



**15th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
to the Convention on Wetlands**

**“Protecting wetlands for our common future”
Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, 23-31 July 2025**

COP15 Doc.23.7

Note from the Secretariat:

At its 64th meeting, the Standing Committee in Decision SC64-25 instructed the Secretariat to submit the draft resolution in document SC64 Doc.25 on the *status of Sites on the List of Wetlands of International Importance* to COP15 for its consideration.

**Draft resolution on the Status of Sites in the List of Wetlands
of International Importance**

1. RECALLING Article 8.2 of the Convention, on the duties of the Secretariat concerning reporting on the status of Wetlands of International Importance (“Ramsar Sites”) for the consideration and recommendations of the Conference of the Contracting Parties on these matters, and Article 6.2.d), concerning the competence of the Conference to make general or specific recommendations to the Contracting Parties regarding the conservation, management and wise use of wetlands;
2. RECALLING Article 2.1 of the Convention, which states that “Each Contracting Party shall designate suitable wetlands within its territory for inclusion in a List of Wetlands of International Importance” and that “The boundaries of each wetland shall be precisely described and also delimited on a map”;
3. APPRECIATING the designation of 97 new Wetlands of International Importance by Contracting Parties between 1 July 2022 and 26 March 2025;
4. ALSO APPRECIATING the work done by 29 Contracting Parties that completed updates to Ramsar Information Sheets (RISs) for 314 Ramsar Sites within their territories during this period, and by 68 Parties that provided updated information on a further 564 Sites;
5. NOTING that, for 1,872 Ramsar Sites, representing 74% of the 2,533 Sites that had been designated by 26 March 2025, either Ramsar Information Sheets or adequate maps had not been submitted, or relevant RISs or maps had not been updated for over six years, so that recent information on the status of these Sites was not available;

6. RECALLING paragraph 9 of Resolution VIII.21 on *Defining Ramsar site boundaries more accurately in Ramsar Information Sheets* which “recommends that refinement of the mapped Ramsar Site boundary should only occur where the change is so minor that it does not substantially affect the fundamental objectives for which the site was listed, and:
 - a) the site boundary has been drawn incorrectly and there has been a genuine error; and/or
 - b) the site boundary does not accurately match the description of the boundary as defined in the RIS; and/or
 - c) technology allows for a higher resolution and more accurate definition of the site boundary than was available at the time of Listing”;
7. ALSO RECALLING paragraph 44 of Resolution XIII.20 on *Promoting the conservation and wise use of intertidal wetlands and ecologically associated habitats* which “encourages Contracting Parties to ensure that intertidal Ramsar Site boundaries include the entire ecosystem of importance to migratory waterbirds and other dependent species, including inland roost and feeding sites; and invites Parties to review and extend boundaries of relevant Sites as appropriate”;
8. NOTING that substantive changes to Ramsar Site boundaries, arising from extensions or restrictions of the area of a Site, should also be reported in updated Ramsar Information Sheets;
9. FURTHER RECALLING paragraph 12 of Resolution VIII.8 on *Assessing and reporting the status and trends of wetlands, and the implementation of Article 3.2 of the Convention*, which urges Contracting Parties “to put in place mechanisms in order to be informed at the earliest possible time, including through reports by national authorities and local and Indigenous communities and NGOs, if the ecological character of any wetland in its territory included in the Ramsar List has changed, is changing or is likely to change, and to report any such change without delay to the Ramsar Bureau so as to implement fully Article 3.2 of the Convention”;
10. EXPRESSING ITS APPRECIATION to those Contracting Parties that have provided Article 3.2 reports to the Secretariat about Ramsar Sites where human-induced changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring, or may occur, as listed in Annex 4.a) of the Report of the Secretariat pursuant to Article 8.2 on the List of Wetlands of International Importance¹;
11. NOTING that 79% of the Contracting Parties reported in their National Reports to the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP15) that they had arrangements in place to be informed of negative human-induced changes or likely changes in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites in their territories; but AWARE that during this reporting period fewer than 5% of Parties have submitted reports of all instances of such changes or likely changes;
12. CONCERNED that, as of 26 March 2025, none of the 46 Ramsar Sites listed in the Montreux Record had been removed since COP14;
13. ALSO CONCERNED about the length of time Contracting Parties are taking to address changes in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites pursuant to Article 3.2, the ongoing lack of information on the status of many unresolved “Article 3.2 cases”, and the lack of response from some Contracting Parties to either confirm or refute concerns raised by third parties regarding potential changes to Sites; and

¹ See document COP15 Doc.9 at <https://www.ramsar.org/document/cop15-doc9-report-secretariat-pursuant-article-82-list-wetlands-international-importance>.

