conflicts,Wildfires,Natural hazards and Climate change. Although the U.S. invests 500-700 million dollars a year in wetland conservation maintaining public support for these programs is a complex task particularly as national budgets shrink. The coordination of efforts to align multiple constituencies is difficult in spite of shared visions and interests.
5) Mindsets are still mechanistic and vulnerable to fragmented, short-term problem solving and adversarial approaches and zero-sum thinking still persist.

C. What are the five priorities for future implementation of the Convention?

1) Reinvigorate the National Ramsar Committee, creating a Friends of Ramsar constituency.
2) Promote more designations of Wetlands of International Importance across the nation and its territories.
3) Promote Environmental Awareness as the underpinning of wise use and conservation.
4) Promote Ramsar within the context of management for environmental resilience
5) Promote wetland restoration as preparedness for environmental change

D. Do you (AA) have any recommendations concerning implementation assistance from the Ramsar Secretariat?

There must be increased alignment between the STRP and CEPA and STRP efforts and products must be shaped to become increasingly more effective training/education tools. In fact, a key concern for all multilateral environmental agreements is the assessment of their impacts on the ground, and how abstract resolutions and goals become translated into local actions. We suggest that case studies are a potent method for documenting the actualization of abstract notions and communicating concrete experiences in order to promote further applications by sharing lessons learned in the implementation of resolution and guidelines to the real world. The method of Case Studies has a respected and prominent role in the field of law but its use has expanded to the business world, ecology and resource management) as a knowledge management tool and a way to support performance accountability(Schrader-Frechette & McCoy, 1993. For Ramsar the adoption of case studies as an instrument for guidance could have an important place in evaluating performance, illustrating guidance, and sharing experience as part of Evidence-Based Management (EBM). Evidence-based management entails managerial decisions and practices cognizant of the best available concrete evidence. Case studies provide a powerful way to disseminate such experience in the implementation of the Convention's goals; documenting how guidance is used, as well as the decision making relationships between National Focal Points, National Ramsar Committees, wetland site managers, experts and stakeholders which until now remains little documented despite its importance.

E. Do you (AA) have any recommendations concerning implementation assistance from the Convention's International Organisation Partners (IOPs)? (including ongoing partnerships and partnerships to develop)

While the IOPs are able to sit in on meetings with the Parties and so receive greater access and information than other NGOs or IGOs, it is not currently very clear what benefit the Parties and convention itself receive from the special status of the IOPs. The expertise and resources of the IOPs should be leveraged to benefit Parties' work to implement the convention, and if this is not being done greater efforts should be made to ensure that this is occurring. If it is already happening it is not visible and better efforts need to be made to publicize the benefits the IOPs bring to the convention and the Parties. In addition, Ramsar must consider broadening its partnership base in order to engage wetland constituencies more broadly and effectively. One option would be to create a global-level Friend of Ramsar constituency which smaller organizations sharing Ramsar's goals can join.

F. How can national implementation of the Ramsar Convention be better linked with implementation of other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), especially those in the 'biodiversity cluster' (Ramsar, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), CITES, and World Heritage Convention), and UNCCD and UNFCCC?

In addition to our ongoing efforts to foster communication and information sharing at the national level, the U.S. continues to explore the possibility of greater coordination among Multilateral Environmental Agreements and International Organizations through the creation of an international Forum; the Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative. This forum brings together government wildlife officials and representatives from non-governmental organizations and conventions with interests in international dialogue and cooperation on migratory species conservation. Four meetings have been held to date; Chile 2003; Costa Rica 2006; Paraguay 2008 and Miami 2010. The Ramsar Secretariat has been represented at all these meetings. The forums provide opportunities for coordination and alighnment of effort and for discussion of emerging issues. A thematic session of the 2008 Paraguay meeting was How to Adapt Habitats in the Face of Climate Change. These meetings have been supported jointly by the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Fish and Wilflife "Wldlife Without Borders Initiative. The Organization of Ameican States (OAS) co-hosted the last meeting in Miami (2010).

G. How can implementation of the Ramsar Convention be better linked with the implementation of water policy/strategy and other strategies in the country (e.g., on sustainable development, energy, extractive industries, poverty reduction, sanitation, food security, biodiversity)?

This can be accomplished through continued collaboration at the national level.

H. Do you (AA) have any other general comments on the implementation of the Convention?

Evaluations of complex system performance is difficult because it involves the simultaneous use of two perspectives, a broad or thick brush view (coarse grain), while at the same time being deep enough to address the complexity and variety of fine grain drivers and responses. In the past this was a challenging, almost intractable task, but this is not the case anymore. Information systems now provide the means to provide detail through portals at various hierarchical levels and locations facilitating scaling and distance issues. The broad picture serves only to provide a coarse road map for the evaluator to use. Evaluation has taken root in the environmental community largely because of the demand for greater accountability.The methods used to assess performance are well suited to deal with linear causation but are not appropriate for application in complex systems where instead of causal chains we deal with causal webs. Causation is obscured by the fact that complex systems involve parallel processes that operate at different temporal scales. There is a need to look beyond simple verification of deliverables; it is a requisite to revisit the policies and evaluation methodologies used in order to cope with change. Otherwise we can become mired in the acceptance of methods and policies that worked well in the past but now have become inappropriate or narrower in scope. Policies have expiration dates like perishable products because change is inexorable. In order to help this type of evaluation we suggest that National Reports be interpreted in the light of the following a) a governance perspective; decentralized, participative, collaborative decision making. The role of government is then to: a) Develop methods to monitor status and trends that can be easily disseminated; b) Provide for the establishment of problem-solving communities where structured decision making takes place; c) identify gaps and needs for higher level policy guidelines; d) Develop long-term strategies; and e) Develop incentives and collaborative pathways to address identified tactical issues and implement long-term strategy that is sustainable through education, empowerment and adaptive change.

I. Please list the names of the organisations which have been consulted on or have contributed to the information provided in this report:

This Report was developed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in collaboration with the U.S. Department of State. It is based largely on web-based research and assistance from the U.S. Ramsar Committee. More than a dozen Federal Agencies have mandates that require wetland involvement in research, regulation and management, and they continually post a wealth of information on their web sites. Summarizing this information in a brief report is challenging. Readers are urged to check these websites as well as those of the numerous non-governmentalorganizations to seek additionalinformation about U.S. activities related to wetland conservation.

SECTION 3: INDICATOR QUESTIONS AND FURTHER IMPLEMENTATION INFORMATION

REMINDER: Guidance for completing this section

1. For each 'indicator question', please select one answer from the 'drop-down' list in the yellow box.

2. If you wish to add any additional information on a specific indicator, please provide this information in the green 'free-text' boxes below the indicator questions.

3. If you wish to amend any of the text you have put in a green 'free-text' box, you should cut and paste the existing text into a separate file, make the amendments, and then cut and paste the revised text back into the green box.

4. Some characters used in the free text box prevent the automatic data entry into our database National Reports. For that reason, **please do not use double quote marks " " in the free text boxes. Use single quotes ' '. Text in the 'free text' boxes should be simple text only: they cannot accept formatting, colours or objects such as tables and images.**

5. To help Contracting Parties refer to relevant information they provided in their National Report to COP11, for each appropriate indicator a cross-reference is provided to the equivalent indicator(s) in the COP11 NRF, shown thus: {x.x.x}

6. Where appropriate, a cross-reference is also provided to the relevant Key Result Area (KRA) relating to Contracting Parties implementation in the Strategic Plan 2009-2015.

7. Only Strategic Plan 2009-2015 Strategies and KRAs for which there are significant implementation actions for Contracting Parties are included in this reporting format; those parts of the Strategic Plan that do not refer directly to Parties are omitted.

GOAL 1. THE WISE USE OF WETLANDS

STRATEGY 1.1 Wetland inventory and assessment. *Describe, assess and monitor the extent and condition of all types of wetlands as defined by the Ramsar Convention and wetland resources at relevant scales, in order to inform and underpin implementation of the Convention, in particular in the application of its provisions concerning the wise use of all wetlands.*

1.1.1 Does your country have a comprehensive National Wetland Inventory? {1.1.1} KRA 1.1.i	A - Yes

1.1.1 Additional information:
National Wetland Inventory (NWI) Overview

The National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) was established by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to conduct a nationwide inventory of U.S. wetlands th provide biologists and others with information on the distribution and type of wetlands to aid in conservation efforts. To do this, the NWI developed a wetland classification system (Cowardin et al. 1979) that is now the official FWS wetland classification system and the Federal standard for wetland classification (adopted by the Federal Geographic Data Committee on July 29, 1996: 61 Federal Register 39465). The NWI has led the development of techniques for mapping and recording the inventory findings. The NWI relies on trained image analysts to identify and classify wetlands and deepwater habitats from aerial imagery. NWI started mapping wetlands at a small scale (1:250,000 map which covers an area the size of 128-1:24,000 USGS topographic maps or approximately 7,400 square miles). Eventually, large-scale (1:24K scale) maps became the standard product delivered by NWI. As computerized mapping and geospatial technology evolved, NWI discontinued production of paper maps in favor of distributing data via online "mapping tools" where information can be viewed and downloaded. Today, FWS serves its data via an on-line data discovery "Wetlands Mapper". GIS users can access wetlands data through an online wetland mapping service or download data for various applications (maps, data analyses, and reports). The techniques used by NWI have recently been adopted by the Federal Geographic Data Committee as the federal wetland mapping standard (FGDC Wetlands Subcommittee 2009). This standard applies to all federal grants involving wetland mapping to insure the data can be added to the Wetlands Layer of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure. NWI also produces national wetlands status and trends reports required by Congress [See http://www.fws.gov/wetlands/]

