



"People and Wetlands: The Vital Link"
7th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971),
San José, Costa Rica, 10-18 May 1999

Agenda item X

Regional overview of implementation of the Convention and its Strategic Plan 1997-2002 in North America

The National Reports upon which this overview is based can be consulted on the Ramsar Web site,
http://ramsar.org/cop7_natl_rpt_index.htm

Contracting Parties in the North America region: Canada, Mexico and the United States of America

Contracting Parties yet to submit National Reports: all reports were received.

§I. Major achievements since COP6 and priorities for the next triennium

The following have been prepared based on the advice provided by the National Reports submitted for COP7 as summarised in Sections II and III.

A. Main achievements since COP6

- A1. Considerable support has been provided to encourage the accession of non-Contracting Parties from other regions.
- A2. The development of policy frameworks for implementing the Convention has progressed either through specific instruments or the inclusion of wetland issues in related policies.
- A3. All Contracting Parties in the region have legislation requiring Environmental Impact Assessments to be carried out for certain actions potentially impacting on wetlands.
- A4. Wetland restoration and rehabilitation projects are being carried out by all three Contracting Parties and substantial resources have been allocated by the USA for the rehabilitation of the Montreux Record-listed Everglades Ramsar site.
- A5. There is active encouragement of participation by local stakeholders and these efforts are being strongly supported by NGOs and the private sector.
- A6. The region has a wide range of Education and Public Awareness initiatives for wetlands, with efforts being made to incorporate wetland considerations into school curricula.

- A7. The USA-sponsored Wetlands for the Future initiative has provided much needed support for training activities in the Neotropics region.
- A8. There were seven new Ramsar sites designated in this period and one site in the USA was expanded.
- A9. All three Contracting Parties are actively involved in bilateral or multilateral cooperation in favour of migratory wetland species, most through the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. Canada and Mexico have a Monarch Butterfly Reserve Accord.
- A10. The development assistance agencies of both Canada and the USA have mobilised resources for a range of wetland-related activities in developing countries.

B. Priorities for the next triennium

- B1. Finalise reviews of legislation impacting wetlands and introduce appropriate amendments where appropriate.
- B2. Escalate the efforts to undertake economic valuations of wetlands to assist with decision-making.
- B3. Undertake comprehensive reviews of wetland-related training needs, opportunities and the development of training programmes where indicated.
- B4. Introduce formal mechanisms to enhance the integrated implementation of international conventions, such as through the establishment of cross-sectoral National Ramsar Committees.
- B5. Complete wetland inventories in each Contracting Party.
- B6. Strengthen the resources for development, implementation and monitoring of management plans for Ramsar sites.
- B7. Further increase efforts to designate examples of under-represented wetland types for the Ramsar List and suitable transboundary wetland sites.
- B8. Pursue opportunities for further twinning arrangements between Ramsar sites.
- B9. Establish formal consultation between development assistance agencies and Ramsar Administrative Authorities to assist with meeting obligations under Article 5 of the Convention.

§II. Description of activities undertaken

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 1

To progress towards universal membership of the Convention.

1. Within the North American region all three countries, Canada, Mexico and the United States of America (USA) are Contracting Parties.
2. In this triennium a number of regional, pan-american and other meetings were held, and these have contributed to raising awareness about the Convention among a number of the non-Contracting Parties in other regions and promoting cooperation. Specifically, the Pan-American regional meeting was held in Costa Rica in June 1998, and this was co-chaired by Canada and Uruguay. There were also two meetings of the Society of Caribbean Ornithology and attendances at these were supported by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The Fish and Wildlife Service also provided support for the hosting of the Ramsar Southern African Subregional meeting held in Pretoria, South Africa in February 1998.
3. Through the Wetlands for the Future Program, sponsored by the USA and administered by the Ramsar Bureau, funds were contributed toward the production of the brochure prepared by the Bureau specifically for Small Island Developing States. In time for COP7 a promotional brochure and display describing the Wetlands For the Future initiative will be prepared.
4. It is especially notable as a future conference that Environment Canada, in partnership with several Canadian and international partners, will host the Millenium Wetland Event in August 2000 in Quebec, Quebec. This will be in association with the Sixth International Conference of the International Association of Ecology (INTECOL), the 21st Annual Meeting of the Society of Wetland Scientists, and the 11th Global Congress of the International Peat Society. The Ramsar Bureau has indicated its interest in being a supporter of this meeting.

