



The Ramsar Convention celebrates its 1000th Ramsar site

10 July 1999



The Government of Honduras has designated the world's 1000th Wetland of International

Importance, as of 10 July 1999. The new Ramsar site, "Sistema de Humedales de la Zona Sur de Honduras" (Wetlands system of the southern region of Honduras), is a complex of seven coastal areas totaling 69,711 hectares along the Honduran portion of the Golfo de Fonseca: Bahía de Chismuyo, Bahía de San Lorenzo, Los Delgaditos, Las Iguanas y Punta Condega, Jicarito, San Bernardo and La Berbería, along the Corredor Biológico Mesoamericano Pacífico de Honduras. Various species of mangrove form the predominant vegetation in this area of typical marine-coastal ecosystem influenced by the fluctuation of the tides. Several lagoons in the rainy season provide refuge for both migratory and non-migratory birds, as well as spawning grounds for various species of tortoise, molluscs, crustaceans, and fish. The area is important to the nearby people for its mangrove wood for construction as well as for traditional fishing and grazing activities.



Aerial view of Bahía de Chismuyo

The data sheet for the new Ramsar site, prepared by the Secretaría de Recursos Naturales y Ambiente, lists a bewildering variety of wetland types present, including eight of the eleven types in the marine/coastal category (principally Intertidal Forested Wetlands, Shallow Marine Waters, and Estuarine Waters), as well as, from the human-made category, aquaculture ponds, salt exploitation sites, canals and channels, and wastewater treatment areas. Designation as a Ramsar site has been justified under old Criteria 1a, 1b, and 1c on representative wetlands, all four categories of old Criteria 2 on plants or animals, all three categories of Criteria 3 on waterfowl, and both of Criteria 4 on fish. In fact, the only Ramsar Criterion that has not been claimed is 1d, a wetland that is unusual in the region.

In the few years since the first *Overview of the World's Ramsar Sites* was published for the Brisbane COP in 1996, the Convention's coverage has grown from 771 to 1000 sites, a remarkable achievement. However, since San José Resolution VII.11 "*INVITES Contracting Parties, the Convention's International Organization Partners, and local community stakeholders to work, within the long-term strategic framework, to achieve the short-term global target of 2000 Ramsar sites by COP9 in the year 2005*", complacency is probably not recommended.

Congratulations to Honduras for helping the Convention reach its first one thousand Ramsar sites!

Salvador

ALIANZA

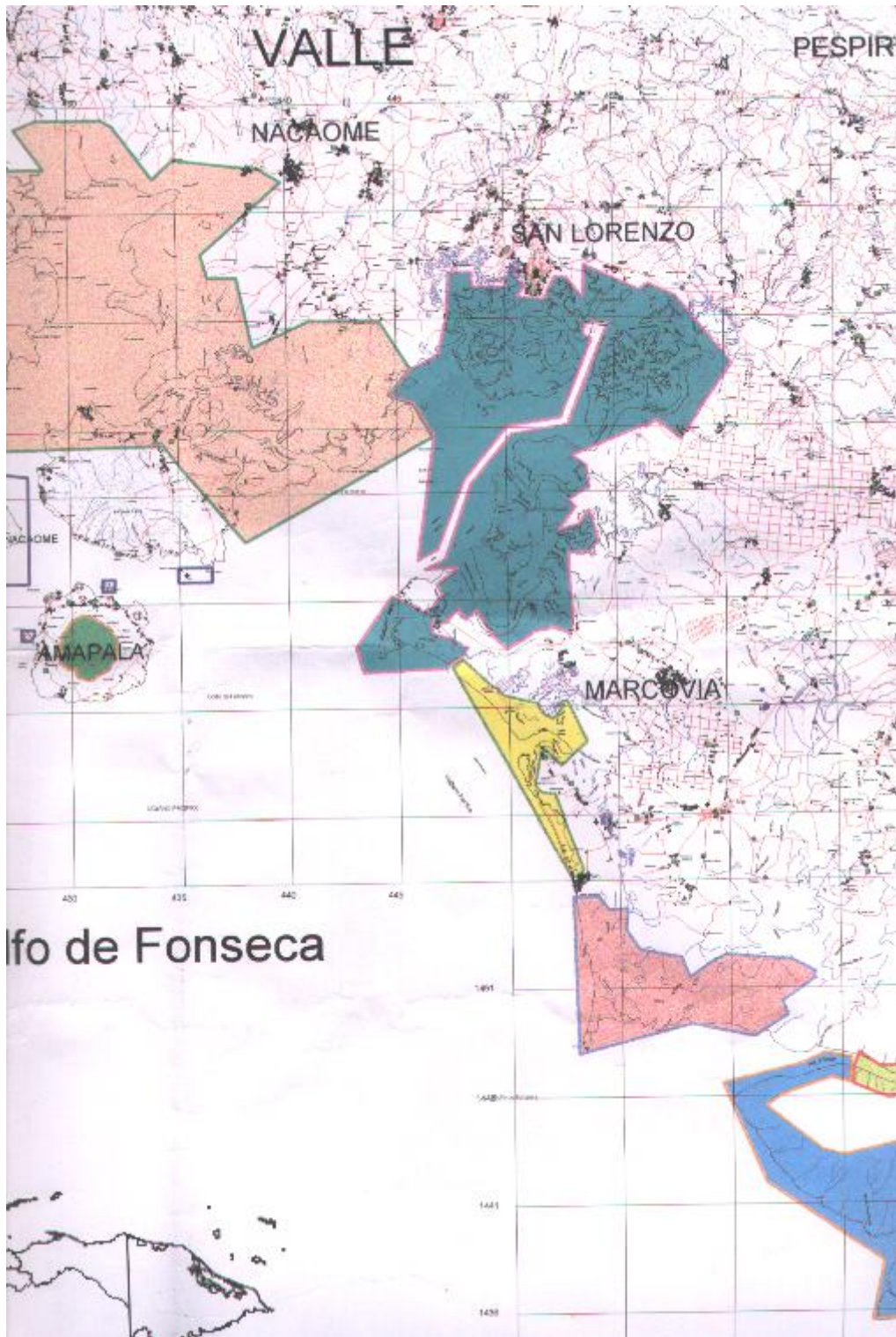
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Golfo de Fonseca





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