Evolution of mapping techniques

Mapping techniques have evolved over time. At the outset, NWI produced maps by interpreting wetlands and deepwater habitats from high-altitude aerial photography (including 1:130,000, 1:80,000, and 1:62,500 scale photographs). Acetate overlays were attached to the aerial photos and the interpreter outlined and labeled wetlands and deepwater habitats with pen and ink. Data from the overlays were then transferred to mylar overlays attached to a standard topographic map (e.g., 1:24,000 scale for lower 48 states and Hawaii, and 1:63,360 scale for Alaska). Small-scale maps were then made through an engraving process. The final step was digitizing data from large-scale NWI maps to create a geospatial database. As GIS and mapping technology advanced, the process of data collection and map production became a single step integrated operation done on-screen by the analysts These analysts delineated wetlands onscreen, and data were simultaneously entered into a digital data layer that could be used to generate maps at various scales using GIS technology. Today, all of the NWI data are created through this on-screen process. This technology has facilitated the use of other sources in the interpretation process as other digital datasets (e.g., USDA digital soil surveys and USGS digital topographic map information) which may be viewed with the source imagery to identify wetlands.

1.1.2 Is wetland inventory data and information maintained and made accessible to all stakeholders? {1.1.2} KRA 1.1.ii	A - Yes

1.1.2 Additional information:

Through most of NWI's history, large-scale wetland maps were the prime product Today, the basic products are: 1) wetlands geospatial data that can be used to generate maps and information on the Nation's wetlands and 2) the national wetlands status and trends reports derived from data collected from a scientific monitoring study of wetland changes over time NWI geospatial data are available for decision makers for viewing or downloading via the Cloud (http://www.fws.gov/wetlands) and individuals can produce custom maps showing NWI data on planimetric maps. Wetlands data can also be downloaded or incorporated as a direct link by any organization through a web mapping service. Some applications incorporating NWI wetlands data include ESRI's ArcGIS Resources Community; ArcGIS Online Resources; the FWS' ECOS (Endangered Species planning); the US Army Corps of Engineers ORM2 (online wetland permitting system); and the Department of Housing and Urban Developments and over 60 social media portals. The Federal Government is adopting a "Cloud-first" policy, in support of web-based computing as it looks to re-tool the way it buys information technology and OMB has required agencies to develop an analysis of how they could use cloud computing for all major technology projects. Working with FGDC's Technology and Architecture Working Group, the NWI - Wetlands Mapper became the first geospatial service application to reach a Cloud computing platform from DOI.

The general public consults NWI data on a daily basis via the NWI website (Wetlands Mapper) when considering land purchases and development. Landowners, developers, real estate agents, and environmental consultants review NWI data as a first step in assessing the potential restrictions of land for residential, commercial, and industrial development. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) uses NWI data during its permit review process (e.g., cumulative effects determinations and potential sites for mitigation banking) and includes a link to NWI data on its online permit tracking system (Figure 10). Pesticide applicators use NWI data to reduce the effects of their products on wetland habitats..

1.1.3 Has the condition* of wetlands in your country, overall, changed since the last triennium? {1.1.3} a) Ramsar Sites b) wetlands generally Please comment on the sources of the information on which your answer is based in the green free- text box below. If there is a difference between inland and coastal wetland situations, please describe. If you are able to, please describe the principal driver(s) of the change(s). * 'Condition' corresponds to ecological character, as defined by the Convention	a) O - No change b) N - Status deteriorated

1.1.3 Additional information on a) and/or b):

Comments on b. Despite their environmental and economic importance, coastal wetlands (wetlands located in coastal watersheds) in the eastern United States are being lost at twice the rate they are being restored. More focused protection strategies are required to reverse this trend. The Coastal Wetlands Initiative was established by the EPA in response to the loss of coastal wetland acreage identified through the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's and NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service's Status & Trends of Wetlands in the Coastal Watersheds of the Eastern United States. Coastal wetlands in the eastern United States were lost at an average rate of 59,000 acres per year between 1998 and 2004, even while inland wetlands acreage across the United States was increasing. The initiative addresses the need to enhance conservation of coastal wetlands.The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service, in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, analyzed the status and recent trends of wetland acreage in the coastal watersheds of the United States adjacent to the Atlantic Ocean Gulf of Mexico, and Great Lakes. Sample plots were analyzed using digital high-resolution Timagery to identify wetlands and land use changes observed between 1998 and 2004. Results indicate that there were an estimated 39.8 million acres (16.1 million ha) of wetlands in these coastal watersheds in 2004. This represented 38 percent of the estimated total wetland acreage of 107.7 million acres (43.6 million ha) found in the conterminous United States. Coastal watersheds experienced a net loss in wetland area. There was an estimated wetland loss of 361,000 acres (146,200 ha) in the coastal watersheds of the eastern U.S. between 1998 and 2004. This equated to an average annual net loss of about 59,000 acres (24,300 ha) over the 6-year period of this study. Gulf of Mexico coastal watersheds exhibited substantial losses in freshwater wetlands. This rate of loss was 6 times higher than the rate of freshwater vegetated wetlands losses in the Atlantic coastal watersheds. The estimated losses for all wetland types in the Gulf of Mexico were 25 times higher than those estimates for the Atlantic over the course of this study. There was a net gain of an estimated 24,650 acres (10,000 ha) in the Great Lakes coastal watersheds over the same period of time.In the time period encompassed by this study, trends suggested the country as a whole was gaining wetlands. From 1998 to 2004, wetland gains in the conterminous United States were estimated to have been 32,000 acres (12,960 ha) annually. The fact that coastal watersheds were losing wetlands despite the national trend of net gains points to the need for more research on the natural and human forces behind these trends and to an expanded effort on conservation of wetlands in these coastal areas. Coastal wetlands are impacted by development, storms and climate change.
[http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/pdf/pub_wetlands_status_trends.pdf]

STRATEGY 1.3 Policy, legislation and institutions. *Develop and implement policies, legislation, and practices, including growth and development of appropriate institutions, in all Contracting Parties, to ensure that the wise use provisions of the Convention are being effectively applied.*

1.3.1 Is a National Wetland Policy (or equivalent instrument) in place? {1.3.1} KRA 1.3.i (If 'Yes', please give the title and date of the policy in the green text box)	A - Yes

1.3.1 Additional information:

The first legal protection of wetlands came from President Jimmy Carter in 1977. He signed Executive Order 11990 into law requiring Federal government agencies to take steps to avoid impacts to wetland when possible. Despite the passage of numerous laws and the issuance of two presidential executive orders no specific or consistent goal for the nation's wetlands-related efforts existed until 1989. No net loss" is currently the United States government's overall policy goal regarding wetland conservation. No net loss was first adopted as a national goal under George H. W. Bush's administration in 1989. It emphasized three elements: strengthening wetland conservation and acquisition measures, revising the delineation manual and improving and streamlining the wetlands regulatory program. The goal of the policy is to balance wetland loss due to economic development with wetland creation, mitigation, and restorations efforts, so that the total acreage of wetlands in the country does not decrease, but remains constant or increases. To achieve the objective of no net loss, the federal government utilizes several different tools which legally protect wetlands, provide rules and regulations for citizens and corporations interacting with wetlands, and incentives for the preservation and conservation of wetlands. In addition, a 1990 memorandum of agreement between the Department of the Army and EPA, addressing mitigation under the Clean Water Act, states that the Corps will strive to achieve a goal of no overall net loss of wetland functions and values. About 70% of the nation's wetlands are located on private lands, requiring cooperation and active partnerships between government agencies and landholders is an essential component of policy implementation approaches. Subsequently, the Clinton administration expanded the goal to achieve a net increase of 100,000 acres per year by 2005 and the administration of George W. Bush endorsed the no net loss goal in December 2002, when it released a National Wetlands Mitigation Action Plan. Following the lead of the previous three presidential administrations, President Obama has also pledged his commitment to no net loss. The Obama administration increased funding of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act to ensure no net loss operation. The present administration is working with Congress to amend the Clean Water Act so that isolated wetlands will fall under the Act's protection. In March 2014 The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers jointly released a proposed rule to clarify protection under the Clean Water Act for streams and wetlands that form the foundation of the nation's water resources. Determining Clean Water Act protection for streams and wetlands became confusing and complex following Supreme Court decisions in 2001 and 2006.