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 2

To achieve the wise use of wetlands by implementing and further developing the Ramsar Wise Use Guidelines.

National Wetland Policies/Strategies and their implementation

5. Canada adopted its *Federal Policy on Wetland Conservation* in March 1992 and since then four (out of 10) Canadian provinces have done likewise. In Canada the Federal Wetland Policy and the four provincial policies were adopted by the respective Cabinets. The North American Waterfowl Management Plan is a flagship initiative which involves the provincial, territorial and federal governments as well as national, subnational and local NGOs as well as the private sector in Canada. Since 1986 it has delivered extensive wetland habitat and waterfowl population objectives in cooperation with the USA and Mexico.
6. Federally in Canada there is no interdepartmental committee to coordinate implementation. Each Ministry has responsibility for interpreting and implementing the Policy. The Canadian Wildlife Service acts as an expert science and advisory agency and provides communications

and training materials to other agencies upon request. Canada also has the North American Wetlands Conservation Council (NAWCC) as an advisory body under the *Canada Wildlife Act*. It provides a facilitating and coordination role for the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. The NAWCC includes federal and provincial and non-government partners involved in the implementation of the Management Plan.

7. Mexico does not have a specific wetland policy or strategy and advises that Ramsar-related matters are addressed through several policy instruments such as their National Environmental Plan and the Wildlife Conservation, Rural Diversity and Protected Area Programmes. Mexico is also redefining its National Wetlands Programme. Responsibility for the implementation of these various policies rests with the Secretary of the Environment and Natural Resources. Mexico plans to establish a cross-sectoral committee to serve as a mechanism for policy coordination and is encouraging its provincial and local administrations to develop wetland policies.
8. Like Mexico, the USA does not have a specific wetland policy and pursues implementation of the Convention through a range of policy instruments and programmes at the federal and provincial levels of government. The USA's National Report draws attention to the 1998 launch of the Clean Water Initiative designed to accelerate the restoration of the country's waterways. Under this initiative there is the existing Clean Water Action Plan (CWAP), involving at least 36 federal agencies. It promotes a watershed approach to management, setting priorities to clean up rivers, lakes and coastal waters. The CWAP consists of 111 key action items, several of which apply specifically to wetlands. The Plan also sets targets for increasing the quality and quantity of the USA's wetlands. For implementation of the CWAP ten interagency Action Teams have been formed, each addressing a series of related priority actions. These Actions Teams are coordinating activities between the three tiers of government and the public. The USA also has an NGO National Ramsar Committee which provides its advice to the government departments implementing the Ramsar Convention. US Government officials are invited to attend these meetings as observers.

Reviews of legislation

9. Mexico is developing a national law for wetlands management as well as reviewing all other relevant legislation. Canada completed a review of its federal and provincial laws which "*serve the interests of wetland conservation*" in July 1998 but also recognises the need to review those pieces of legislation with inherent disincentives to these aspirations.

Integrated approaches to wetland management

10. The National Report for the USA provides extensive information on this subject for the national, provincial and local levels. As indicated above (paragraph 8), the USA has a framework for managing at the watershed scale and this takes wetlands into consideration and seeks to have management regimes developed for them as integrated components of these broader plans. Canada and Mexico are also promoting the integrated management of wetlands through various policies and programmes.

