



Ramsar Visit to Norway

29 June 1997

Norway

Ramsar Bureau Visit to Norway, 14-20 June 1997

The Bureau's Regional Coordinator visited Norway from 14-20 June, following an invitation by the Norwegian Delegation to the Brisbane Conference. Six of the Norwegian Ramsar sites were visited and detailed discussions held with the national, regional and local authorities, national and local NGOs, and local residents. A thorough report has been compiled and the factual content is currently being checked with Norwegian counterparts. A summary of the report will be posted in due course. In the meantime an overview of Norway's Ramsar implementation follows.

Norway became a Contracting Party in 1974, being amongst the first seven Contracting Parties required in order for the Convention to enter into force.

Norway has played an active role in promoting implementation of the Convention internationally, in particular by chairing the 'Working Group on Criteria and Wise Use' between 1987 and 1990. This work led to the adoption, at the 4th COP (Montreux, 1990) of the *Guidelines for the Implementation of the Wise Use Concept* and the *Criteria for Identifying Wetlands of International Importance*, tools which significantly strengthened application of the Convention.

In addition to prompt payment of its annual contributions to the Convention's core budget, Norway has also made regular additional voluntary contributions, notably to facilitate participation of developing country representatives at Ramsar meetings.

Norway has so far designated 23 sites for the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance (1 site designated in 1974, 13 in 1985 - of which five are in Spitzbergen - and 9 in 1996):

NORWAY ('mainland')

- Åkersvika 09/07/74 Hedemark 415 ha 60°50'N 011°08'E
- Froan 19/03/96 Sør-Trøndelag 48,400 ha 64°00'N 009°10'E
- Giske wetland system 19/03/96 More og Romsdal 554 ha 62°33'N 006°05'E
- Haroya wetland system 19/03/96 More og Romsdal 189 ha 62°45'N 006°28'E
- Ilene & Presterødkilen 24/07/85 Vestfold 177 ha 59°15'N 010°20'E
- Jaeren 24/07/85 Rogaland 400 ha 58°50'N 005°34'E
- Kurefjorden 24/07/85 Østfold 400 ha 59°30'N 011°00'E
- Lista wetland system 19/03/96 Vest-Agder 724 ha 58°13'N 006°45'E
- Mellandsvågen 19/03/96 More og Romsdal 98 ha 63°22'N 008°30'E
- Mosvasstangen wetland system 19/03/96 Telemark 1,436 ha 59°50'N 008°10'E
- Nordre Tyrifjord 19/03/96 Buskerud 323 ha 60°07'N 010°12'E
- Nordre Øyeren 24/07/85 Akerhus 6,260 ha 59°53'N 011°09'E
- Øra 24/07/85 Østfold 1,560 ha 59°10'N 011°00'E
- Ørlandet 24/07/85 Sør-Trøndelag 2,920 ha 63°42'N 009°35'E
- Pasvik 19/03/96 Finnmark 1,910 ha 69°10'N 029°15'E
- Sandblåst/Gaustadvågen 19/03/96 More og Romsdal 250 ha 62°58'N 007°17'E
- Stabbursneset 24/07/85 Finnmark 1,620 ha 70°10'N 024°40'E
- Tautra & svaet 24/07/85 Nord-Trøndelag 2,054 ha 63°35'N 010°37'E

NORWAY (Svalbard/Spitzbergen)

- Dunøyane 24/07/85 120 ha 77°04'N 015°00'E
- Forlandsøyane 24/07/85 60 ha 78°20'N 011°36'E
- Gasøyane 24/07/85 100 ha 78°20'N 011°36'E
- Isøyane 24/07/85 30 ha 77°08'N 014°48'E
- Kongsfjorden 24/07/85 140 ha 78°55'N 012°10'E

Administratively, the Norwegian 'mainland' (excluding Svalbard and Jan Mayen Island) is divided into Counties (*Fylke*), with each County subdivided into Municipalities (*Kommune*). Environmental issues are generally dealt with at the county level, in consultation with the municipalities and national authorities, as appropriate. Norway has not developed a National Wetland Policy, although each county is obliged by the Nature Conservation Act to produce a Wetland Protection Plan, identifying wetlands to be given national protected area status. There is no formal National Ramsar/Wetland Committee in Norway.

The Administrative Authority for the Convention is the Directorate of Nature Management (Direktoratet for Naturforvaltning), one of three Directorates with powers delegated by the Minister of Environment (the other two Directorates deal with pollution, and cultural heritage issues, respectively). National Reports, prepared by the Directorate for Nature Management, have been submitted to each Conference of the Parties (copies available from the Bureau).

It is Norwegian Government policy that Ramsar sites can only be designated if the wetland concerned already benefits from national protected area status (e.g. Nature Reserve or Bird Sanctuary). Many nationally protected areas were established in the 1970's and early 1980's when concepts of integrated wetland management, land-use zonation and incorporation of buffer zones were not as widely accepted as they are now. This means that difficulties may sometimes arise in preventing or minimising negative impacts from activities which take place outside the protected area boundaries.

The Bureau has visited Norway on one previous occasion, in 1990, when the Secretary General was in Åkersvika Ramsar site to discuss the possible impact of development proposals in the surrounding area. A report in the framework of the Convention's Monitoring Procedure (since renamed Management Guidance Procedure) was produced (available from the Bureau).

-- reported by Tim Jones, Regional Coordinator for Europe

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