1.3.2 Have wetland issues been incorporated into other national strategies and planning processes, including: a) Poverty eradication strategies b) Water resource management and water efficiency plans c) Coastal and marine resource management plans d) National forest programmes e) National strategies for sustainable development f) National policies or measures on agriculture g) National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans drawn up under the CBD {1.3.3} KRA 1.3.i	a) A - Yes b) A - Yes c) A - Yes d) A - Yes e) A - Yes f) A - Yes g) Z - Not applicable

1.3.2 Additional information:
The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). NEPA recognizes the critical importance of restoring and maintaining environmental quality to overall welfare, declaring that it is the continuing policy of the Federal Government, in cooperation with State and local governments, and other concerned public and private organizations, to use all practicable means and measures, including financial and technical assistance to foster and promote the general welfare, creating and maintaining conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony. NEPA acknowledges sustainability by recognizing that it is the responsibility of the Federal Government to use all practical means to improve and coordinate federal plans, functions, programs, and resources in order that the Nation may fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations; the social, economic, and requirements of present and future generations. NEPA, requires every federal agency to examine the environmental impacts of proposed major federal actions and to consider reasonable alternatives and cumulative impacts, sharing its analysis with the public for comment, before deciding on action. Because the substantive statute pursuant to which an agency is undertaking a particular action may provide broad discretionary power to agency decision making, NEPA's "procedural" requirements are often the principal, and in some cases the most powerful tool available to citizens for challenging agency action in the courts. NEPA establishes a national policy for the environment and provides for the establishment of a Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). The Chair of CEQ serves as the President's principal environmental policy advisor. CEQ oversees Federal agencies' implementation of NEPA through regulations implementing the procedural provisions of the act and through interpretation of statutory requirements.

1.3.3 Are Strategic Environmental Assessment practices applied when reviewing policies, programmes and plans that may impact upon wetlands? {1.3.4} KRA 1.3.ii	A - Yes

1.3.3 Additional information:
The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) [42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.] was signed into law on January 1, 1970. The Act establishes national environmental policy and goals for the protection, maintenance, and enhancement of the environment and provides a process for implementing these goals within the federal agencies. The Act also establishes the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). Title I of NEPA contains a Declaration of National Environmental Policy which requires the federal government to use all practicable means to create and maintain conditions under which man and nature can exist in productive harmony. Section 102 requires federal agencies to incorporate environmental considerations in their planning and decision-making through a systematic interdisciplinary approach. Specifically, all federal agencies are to prepare detailed statements assessing the environmental impact of and alternatives to major federal actions significantly affecting the environment. These statements are commonly referred to as environmental impact statements (EISs).

1.3.4 Are Environmental Impact Assessments made for any development projects (such as new buildings, new roads, extractive industry) that may affect wetlands,? {1.3.5} KRA 1.3.iii	A - Yes

1.3.4 Additional information:
See above. Three of the most important environmental regulatory mechanisms in the country are not wetland specific, but play key roles in wetland conservation these are; the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (CWA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA), The Rivers and Harbors Act;Farm Bill; These laws have resulted in the (1) regulation of activities undertaken in areas designated as wetlands; (2) acquisition of wetlands through purchase or protective easements that prevent certain activities, such as draining and filling; (3) restoration of damaged wetlands or the creation of new wetlands; and (4) disincentives to altering wetlands or incentives to protect them in their natural states.
.....

1.3.5 Have any amendments to existing legislation been made to reflect Ramsar commitments? {1.3.6}	B - No

1.3.5 Additional information:
.U.S legislation reflects domestic concerns and complex context sensitive efforts and also reflects a long evolutionary path and developmental trajectory. For this reason wetland conservation in the U.S. has its own signature and character.Changes are driven from the bottom rather than top-down and result from public awareness and demands.

STRATEGY 1.4: Cross-sectoral recognition of wetland services. *Increase recognition of and attention in decision-making to the significance of wetlands for reasons of biodiversity conservation, water supply, coastal protection, integrated coastal zone management, flood defence, climate change mitigation and/or adaptation, food security, poverty eradication, tourism, cultural heritage, and scientific research, by developing and disseminating methodologies to achieve wise use of wetlands.*

1.4.1 Has an assessment been made of the ecosystem benefits/services provided by Ramsar Sites? {1.4.1} KRA 1.4.ii	A - Yes
1.4.1 Additional information: Gardner and Connolly studied 22 U.S Ramsar sites to ascertain if and how designation had resulted in benefits to these stes. [See http://www.wetlandsnewsletter.org/pdf/29.02/gardner.pdf]	

1.4.2 Have wetland programmes or projects that contribute to poverty alleviation objectives or food and water security plans been implemented? {1.4.2} KRA 1.4.i	A - Yes
1.4.2 Additional information: The Everglades restoration is a case in point: A 2010 study by Mather Economics revealed that investment in Everglades's restoration documents that restoration is economically viable as well as ecologically desirable. The study demonstrates a four-to-one economic benefit for ever dollar invested in restoration projects. Over the last three years, Everglades's restoration projects have generated 10,500 jobs, 22,000 short- to mid-term jobs on the restoration itself, and more than 442,000 jobs are expected to be created over the next several decades in tourism, real estate and commercial and recreational fishing industries. On July 6, 2012, the President signed the Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act of 2012 (RESTORE Act). The Act establishes a Trust Fund in the Treasury of the United States, known as the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund. Eighty percent of the civil penalties paid after July 6, 2012, under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, in connection with the Deepwater Horizon oil spill will be deposited into the Trust Fund and invested. The purpose of this Act is to restore natural resources as well as the local economies impacted by the Deepwater Horizon in the Gulf in 2010.	

1.4.3 Have socio-economic and cultural values of wetlands been included in the management planning for Ramsar Sites and other wetlands? {1.4.4} KRA 1.4.iii	A - Yes
1.4.3 Additional information (If 'Yes' or 'Partly', please indicate, if known, how many Ramsar Sites and their names): In the U.S. Ramsar designations are locally driven so that by default social, ecological cultural and economic concerns are considered in the designation.	

STRATEGY 1.5 Recognition of the role of the Convention. *Raise the profile of the Convention by highlighting its capacity as a unique mechanism for wetland ecosystem management at all levels; promote the usefulness of the Convention as a possible implementation mechanism to meet the goals and targets of other global conventions and processes.*

1.5.1 Since COP11, have you brought the 'Changwon Declaration' (Resolution X.3) to the attention of your: a. head of state b. parliament c. private sector d. civil society {1.5.2}	a. B - No b. B - No c. B - No d. B - No

1.5.1 Additional information:
The Unites States embraces the principles of the Changwon Declaration and these are reflected in concrete policy and action, although we do not brand them as Changwon Declaration.Wetland conservation efforts in the United States inherently address all of the concerns and aspirations embedded in the Declaration. Furthermore, Wetland conservation in the United States takes place and is driven by numerous partnerships that engage civil society in most if not all of the Changwon concerns such as wise use, restoration, water quality watershed protection and water quality. Wetland conservation in the United States is extraordinarily participatory, collaborative and incentive driven. To achieve the objective of no net loss, the federal government utilizes several different environmental policy tools which legally protect wetlands, provide rules and regulations for citizens and corporations interacting with wetlands, and incentives for the preservation and conservation of wetlands.Numerous organizations deliver hands-on conservation at local, landscape and regional levels. A few examples include:

The Association of State Wetland Managers: a nonprofit organization dedicated to the protection and restoration of America's wetlands. Its goal is to help public and private wetland decision-makers use scientific information and techniques in wetland delineation, assessment, mapping, planning, regulation, acquisition, restoration, and other management projects.

Coastal America is a nonprofit partnership dedicated to protecting, preserving and restoring America's coastal heritage. It works with public, private and government agencies to perform coastal and wetland restoration efforts throughout the United States.

The Society of Wetland Scientists: provides information on conferences, research, wetlands restoration training, and student grants, as well as conference abstracts and the Wetlands Journal, published by the Society for Wetlands Scientists. This site contains a wide variety of information useful for individuals who work professionally with wetland-related science.

NatureServe: is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing knowledge to protect our natural world. Working in partnership with The Nature Conservancy and a network of scientific experts, NatureServe helps protect the environment by improving public understanding of biodiversity and by developing essential information about rare and endangered plants and animals and threatened ecosystems.

Ducks Unlimited: the world's leader in wetlands conservation, has conserved more than 13 million acres since 1937. DU adopted a approach of continuous monitoring and evaluation which allows for adaptiverefinement of its habitat programs. This approach ensures that each and every dollar invested in conservation programs is used as effectively and efficiently as possible. DU is a partner to the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and works internationally through DU's International Conservation Plan. Virtually all of DU's projects include partnerships with state and federal agencies, private corporations and foundations, and individuals. DU promotes national wildlife-friendly legislation by assisting and supporing congress develop effective legislation to protect wildlife and wetlands in the US.

Environmental Concern (EC) is a not-for-profit, non-advocacy organization founded in 1972 to promote public understanding and stewardship of wetlands through experiential learning, native species horticulture, and restoration and creation initiatives. With over thirty years of experience, and home to the nation's first wetland plant nursery.