Wise use publications produced

11. Refer to paragraph 22 below.

Toxic chemicals and pollution

12. The USA provides very detailed information about its actions to address toxic chemical pollution and impacts on wetlands. These range from ongoing contaminant investigations, through oil spill prevention and response plans and investigations (with Canada and Mexico) into the effects of selenium and mercury on waterfowl species. The USA's *Clean Water Act* also provides mechanisms for dealing with point sources of pollution and a revolving loan fund for projects to prevent polluted runoff. Mexico's emphasis has been on education programmes to prevent the use of toxics and pollutants and Canada advises that they have not encountered any problems of this type for their Ramsar sites.

Economic valuation techniques

13. Canada advises of their actions to promote the development of such tools internationally and notes that within the country a number of organizations are actively promoting the development and use of economic valuation tools. Mexico's Wildlife General Directorate encourages qualitative valuation of wetlands at the local level to be able to demonstrate the benefits of using wetlands sustainably.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIAs)

14. In Mexico any activity to be undertaken in association with a wetland requires an EIA submission. For actions proposed at Ramsar sites or within the buffer zones around them special authorisation from the Wildlife General Directorate is required. In Canada, EIAs are required under federal and provincial legislation. In the USA there are several Acts which require EIAs in differing circumstances. The National Environment Protection Act of 1969 requires EIAs for all federal agency actions that can significantly affect the quality of the environment.

Restoration and rehabilitation of wetlands

15. Wetland restoration is a priority in the USA. The Clean Water Action Plan announced in 1998 that it has sets targets for achieving net gains in wetland area by the year 2005 of 100,000 hectares of wetland per year. The major restoration project for the Ramsar and Montreux Record-listed Everglades is another illustration of the priority wetland restoration has in the USA. In Mexico also, restoration works are under way, mostly involving re-forestation and water management-related projects. Through the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, Canada has restored over 685,000 hectares of wetlands in the past decade. Canada also has restoration as a fundamental element of its peat harvesting industry and has developed guidelines on restoration policy.

Encouraging active and informed action by local stakeholders

16. In Mexico public participation in wetland management is promoted through direct support for local projects and workshops with multi-stakeholder participation. Environmental education and training programmes also contribute these efforts in Mexico. In Canada, local citizens have assisted with the conservation efforts for a number of the Ramsar sites and stewardship projects are supported across the country by the various local, subnational and national organizations. The USA's Report details a range of undertakings which are designed to promote informed action by local stakeholders including the celebration of International Migratory Bird Day in May each year, direct funding to community-based groups for suitable activities, and the involvement of local stakeholders in watershed planning and management actions. The US Government also supported two of the three workshops held to develop the *Guidelines involving local and indigenous people in the management of wetlands* which will be considered at COP7.

Private sector involvement

17. In Canada the federal Income Tax Act and that of Quebec were amended in 1996 and 1994 respectively to promote private and corporate land donations of ecologically sensitive lands to conservation trusts, conservancies and alike. Over 60 ecological "gifts" have been completed with a value in excess of CA\$20m. The North American Waterfowl Management Plan is strongly focused on private and corporate land stewardship. Wildlife Canada and Ducks Unlimited Canada direct considerable effort to promoting these aspects of the Plan. Mexico advises that private sector involvement occurs more at the local and subnational levels, although there are some examples of this nationally as well where agreements involving state authorities, universities and the private sector are in place.
18. In the United States there are various activities happening which are designed to promote private sector involvement in wetland conservation. Over the past three years, five workshops under the theme of "Working with Wetlands and Wildlife" have been held which have the corporate sector as a target audience. The US Fish and Wildlife Service has programmes such as Partners for Fish and Wildlife intended to promote private sector involvement. A key aspect of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan are the Joint Ventures involving government and non-government partners. There are 10 of these in place in the USA and 2 in Canada. The USA also has its Wetlands Reserve Program run by the Department of Agriculture. It promotes voluntary restoration and protection of wetlands on private lands.