14. NOTING the importance of Ramsar Advisory Missions as a monitoring procedure, underlined by Contracting Parties through Resolution XIII.11 on *Ramsar Advisory Missions*, to provide technical assistance for addressing threats to Ramsar Sites that could lead to a change in ecological character;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

15. URGES the Contracting Parties that have not submitted a Ramsar Information Sheet or a map for all Wetlands of International Importance ("Ramsar Sites") that they have designated (listed at Annex 3.a) of the Report of the Secretariat pursuant to Article 8.2 on the List of Wetlands of International Importance), to provide such information as a matter of priority within the next twelve months but not later than 120 days before the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP16); and INSTRUCTS the Secretariat of the Convention to contact the relevant Contracting Parties to offer any necessary technical support;
16. REQUESTS the Contracting Parties listed in Annex 3.b) of the Report of the Secretariat pursuant to Article 8.2 on the List of Wetlands of International Importance, to update, as a matter of urgency, the Ramsar Information Sheets for their Ramsar Sites at least once every six years (as urged in Resolution VI.13 on *Submission of information on sites designated for the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance*);
17. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to adopt and apply as appropriate, as part of their management planning for Ramsar Sites and other wetlands, a suitable assessment and monitoring regime, such as that outlined in the Annex to Resolution VI.1 on *Working definitions of ecological character, guidelines for describing and maintaining the ecological character of listed sites, and guidelines for operation of the Montreux Record*, as well as the Convention's Wetland Risk Assessment Framework (Resolution VII.10), in order to be able to report change or likely change in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites in accordance with Article 3.2;
18. REQUESTS Contracting Parties with Ramsar Sites for which the Secretariat has received reports of change or likely change in their ecological character (listed in Annexes 4a and 4b of the Report of the Secretariat pursuant to Article 8.2 on the List of Wetlands of International Importance) to submit information to the Secretariat in response to such reports, including, as appropriate, information on steps taken or to be taken to address these changes or likely changes in ecological character, as a matter of priority within the next twelve months but not later than 120 days before COP16 until the issue is resolved;
19. FURTHER REQUESTS the Secretariat to provide technical support to these Parties to address the threats to their Sites, with priority being given to the most threatened Sites, and to report back to COP16;
20. ENCOURAGES the Contracting Parties to continue to use the Montreux Record questionnaire at Annex 1 of the present Resolution to determine the inclusion or removal of a listed Site in the Montreux Record;
21. FURTHER ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties, when submitting a report in fulfilment of Article 3.2, to consider whether the Site concerned would benefit from listing on the Montreux Record;
22. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to assist Contracting Parties in their actions in response to change or likely change in the ecological character of a Ramsar Site or Sites, for example by providing advice, when requested, on the application of the wise-use principles, or, when relevant,

proposing to Parties to add the Site or Sites to the Montreux Record or to invite a Ramsar Advisory Mission; and

23. REPEALS Resolution XIV.13 on the *Status of Sites in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance*, which is replaced by the present Resolution.

Annex 1

Montreux Record – Questionnaire content

Section 1: Information for assessing possible inclusion of a listed Ramsar Site in the Montreux Record

Nature of the change

1. Name of Site.
2. Ramsar Criteria for listing the Site as internationally important.
3. Summary statement of ecological character description.
4. Ecological components, processes, functions and services of the ecosystems affected by adverse human-induced change / likely change (list relevant code numbers from the ecological character description).
5. Nature and extent of the change / likely change to ecological character (use the threat categories in Appendix F of Resolution XI.8 Annex 2 *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance of the Convention on Wetlands*).
6. Reason(s) for the change / likely change described above.

Management measures in place

1. Date when the latest Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) was submitted.
2. Management strategies and administrative mechanisms in place, if any (national government, decentralized government, community-level, or others).
3. Site management plan or other planning, monitoring or assessment programmes in place at the Site, if any (description of technique(s), objectives, and nature of data and information gathered) – refer to RIS section 5.2.7 (Resolution XI.8 Annex 1, RIS field 34).
4. Assessment procedures in place, if any. (How is the information obtained from the monitoring programme used?)
5. Protection, amelioration and/or restoration measures in place so far or planned, if any.
6. Any other analogous or linked Site intervention processes activated or planned, e.g. under other multilateral environmental agreements.
7. List of attachments provided by the Contracting Party (if applicable).
8. List of attachments provided by the Secretariat (if applicable).

Section 2: Information for assessing possible removal of a listed Site from the Montreux Record

Management measures in place

1. Date when the latest RIS was submitted.
2. Site management plan or other planning, monitoring or assessment programmes in place at the Site, if any (description of technique(s), objectives and nature of data and information gathered (refer to RIS section 5.2.7, Resolution XI.8 Annex 1 RIS field 34).
3. Assessment procedures in place, if any (how is the information obtained from the monitoring programme used).
4. Protection, amelioration and/or restoration measures so far in place or planned, if any.

Assessment for removal of the Ramsar Site from the Montreux Record

1. Success of protection, amelioration and/or maintenance measures (if different from those covered in Section 1 of this questionnaire).
2. Proposed management, monitoring and assessment or other procedures (if different from those in Section 1 of this questionnaire).
3. Extent to which the ecological components, processes, functions and services of the Site's ecosystems have been restored or maintained (provide details).
4. Rationale for removing the Site from the Montreux Record. (Refer to *Guidelines for Operation of the Montreux Record*, the specific issues identified in Section 1 of this questionnaire, and any advice given by the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) or arising from a Ramsar Advisory Mission, where applicable.)
5. Status of any other analogous or linked Site intervention processes, e.g. under other multilateral environmental agreements, and details of how Montreux Record removal will be harmonized with these.
6. Measures that the Contracting Party will implement to maintain the ecological character of the Site with clear indicators for follow up.
7. List of further attachments (if applicable).