STRATEGY 1.6 Science-based management of wetlands. *Promote successful implementation of the wise use concept by ensuring that national policies and wetland management plans are based on the best available scientific knowledge, including technical and traditional knowledge.*

1.6.1 Has research to inform wetland policies and plans been undertaken in your country on:	
a. agriculture-wetland interactions	a. A - Yes
b. climate change	b. A - Yes
c. valuation of ecosystem services	c. A - Yes
{1.6.1} KRA 1.6.i	

1.6.1 Additional information:

Climate/environmental change is no longer a distant threat, the United States is already feeling its impacts across the country. In 2012 alone, extreme weather events caused more than $110 billion in damages and claimed more than 300 lives. The year 2012 was the warmest year ever in the contiguous United States and about one-third of all Americans experienced 10 days or more of 100-degree heat. The 12 hottest years on record have all come in the last 15 years. According to NOAA, the global-averaged temperature over land and ocean surfaces for January 2014 was the highest since 2007 and the fourth highest for January since reliable record keeping began in 1880. It also marked the 38th consecutive Januar and 347th consecutive month (almost 29 years) with a global temperature above the 20th century average. The last below-average January global temperature took place in January 1976 and the last below-average global temperature for any month was February 1985. Ultimately, we can't keep using the same policies and methodologies used to address problems in the past. Climate change is cross-cutting and it comes with far-reaching consequences and real economic costs. New and comprehensive approaches are needed and perspectives must be broadened to landscape and continental levels. As we take new steps to reduce carbon pollution, we must also prepare for the impacts of a changing climate that are already being felt across the country. Moving forward, the Administration is helping state and local governments strengthen roads and bridges as well as our ecological infrastructure, in order to better protect people's homes, businesses and way of life from severe weather. In February 2013, federal agencies released the Climate Change Adaptation Plan. In partnership with State and Tribal agencies, the Administration released this first nationwide strategy to help public and private decision makers address the impacts that climate change is having on natural resources and the people and economies that depend on them. Developed in response to a request by Congress, the National Fish, Wildlife, and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy is the product of extensive national dialogue that spanned nearly two years and was shaped by comments from more than 55,000 Americans.

Two interrelated organizations have been established to address conservation needs across the nation and across ecosystems. The first has been the establishment of DOI Climate Science Centers to provide natural and cultural resource managers with the tools and information they need to develop and execute management strategies that address the impacts of climate change on a broad range of natural and cultural resources. Eight Climate Science Centers (CSCs) provide scientific information, tools, and techniques that land, water, wildlife, and cultural resource managers and other interested parties can apply to anticipate, monitor, and adapt to climate change impacts. Much of the information and tools provided by the CSCs, including physical and biological research, ecological forecasting, and multi-scale modeling, will be in response to the landscape-level priority needs identified by the Landscape Conservation Cooperatives.

1.6.2 Have all wetland management plans been based on sound scientific research, including research on potential threats to the wetlands? {1.6.2} KRA 1.6.ii	A - Yes
1.6.2 Additional information: Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCC) have been established to create a network of partners working in unison to ensure the sustainability of land, water, wildlife and cultural resources. LCC's are an emerging tool designed for the delivery of context appropriate conservation (in the form of landscape-level guidance for governance or management prescriptions) across scales, based on best available information and decentralized, multi-level collaborative management. The year 2013 saw the maturation of the concept and development into an operational network. LCC's leverage and integrate the resources of stakeholders and the public to meet shared goals and develop conservation/management tools through collaborative dialogue and decision-making processes, and to date, some 22 have been created by the Federal Government under Secretarial Order No. 3289. The LCCs are self-directed partnerships that provide science support for conservation actions that addresss landscape-level challenges or stressors such as climate change.By building a network that is holistic, collaborative, adaptive, and grounded in science, LCCs are working to ensure the sustainability of our economy, land, water, wildlife, and cultural resources. and represent a learning-based network approach for conservation acros the continent. A Council will serve as the national voice for the LCC network, highlighting successes and challenges, sustaining funding and ensuring that local and regional partnership efforts are supported. In addition, the Council will enhance coordination among LCCs to address national and international scale concerns such as climate change and other landscape-scale stressors. Members of the LCC Council held their first meeting February 2014. The Council will serve the LCC network by learning from them and helping to identify the ecological and institutional challenges faced by the LCCs that should be addressed at the national scale. Members of the Council representing federal and state agencies, Tribes and First Nations, and non-governmental organizations have a shared commitment to landscape scale conservation and the unique contribution of the LCCs to achieving the shared vision for landscape conservation for current and future generations. During the inaugural meeting, Council members affirmed their role to support the LCCs and facilitate the work they do to support landscape conservation.	

STRATEGY 1.7 Integrated Water Resources Management. *Ensure that policies and implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), applying an ecosystem-based approach, are included in the planning activities in all Contracting Parties and in their decision-making processes, particularly concerning groundwater management, catchment/river basin management, coastal and nearshore marine zone planning and climate change mitigation and/or adaptation activities.*

1.7.1 Do your country's water governance and management systems treat wetlands as natural water infrastructure integral to water resource management at the scale of river basins? {1.7.2} KRA 1.7.ii	A - Yes

1.7.1 Additional information:
The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's mission is to protect human health and the environment, ensuring all Americans are protected from significant risks to human health and the environment where they live and work and that national efforts to reduce environmental risk are based on the best available scientific information and that federal laws protecting human health and the environment are enforced fairly and effectively. The United States considers the watershed approach to be the most effective framework to address today's water resource challenges. Watersheds supply drinking water, provide recreation and respite, and sustain life. More than $450 billion in food and fiber, manufactured goods, and tourism depends on clean water and healthy watersheds. EPA has traditionally focused on identifying impaired waters and restoring their water quality but has now begun efforts for the protection and conservation of healthy, functioning watersheds, which provide the ecological support system essential for achieving large scale water quality restoration. The challenge is to weave a range of voluntary programs, regulations, and strategies into an effective method ofprotecting whole geographically-based drainage areas. The watershed approach is a proven tool to deal with non-point discharges and for providing an integrated framework for aligning government and private management and conservation effortsall parts of society.
[http://water.epa.gov/type/watersheds/approach.cfm]

1.7.2 Have Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) expertise and tools been incorporated into catchment/river basin planning and management (see Resolution X.19)? {1.7.3}	A - Yes

1.7.2 Additional information:
Much of EPA's efforts are related to environmental education as well as the additional step of engaging stakeholders in the management of watershed and water resources.EPA ensures that communities, individuals, businesses, and state, local and tribal governments have access to the most accurate information in order to to effectively participate in managing human health and environmental risks. See http://www2.epa.gov/education

1.7.3 Has your country established policies or guidelines for enhancing the role of wetlands in mitigating or adapting to climate change? {1.7.5} KRA 1.7.iii	A - Yes

1.7.3 Additional information:
.Healthy watersheds and wetlands provide multiple ecological services, including water purification, ground water and surface flow regulation, wildlife habitat, flood and surge impact reduction, water temperature moderation, erosion control, and stream stabilization. They also store carbon and sequester other greenhouse gases. These ecosystems are already threatened by a number of stressors, and climate change will further exacerbate this situation. EPA's Healthy Watersheds Initiative encourages states, local governments, watershed organizations, and others to take a strategic systems approach to conserving healthy watersheds, with a goal of protecting high-quality waters and preventing future water quality impairments.

1.7.4 Has your country formulated plans or projects to sustain and enhance the role of wetlands in supporting and maintaining viable farming systems? {1.7.6} KRA 1.7.v	A - Yes

1.7.4 Additional information:
From about 1987 to the present, Federal efforts to harmonize wetlands and farming have increased. Congress has passed critical wetland conservation and restoration legislation which is administered by the Department of Agriculture's National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). These programs have slowed down and even reversed the loss of wetlands to agriculture while providing conservation incentives to farmers. These programs include the Wetland Conservation Provisions (WC) which was authorized in the 1985 Farm Bill, and the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) which was authorized in the 1990 Farm Bill. The wetland conservation provisions have sharply reduced wetland conversions for agricultural uses, from 235,000 acres per year before 1985 to 27,000 acres per year from 1992 through 1997. The 2014 Farm Bill was enacted on February 7, 2014. NRCS manages these voluntary conservation programs, which benefit both agricultural producers and the environment. The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) provides financial and technical assistance to help conserve agricultural lands and wetlands and their related benefits. Under the Agricultural Land Easements component, NRCS helps Indian tribes, state and local governments and non-governmental organizations protect working agricultural lands and limit non-agricultural uses of the land. Under the Wetlands Reserve Easements component, NRCS helps to restore, protect and enhance enrolled wetlands. ACEP is a new program that consolidates three former programs – the Wetlands Reserve Program, Grassland Reserve Program and Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program. Land eligible for wetland reserve easements includes farmed or converted wetland that can be successfully and cost-effectively restored. NRCS prioritizes applications based the easement's potential for protecting and enhancing habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife.The Secretary of Agriculture announced that up to $35 million will be provided during the next three years to help landowners conserve grasslands and wetlands in the Prairie Pothole region. Farmers, ranchers and conservation partners will have access to a mix of financial and technical assistance opportunities through the NRCS to restore wetlands and grasslands. The Prairie Pothole region is critical as it provides critical breeding and nesting habitat for more than 60 percent of the nation's migratory waterfowl. The program's goal is to help landowners manage their working lands in a way that is compatible with agricultural production and good stewardship of the soil, water and habitat resources of the area. The wetlands and grasslands that characterize the region provide vital water storage to reduce regional flooding, improve water quality, and have tremendous potential to store carbon in soils, which reduces the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, one of the leading greenhouse gases contributing to climate change. The funding has several sources, including an Environmental Quality Incentives Program. This is the agency's largest conservation program and will help farmers with expiring Conservation Reserve Program contracts keep their lands as working grasslands or haylands through implementation of prescribed grazing and other conservation practices. Another source is a Ducks Unlimited/NRCS partnership for a carbon credits system. NRCS is working with North Dakota, South Dakota and Montana to create a carbon credit marketing system for landowners who agreed to avoid tilling grasslands. This work started in 2011 in North Dakota as part of a Conservation Innovation Grant, but it's being expanded to the three states.

STRATEGY 1.8 Wetland restoration. *Identify priority wetlands and wetland systems where restoration or rehabilitation would be beneficial and yield long-term environmental, social or economic benefits, and implement the necessary measures to recover these sites and systems.*

1.8.1 Have priority sites for wetland restoration been identified? {1.8.1} KRA 1.8.i	A - Yes

1.8.1 Additional information:
Ducks Unlimited, the world's leader in wetlands conservation takes a continental, landscape approach to wetland conservation and restoratin. Since 1937, DU has conserved more than 13 million acres of waterfowl habitat across North America (U.S. Canada and Mexico). While DU works in all 50 states, the organization focuses its efforts and resources on the habitats most beneficial to waterfowl, resulting in five conservation priorities (http://www.ducks.org/conservation/where-we-work/du-conservation-priority-areas), four of which are in the United States.
Prairy Pothole Region - The PPR is a relict Glacial landscape where millions of shallow depresions were formed and which are now wetlands (Prairie Potholes). This is North America's #1 Priority.

The Mississippi Alluvial Valley was once a 24.7 million acre complex of forested wetlands interspersed with swamps, cypress-tupelo brakes, scrub-shrub wetlands and emergent wetlands. This vast complex of wetlands, through which nearly 40 percent of North America drains. Today, only about 20 percent of the original forest remains in the MAV. The rest has been cleared for agricultural production and other land uses.

The Gulf Coast Prairie. Stretching from the Mississippi-Louisiana state line, west and south to the mouth of the Rio Grande River, the marshes and bays of the Gulf of Mexico were once among the most productive wetland systems in North America. This area is wintering habitat for large continental populations of several species: 95 percent of gadwall, 90 percent of mottled duck, 80 percent of green-winged teal, 80 percent of redheads, 60 percent of lesser scaup and 25 percent of pintails.

California's Central Valley runs from Red Bluff to Bakersfield. The Central Valley is No. 2 on the 25 most important and threatened waterfowl habitats on the continent. The Coastal California region extends from Bodega Bay south to northern Mexico and includes the important San Francisco and San Diego bays. This region also includes the Salton Sea. Water is a crucial factor in the amount and quality of waterfowl habitat.

1.8.2 Have wetland restoration/rehabilitation programmes or projects been implemented? {1.8.2} KRA 1.8.i	A - Yes

1.8.2 Additional information:
The North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) conserves North America's waterfowl, fish and wildlife resources while producing a variety of environmental and economic benefits. Its success is driven by partnerships involving federal, state and local governments; nonprofit organizations like Ducks Unlimited and community groups. Every federal dollar provided by NAWCA must be matched by at least one dollar from non-federal sources. Because the program is so effective, NAWCA funds are usually tripled or quadrupled on the local level. More than $1 billion in federal grants has been allocated for NAWCA projects – a figure that has leveraged an additional $3 billion from matching and non-matching funds. Since its inception, more than 2,000 NAWCA projects have contributed to the conservation of almost 27 million acres of habitat across North America.

STRATEGY 1.9 Invasive alien species. *Encourage Contracting Parties to develop a national inventory of invasive alien species that currently and/or potentially impact the ecological character of wetlands, especially Ramsar Sites, and ensure mutual supportiveness between the national inventory and IUCN's Global Register on Invasive Species (GRIS); develop guidance and promote procedures and actions to prevent, control or eradicate such species in wetland systems.*

1.9.1 Does your country have a comprehensive national inventory of invasive alien species that currently or potentially impact the ecological character of wetlands? {1.9.1} KRA 1.9.i	B - No

1.9.1 Additional information:

There is not a "National Inventory as such" but there is a NATIONAL INVASIVE SPECIES CENTER which publishes an on-line databases available relative to invasive species; See http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/plants/databases.shtml

One of these, hosted by Nature-Serve is entitled : Invasive Species Impact Rank (I-Rank): Includes assessments for a total 452 non-native plants of the U.S., searchable by name, location, invasive impact rank (I-Rank), or a combination of these criteria. The assessments are the result of applying a systematic protocol (2004; PDF | 1.03 MB) to determine the degree of impact an individual non-native species has on the native plants, animals, and ecosystems of the United States.

The National Invasive Species Council (NISC) maintains information on a state-by-state level as well as overarching information about invasive alien species in the United States, including specifics on invasive aquatic plants and animals. The NISC is under USDA (Department of Agriculture) and is a gateway to invasive species information covering Federal, State. local and International. sources.(http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/aquatics/main.shtml)

In addition, although not an official list, Bargeron, C.T., C.R. Minteer, C.W. Evans, D.J. Moorhead, G.K. Douce and R.C. Reardon. Technical Coordinators. 2008. Invasive Plants of the United States DVD-ROM: Identification, Biology and Control. USDA Forest Service. Forest Health Technology Enterprise Team. Morgantown, WV. FHTET-08-11 l is an aid for landowners, foresters, resource managers, and the general public in becoming familiar with invasive plants in their area to help protect our environment from the economic and ecological impacts of these biological pollutants. http://www.invasive.org/weedcd/.

The UF/IFAS Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants is a multidisciplinary research, teaching and extension unit directed to develop environmentally sound techniques for the management of aquatic and natural area weed species and to coordinate aquatic plant research activities within the State of Florida. The Center was established in 1978 by the Florida legislature. The Center utilizes expertise from many departments within UF/IFAS and its Agricultural Research and Education Centers throughout Florida.

1.9.2 Have national policies or guidelines on invasive species control and management been established for wetlands? {1.9.2} KRa 1.9.iii	A - Yes
1.9.2 Additional information: A 1999 Executive Order established the National Invasive Species Council which is comprised of representatives from 13 federal departments and agencies of the U.S. Government. Coordinated through the Council, these agencies are working together to address invasive species issues both domestically and abroad. Invasive species present challenges that cut across agency jursidictions and expertise. Thus, the duty of the Council is to provide coordinated national leadership regarding invasive species issues. The Council receives advice from the Invasive Species Advisory Committee, which was created through the passage of the Federal Advisory Committee Act. The legislation explicitly addresses the prevention, mitigation, and eradication of invasive species. The Council adopted a National Management Plan in January 2001 that was updated in 2008. The 2008-2012 National Invasive Species Management Plan outlines five Strategic Goals: Information management, Education and outreach, International Cooperation, and Research. See http://www.invasivespecies.gov/. The State Department is working with other Federal agencies, states, tribes, non-governmental organizations and the private sector to formulate U.S. foreign policy approaches to invasive species, notably in the context of international agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance.	

STRATEGY 1.10 Private sector. *Promote the involvement of the private sector in the conservation and wise use of wetlands.*

1.10.1 Is the private sector encouraged to apply the Ramsar wise use principle and guidance (Ramsar handbooks for the wise use of wetlands) in its activities and investments concerning wetlands? {1.10.1} KRA 1.10.i	A - Yes
1.10.1 Additional information:	

1.10.2 Has the private sector undertaken activities or actions for the wise use and management of: a. Ramsar Sites b. Wetlands in general {1.10.2} KRA 1.10.ii	a. A - Yes b. A - Yes

1.10.2 Additional information:
The bulk of wetland conservation in the U.S. is incentive driven and carried out by the private sector.Perhaps the most notable feature of federal wetland protection policy today is that there is no specific, comprehensive national wetland law. Rather, federal statutes regulating or otherwise protecting wetlands have evolved piecemeal over the years, and often utilize laws originally intended for other purposes (Mitsch and Gosselink, 1993; GAO, 1991). As a result, jurisdiction for wetland protection is spread over many agencies and federal wetland protection is not as effective or cohesive as it could be. Federal, state, and local government regulatory, or permitting, programs are essential tools in the nationwide effort to protect wetlands but, although essential they do not, provide sufficient protection. This gap is addressed by non-regulatory means such as incentive programs which are undertaken by the private sector. Recently, partnerships to manage whole watersheds have developed among federal, state, tribal, and local governments; nonprofit organizations; and private landowners. The goal of these partnerships is to implement comprehensive, integrated watershed protection.

STRATEGY 1.11: Incentive measures. *Promote incentive measures that encourage the application of the wise use provisions of the Convention.*

1.11.1 Have actions been taken to implement incentive measures which encourage the conservation and wise use of wetlands? {1.11.1} KRA 1.11.i	A - Yes

1.11.1 Additional information:
The North American Wetlands Conservation Act conserves North America's waterfowl, fish and wildlife resources while producing a variety of environmental and economic benefits. Its success is driven by partnerships involving federal, state and local governments; nonprofit organizations like DU and community groups. Every federal dollar provided by NAWCA must be matched by at least one dollar from non-federal sources. Because the program is so effective, NAWCA funds are usually tripled or quadrupled on the local level. More than $1 billion in federal grants has been allocated for NAWCA projects – a figure that has leveraged an additional $3 billion from matching and non-matching funds. More than 2,000 NAWCA projects have contributed to the conservation of almost 27 million acres of habitat across North America (U.S. Canada and Mexico).

1.11.2 Have actions been taken to remove perverse incentive measures which discourage conservation and wise use of wetlands? {1.11.2} KRA 1.11.i	A - Yes

1.11.2 Additional information:
Several federal farm programs and Federal policies eliminated incentives and other mechanisms that formerly made the destruction of wetlands technically and economically feasible. From about 1987 to the present, Federal efforts to restore wetlands have increased. Congress has responded by passing critical wetland conservation and restoration legislation which is now administered by the Department of Agriculture's National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). These programs have slowed down and even reversed the loss. These two programs are the Wetland Conservation Provisions (WC) which was authorized in the 1985 Farm Bill, and the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) which was later authorized in the 1990 Farm Bill. The wetland conservation provisions have sharply reduced wetland conversions for agricultural uses, from 235,000 acres per year before 1985 to 27,000 acres per year from 1992 through 1997. The 2014 Farm Bill was enacted on February 7, 2014. NRCS offers voluntary Farm Bill conservation programs that benefit both agricultural producers and the environment. The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) provides financial and technical assistance to help conserve agricultural lands and wetlands and their related benefits. Under the Agricultural Land Easements component, NRCS helps Indian tribes, state and local governments and non-governmental organizations protect working agricultural lands and limit non-agricultural uses of the land. Under the Wetlands Reserve Easements component, NRCS helps to restore, protect and enhance enrolled wetlands. ACEP is a new program that consolidates three former programs – the Wetlands Reserve Program, Grassland Reserve Program and Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program. Land eligible for wetland reserve easements includes farmed or converted wetland that can be successfully and cost-effectively restored. NRCS will prioritize applications based the easement's potential for protecting and enhancing habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife.

GOAL 2. WETLANDS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE

Note: An optional Annex (Section 4) to this COP12 National Report Format is provided so that a Contracting Party, if it so wishes, can also provide additional information separately on each of its designated Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites).

REMINDER: In 'free-text' boxes please do not use double quotes " "; use single quotes ' ' instead.

STRATEGY 2.1 Ramsar Site designation. *Apply the 'Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance' (Handbook 14, 3rd edition).*

2.1.1 Have a national strategy and priorities been established for the further designation of Ramsar Sites, using the *Strategic Framework for the Ramsar List*? {2.1.1} KRA 2.1.i	B - No
2.1.1 Additional information: in the United States designations are grassroot-driven. There are is no centralized process for designations which are only promoted and catalyzed by the National Ramsar Committee and other interested parties.The bulk of U.S effort for designation of Ramsar sites is undertaken by local stakeholders, civic and professional societies. The U.S government only plays a supporting role . Site designations reflect stakeholders interests, aspirations and loca lknowledge and concerns for the conservation of particular sites. This bottom-upapproach is favored over a top-down approach where individual stakeholders may feel or interpret as obligatory or forced. Conservation is more effective when participative, collaborative and stakeholders feel they have full ownership of their own initiatives. In some cases local people will request the designation of areas already managed and protected under the National Refuge System, but even in these cases local communities take the lead in the designation process.	

2.1.2 How many Ramsar Site designations are planned for the next triennium (2015-2018)? {2.1.4} KRA 2.1.iii	0 sites
2.1.2 Additional information (If possible, please indicate the name(s) of the Site(s) and anticipated year of designation): Because designation is a spontaneous locally-driven process it is not possible to estimate or speculate on how many designations will be made in the next triennium. The number is driven by the interest in conservation and appreciation of what the Ramsar designation conveys.	

STRATEGY 2.2 Ramsar Site information. *Ensure that the Ramsar Sites Information Service . . . is available and enhanced as a tool for guiding the further designation of wetlands for the List of Wetlands of International Importance and for research and assessment, and is effectively managed by the Secretariat.*

2.2.1 Are the Ramsar Sites Information Service and its tools being used in national identification of further Ramsar Sites to designate? {2.2.1} KRA 2.2.ii	A - Yes

2.2.1 Additional information: Parties involved in designation proposals are assisted by providing them guidance and awareness of tools available from Ramsar.

STRATEGY 2.3 Management planning - new Ramsar Sites. *While recognizing that Ramsar Site designation can act as a stimulus for development of effective site management plans, generally encourage the philosophy that all new Ramsar Sites should have effective management planning in place before designation, as well as resources for implementing such management.*

2.3.1 Have all sites being prepared for Ramsar designation (2.1.2 above) had adequate management planning processes established? {2.3.1} KRA 2.3.i	B - No
2.3.1 Additional information: As stated earlier the designation process is not centralized and top-down. It is decentralized and locally driven. Parties are provided guidance as the designation process develops and their level of engagement increases. In the United States there are strongly held views of the importance of maintaining the sovereignty of property rights. Since much of the land in the United States is privately held, it is critical that landowner become willing partners in conservation, which is only possible if they are informed and have access to technical information that helps them manage their lands in accordance to sound ecological practice. The Ramsar designation in this case becomes an act of public recognition and appreciation for voluntary conservation efforts.	

STRATEGY 2.4 Ramsar Site ecological character. *Maintain the ecological character of all designated Ramsar Sites, through planning and management.*

2.4.1 How many Ramsar Sites have a management plan? {2.4.1} KRA 2.4.i	29 sites
2.4.2 For how many of the Ramsar Sites with a management plan is the plan being implemented? {2.4.2} KRA 2.4.i	29 sites
2.4.3 For how many Ramsar Sites is a management plan currently being prepared? {2.4.3} KRA 2.4.i	0 sites
2.4.1 – 2.4.3 Additional information: Management plans are a core requirement for Ramsar designations. For those Ramsar wetlands that are National Wildlife Refuges comprehensive conservation plans are required by law. The Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 Act includes two fundamental requirements; that the Secretary of the Interior maintain the biological integrity, diversity and environmental health of the Refuge System, and a requirement for preparing a comprehensive conservation plan for each refuge.	

2.4.4 How many Ramsar Sites have a cross-sectoral management committee? {2.4.6} KRA 2.4.iv	0 sites
2.4.4 Additional information (If at least 1 site, please give the name and official number of the site or sites):	

2.4.5 For how many Ramsar Sites has an ecological character description been prepared? {2.4.7} KRA 2.4.v	0 sites
2.4.5 Additional information (If at least 1 site, please give the name and official number of the site or sites):	

STRATEGY 2.5 Ramsar Site management effectiveness. *Review all existing Ramsar Sites to determine the effectiveness of management arrangements, in line with the 'Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance'.*

2.5.1 Have any assessments of the effectiveness of Ramsar Site management been made? {2.5.1} KRA 2.5.i	A - Yes
2.5.1 Additional information (If 'Yes' or 'Some sites', please indicate the year of assessment and the source of the information):	

STRATEGY 2.6 Ramsar Site status. *Monitor the condition of Ramsar Sites and address negative changes in their ecological character, notify the Ramsar Secretariat of changes affecting Ramsar Sites, and apply the Montreux Record, if appropriate, and Ramsar Advisory Mission as tools to address problems.*

2.6.1 Are mechanisms in place for the Administrative Authority to be informed of negative human-induced changes or likely changes in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites, pursuant to Article 3.2? {2.6.1} KRA 2.6.i	A - Yes
2.6.1 Additional information (If 'Yes' or 'Some sites', please summarise the mechanism or mechanisms established):	

2.6.2 Have all cases of negative human-induced change or likely change in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites been reported to the Ramsar Secretariat, pursuant to Article 3.2? {2.6.2} KRA 2.6.i	A - Yes
2.6.2 Additional information (If 'Yes' or 'Some cases', please indicate for which Ramsar Sites the Administrative Authority has made Article 3.2 reports to the Secretariat, and for which sites such reports of change or likely change have not yet been made):	

2.6.3 If applicable, have actions been taken to address the issues for which Ramsar Sites have been listed on the Montreux Record, including requesting a Ramsar Advisory Mission? {2.6.3} KRA 2.6.ii	A - Yes

2.6.3 Additional information (If 'Yes', please indicate the actions taken):

The USG is addressing the needs to restore the Everglades not only because of its ecological importance but because the system is now a key part of the social end economic infrastructure of South Florida. So the activity is not only a matter of restoration but finding ways to harmonize conservation and development. The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) currently provides the standing framework and guide to restore, protect and preserve the water resources of central and southern Florida, including the Everglades. It covers 16 counties over an 18,000-square-mile area and centers on an update of the Central & Southern Florida (C&SF) Project also known as the Restudy. The Plan, approved in the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2000 includes more than 60 elements, will take more than 30 years to construct and the current estimate in Oct 2007 dollars is $9.5 billion for projects.

The Water Resources Development Act (WRDA 1992) provided the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers with the authority to re-evaluate the C&SF Project and to recommend improvements and modifications in order to restore the ecosystem. The goal of CERP is to capture fresh water that now flows unused to the ocean and the gulf and redirect it to areas that need it most. The majority of the water will be devoted to environmental restoration, reviving a highly altered ecosystem. The remaining water will benefit cities and farmers by enhancing water supplies for the south Florida economy.

The Everglades Restoration Plan Adaptive Strategy (2006) contains the recommendations of REstoration, COordination and VERification (RECOVER) for integrating adaptive management into the implementation of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP or Plan). Adaptive management provides resource managers with a tools to deal with the uncertainties inherent in a project of this scale, and the temporal scopes and dynamics involved. It is expected that restoration will require some 40 years and that very likely it will take the system more than 100 years to respond. The Everglades Restoration is not only a restoration but a large scale attempt to harmonize the natural system with the changing human needs tapping the benefits that subsidize human occupation that are critical, not optional,for development in the region. The USG has not requested the assistance of the Ramsar Advisory Committee because of the scale and complexity of this activityand the need for extreme reliance on local vetting and engagement to generate local solutions as well as approval and support. This highly participatory approach has engaged society, academia and resource managers and has been the foundation of the activity and the key ingredient of its success and progress to date.

STRATEGY 2.7 Management of other internationally important wetlands. *Appropriate management and wise use achieved for those internationally important wetlands that have not yet been formally designated as Ramsar Sites but have been identified through domestic application of the Strategic Framework or an equivalent process.*

2.7.1 Has the ecological character of internationally important wetlands not yet designated as Ramsar Sites been maintained? {2.7.1} KRA 2.7.i	A - Yes
2.7.1 Additional information:	

GOAL 3. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Note: in 'free-text' boxes please do not use double quotes " ": use single quotes ' ' instead.

STRATEGY 3.1 Synergies and partnerships with MEAs and IGOs. *Work as partners with international and regional multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and other intergovernmental agencies (IGOs).*

3.1.1 Are the national focal points of other MEAs invited to participate in the National Ramsar/Wetland Committee? {3.1.2} KRAs 3.1.i & 3.1.iv	A - Yes
3.1.1 Additional information:	

3.1.2 Are mechanisms in place at the national level for collaboration between the Ramsar Administrative Authority and the focal points of UN and other global and regional bodies and agencies (e.g. UNEP, UNDP, WHO, FAO, UNECE, ITTO)? {3.1.3} KRA 3.1.iv	A - Yes
3.1.2 Additional information: Relations between the Ramsar Administrative Authority and other global and regional agencies are coordinated by the Bureau Oceans, International Environmental & Scientific Affairs, U.S. Department of State [OES/DOS].	

STRATEGY 3.2 Regional initiatives. *Support existing regional arrangements under the Convention and promote additional arrangements.*

3.2.1 Have you (AA) been involved in the development and implementation of a Regional Initiative under the framework of the Convention? {3.2.1} KRA 3.2.i	B - No
3.2.1 Additional information (If 'Yes' or 'Planned', please indicate the regional initiative(s) and the collaborating countries of each initiative): Currently the United States is not involved in any Regional Initiative sponsored by the Convention but it did in the past. For this previous involvement see our COP11 National Report.	

3.2.2 Has your country supported or participated in the development of other regional (i.e., covering more than one country) wetland training and research centres? {3.2.2}	B - No

3.2.2 Additional information (If 'Yes', please indicate the name(s) of the centre(s):
At this time the United States supports training abroad for the conservation of natural resources through its Wildlife Without Borders Grants Program. This activity is global in scope.

STRATEGY 3.3 International assistance. *Promote international assistance to support the conservation and wise use of wetlands, while ensuring that environmental safeguards and assessments are an integral component of all development projects that affect wetlands, including foreign and domestic investments.*

3.3.1 [For Contracting Parties with a development assistance agency only ('donor countries')]: Has the agency provided funding to support wetland conservation and management in other countries? {3.3.1} KRA 3.3.i	A - Yes

3.3.1 Additional information (If 'Yes', please indicate the countries supported since COP11):
The United States partners with developing countries around the world to support some $300 million in biodiversity conservation and management, including for wetlands.

3.3.2 [For Contracting Parties with a development assistance agency only ('donor countries')]: Have environmental safeguards and assessments been included in development proposals proposed by the agency? {3.3.2} KRA 3.3.ii	A - Yes

3.3.2 Additional information:
Environmental safeguards and assessments are a standard required element of development programming undertaken by the United States.

3.3.3 [For Contracting Parties that have received development assistance only ('recipient countries')]: Has funding support been received from development assistance agencies specifically for in-country wetland conservation and management? {3.3.3}	Z - Not applicable

3.3.3 Additional information (If 'Yes', please indicate from which countries/agencies since COP11):
.....

STRATEGY 3.4 Sharing information and expertise. *Promote the sharing of expertise and information concerning the conservation and wise use of wetlands.*

3.4.1 Have networks, including twinning arrangements, been established, nationally or internationally, for knowledge sharing and training for wetlands that share common features? {3.4.1}	---
3.4.1 Additional information (If 'Yes' or 'Partly', please indicate the networks and wetlands involved):	

3.4.2 Has information about your country's wetlands and/or Ramsar Sites and their status been made public (e.g., through publications or a website)? {3.4.2} KRA 3.4.iv	A - Yes
3.4.2 Additional information:	

3.4.3 Has information about your country's wetlands and/or Ramsar Sites been transmitted to the Ramsar Secretariat for dissemination? {3.4.3} KRA 3.4.ii	A - Yes
3.4.3 Additional information:	

STRATEGY 3.5 Shared wetlands, river basins and migratory species. *Promote inventory and cooperation for the management of shared wetlands and hydrological basins, including cooperative monitoring and management of shared wetland-dependent species.*

3.5.1 Have all transboundary wetland systems been identified? {3.5.1} KRA 3.5.i	A - Yes
3.5.1 Additional information:	

3.5.2 Is effective cooperative management in place for shared wetland systems (for example, in shared river basins and coastal zones)? {3.5.2} KRA 3.5.ii	A - Yes
3.5.2 Additional information (If 'Yes' or 'Partly', please indicate for which wetland systems such management is in place):	

3.5.3 Does your country participate in regional networks or initiatives for wetland-dependent migratory species? {3.5.3} KRA 3.5.iii	A - Yes
3.5.3 Additional information:	

GOAL 4. IMPLEMENTATION CAPACITY

Note: in 'free-text' boxes please do not use double quotes " ": use single quotes ' ' instead.

STRATEGY 4.1 CEPA. *Support, and assist in implementing at all levels, where appropriate, the Convention's Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness Programme (Resolution X.8) for promoting the conservation and wise use of wetlands through communication, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) and work towards wider awareness of the Convention's goals, mechanisms, and key findings.*

4.1.1 Has an action plan (or plans) for wetland CEPA been established? {4.1.1} KRA 4.1.i a) At the national level b) Sub-national level c) Catchment/basin level d) Local/site level (Even if no CEPA plans have been developed, if broad CEPA objectives for CEPA actions have been established, please indicate this in the Additional information section below)	a) A - Yes b) --- c) --- d) A - Yes
4.1.1 Additional information (If 'Yes' or 'In progress' to one or more of the four questions above, for each please describe the mechanism, who is responsible and identify if it has involved CEPA NFPs):	

4.1.2 How many centres (visitor centres, interpretation centres, education centres) have been established? {4.1.2} KRA 4.1.ii a) at Ramsar Sites b) at other wetlands	a) 0 centres b) 0 centres
4.1.2 Additional information (If centres are part of national or international networks, please describe the networks):	

4.1.3 Does the Contracting Party: a) promote stakeholder participation in decision-making on wetland planning and management b) specifically involve local stakeholders in the selection of new Ramsar Sites and in Ramsar Site management? {4.1.3} KRA 4.1.iii	a) A - Yes b) A - Yes
4.1.3 Additional information (If 'Yes' or 'Partly', please provide information about the ways in which stakeholders are involved):	

4.1.4 Has an assessment of national and local training needs for the implementation of the Convention been made? {4.1.4} KRAs 4.1.iv & 4.1.viii	C - Partly
4.1.4 Additional information: Training needs are assessed individually by each organization, see 4.1.5 additional information.	

4.1.5 How many opportunities for wetland site manager training have been provided since COP11? {4.1.5} KRA 4.1.iv a) at Ramsar Sites b) at other wetlands	Number of opportunities: a) 0 b) 0
4.1.5 Additional information (including whether the Ramsar Wise Use Handbooks were used in the training): Wetland training takes many forms and takes place at many levels across the nation. Federal agencies regularly organize training on many topics related to wetland regulations, delineation and restoration. However, the private sector and professional societies offer training sessions as well. An example of private sector training is that offered by Environmental Concerns. Since its inception in 1972, Environmental Concern Inc. has put a premium on building the capacity of those in the wetland field (consultants, government, higher education, non-profits) through quality professional development opportunities. Unlike other wetland training centers, Environmental Concern is a working firm engaged in the work of wetlands. EC provides students a unique learning experience presented from the practitioner's perspective. The Wetland Learning Center in St. Michaels, Maryland includes the nation's first wholesale wetland plant nursery – currently growing over 120 different species, and an active restoration department engaged in cutting edge enhancement, restoration and creation initiatives. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife National Conservation Training Center campus in West Virginia offers numerous courses on wetland management during the year. Some courses are offered within the campus at West Virginia and others are held throughout the country. Basic courses provides an overview of wetland ecology, and cover what wetlands are and the ecological conditions lead to wetland development, and what functions wetlands serve in the landscape. Courses discuss regional wetland types, wetland classification, the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI), wetland functional assessment, and wetland restoration This introductory course is delivered in different locations in the country so as to be regionally pertinent. In relation to wetland restoration participants learn to assess wetland functions, develop restoration and enhancement plans, and implement plans on degraded wetlands. The course emphasizes wetland ecology, wildlife needs, enhancement of wetland functions, conceptual design and implementation processes, and monitoring considerations. The course consists of two	

portions. The first portion is a self-pace workbook to be reviewed prior to attending the on-site portion of the class. The workbook contains readings and exercises on wetland ecology and wildlife principles applicable to different wetland types. The on-site portion provides detailed discussions, field demonstrations, and reinforces the principles covered in the workbook. Depending upon enrollment the course location will be selected to emphasize the following wetland types: bottomland hardwoods, prairie potholes, Carolina bay and flats, depressional wetlands, floodplains, northwest freshwater wetlands, and others. The Society of Wetland Scientists maintains a web page which lists current and forthcoming training opportunities in the nation.

4.1.6 Do you have an operational cross-sectoral National Ramsar/Wetlands Committee or equivalent body? {4.1.6} KRA 4.3.v	A - Yes

4.1.6 Additional information (If 'Yes', indicate a) its membership; b) number of meetings since COP11; and c) what responsibilities the Committee has):

.....

4.1.7 Are other communication mechanisms (apart from a national committee) in place to share Ramsar implementation guidelines and other information between the Administrative Authority and: a) Ramsar Site managers b) other MEA national focal points c) other ministries, departments and agencies {4.1.7} KRA 4.1.vi	 a) B - No b) B - No c) B - No

4.1.7 Additional information (If 'Yes' or 'Partly', please describe what mechanisms are in place):

.....

4.1.8 Have Ramsar-branded World Wetlands Day activities (whether on 2 February or at another time of year), either government and NGO-led or both, been carried out in the country since COP11? {4.1.8}	A - Yes

4.1.8 Additional information:

In celebration of World Wetlands Day 2013 the Kansas Wetlands Education Center at Cheyenne Bottoms sponsored a coloring contest in cooperation with Barton County schools and area businesses. The coloring contest was used as a follow-up activity for the annual 2nd graders Wetlands Day held at the KWEC each September. Three hundred and nine 2nd grade students from 11 elementary schools in Barton County (public and parochial) completed a coloring sheet (see attached). The coloring sheet

featured macroinvertebrates commonly found in wetlands, and included a short description of how scientists can judge water quality based on the types of macroinvertebrates found. An additional classroom activity and more information about each macroinvertebrate were also sent to each classroom. A news release was submitted to the Great Bend Tribune describing the coloring contest and announcing the winners. The article was published February 10th, 2013. An article about the coloring contest also appeared in the Hoisington Dispatch. Prior to thecoloring contest, KWEC staff wrote an article for the Great Bend Tribune describing the importance of wetlands and World Wetlands Day. William Mitsch sent in this photo montage from the Everglades, titled, "Happy Wetlands Day from the Everglades Wetland Research Park, Naples, Florida".
In addition, the United States Department of State, and its Embassies and Consulates, celebrated World Wetlands Day 2013 organizing 15 events around the world, including wetlands clean ups, walks, film viewings, and social media campaigns, to raise public awareness about the value of wetlands to society and the role of the Ramsar Convention in their wise use and conservation.

The "The Wisconsin Wetlands Association held its Wetland Science Conference in celebration of World Wetlands Day each year in celebration of wetlands. The conference is scheduled so that press releases and announcements promoting the conference can be released on or just before World Wetlands Day. This year's Wetland Science Conference was themed "Great Wetlands, Healthy Watershed" focused on the ways in which wetlands can contribute to healthy watersheds for people, water quality, wildlife habitat, and more. Nearly 300 people attended this year's conference, representing more than 125 different agencies, companies, non profit organizations, universities, and other institutions. Katie Beilfuss Outreach Programs Director and her husband Dr. Richard Beilfuss of the International Crane Foundation were guests on a Wisconsin Public Radio program that promoted the conference. Dr Beilfuss Rich was the banquet speaker for the conference this year (2014) , and spoke on the ways the International Crane Foundation is working to promote watershed health for cranes and people around the world.
More than 2200 middle and high school students from Wayne County attended the 5th annual celebration of World Wetlands Day Friday, January 31, 2014 at Oscar A. Carlson High School in Gibraltar, Michigan. The event featured a Wetlands Exposition showcasing 25 conservation organizations, displays and interactive games like Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge's "Whopper Jawed!," the Ultimate Wetlands Trivia Game, designed for student participation. Program attendees were also treated to interpretive programs and presentations led by area conservation leaders.

Established in 2010 to highlight "Wetlands of International Importance," including Humbug Marsh, a unit of the Detroit River IWR, this popular event has since developed into a collaboration between Carlson HS, the Refuge, International Wildlife Refuge Alliance (IWRA), DTE Energy, International Joint Commission

(IJC), Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, University of Michigan-Dearborn's Environmental Interpretive Center, and the Wyandot of Anderdon Nation. Event attendance continues to grow, in part as a result of efforts to involve outside schools from across the county.

4.1.9 Have campaigns, programmes, and projects (other than for World Wetlands Day-related activities) been carried out since COP11 to raise awareness of the importance of wetlands to people and wildlife and the ecosystem benefits/services provided by wetlands? {4.1.9}	A - Yes
4.1.9 Additional information (If these and other CEPA activities have been undertaken by other organizations, please indicate this):	

STRATEGY 4.2 Convention financial capacity. *Provide the financial resources necessary for the Convention's governance,mechanisms and programmes to achieve the expectations of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, within the availability of existing resources and by the effective use of such resources; explore and enable options and mechanism for mobilization of new and additional resources for implementation of the Convention.*

4.2.1 a) Have Ramsar contributions been paid in full for 2012, 2013 and 2014? {4.2.1} KRA 4.2.i	A - Yes
b) If 'No' in 4.2.1 a), please clarify what plan is in place to ensure future prompt payment:	

4.2.2 Has any additional financial support been provided through voluntary contributions to non-core funded Convention activities? {4.2.2} KRA 4.2.i	A - Yes
4.2.2 Additional information (If 'Yes' please state the amounts, and for which activities): The United States has contributed funding when it is available to support Wetlands for the Future programming.	

STRATEGY 4.3 Convention bodies' effectiveness. *Ensure that the Conference of the Contracting Parties, Standing Committee, Scientific and Technical Review Panel, and Secretariat are operating at a high level of efficiency and effectiveness to support the implementation of the Convention.*

4.3.1 Have you (AA) used your previous Ramsar National Reports in monitoring implementation of the Convention? {4.3.1} KRA 4.3.ii	B - No
4.3.1 Additional information (If 'Yes', please indicate how the Reports have been used for monitoring): The implementation of the Convention requires greater detail than is available on the report and must be carried out in real time because of the complexity and fluidity of the issues.	

STRATEGY 4.4 Working with IOPs and others. *Maximize the benefits of working with the Convention's International Organization Partners (IOPs*) and others.*

* The IOPs are: BirdLife International, the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature), Wetlands International, and WWF International.

4.4.1 Has your country received assistance from one or more of the Convention's IOPs in its implementation of the Convention? {4.4.1} KRA 4.4.iii	B - No
4.4.1 Additional information (If 'Yes' please name the IOP (or IOPs) and the type of assistance received):	

4.4.2 Has your country provided assistance to one or more of the Convention's IOPs? {4.4.2} KRA 4.4.iii	A - Yes
4.4.2 Additional information (If 'Yes' please name the IOP (or IOPs) and the type of assistance provided): Some of Ramsar IOP's are recipients of U.S Federal grants	