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 3

To raise awareness of wetland values and functions throughout the world and at all levels

Education and Public Awareness programmes (EPA)

19. In the USA each federal agency encourages wetland conservation awareness through its own public education programmes. The National Report of the USA refers to a number of web sites where information is posted and a new Internet-based Water Information Network to be established under the Clean Water Initiative. There have also been several conference and

workshops convened in the USA , such as that in April 1996 called “Working together for Wetlands” to celebrate 25 years of the Ramsar Convention. There is also the annual American Wetlands Month Conference which is co-sponsored by many federal agencies and has become “*the most prominent forum to discuss issues related to community-based conservation in the nation.*” In addition, the USA’s National Report refers to support provided for a number of international conferences (refer to General Objective 1 above and General Objectives 4 and 7 below).

20. There is no national wetlands EPA programme in Mexico, although some actions have been taken to introduce appropriate wetland elements into formal and non-formal curricula, notably in south-west Mexico. Canada has a range of actions happening, mostly at the local and provincial level, but no national EPA for wetlands as such. Canada also advise that Ducks Unlimited has a major wetland education programme and facilities at several locations in the country. Wildlife Habitat Canada and the North American Waterfowl Management Plan have supported a variety of public awareness initiatives for wetlands also.

Wise Use as part of formal education curricula

21. As mentioned above, in Mexico some actions have been taken to introduce appropriate wetland elements into formal and non-formal curricula, notably in southwest Mexico. Mexico also has a masters programme which includes wetlands management as a subject. Canada have reported that Wetlands International - Americas, based in Canada, is spearheading a programme called Ecoscope Wetland Education which is directed at high school students nationally. The USA Report mentions a hands-on education project being undertaken in the State of Maryland which has involved several thousand students. They also report that many National Wildlife Refuges offer structured educational programmes for students. The National Report gives several further examples of wetland education initiatives being supported or undertaken in the USA, and some of these are referred to under General Objective Four below.

Wise use publications produced

22. Canada’s National Report provides reference details for some 25 relevant publications. Mexico advises that some NGOs in their country are publishing materials, especially relating to mangrove restoration and water management. The USA refers to the educational newsletter *Waterfowl 2000* published by the North American Waterfowl and Wetlands Office. Within the USA there are large numbers of highly relevant publications produced each year by NGO groups and local and national organizations.

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 4

To reinforce the capacity of institutions in each Contracting Party to achieve conservation and wise use of wetlands.

Institutional coordination and cooperation

23. The situation in Canada is described in paragraph 6 above, and the USA in paragraph 8. Mexico is moving to establish a committee and working group which will be composed of the heads of the different administrative units within the Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAP). Paragraph 7 above gives further details.

Coordinated implementation of international conventions

24. Mexico reports that there is a joint working group for implementation of CBD but no other formal mechanisms for harmonising national implementation of international environment conventions. In Canada those responsible for implementing CBD and Ramsar are both housed within the Canadian Wildlife Service(CWS). The CWS also provides advice to Environment Canada on implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification. For the Climate Change Convention Canada is at present developing more effective links between the interested Ministries which will also see wetland considered as key element of implementing the Kyoto Protocol. The USA advises this issue is not applicable to their situation.

Training needs and opportunities

25. Mexico's National Report advises that there have not been reviews of training needs or opportunities, although two training courses for natural resource managers were conducted in 1996 and 1998. Likewise, the USA and Canada also indicate that there have not been any formal reviews of training needs and opportunities within their jurisdictions. Canada does have a training programme for federal land managers to assist them with implementation of the Wetland Policy and several Canadian organizations have sent staff or supported participants from other countries in international training courses. The USA reports that there are many training programs related to wetlands management in the country which focus on everything from ecological, social and organizational principles as well as community capacity building. The US Fish and Wildlife Service's National Conservation Training Centre coordinates with several other agencies to deliver training courses for conservation professionals. They report also of a range of course offered by the US Geological Survey National Wetlands Research Centre.

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 5

To ensure the conservation of all sites included in the List of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar List).

Status of management plans for Ramsar sites

26. Refer to Section III and also to Ramsar COP7 DOCS. 13.3 and 15.2.

Change in ecological character at Ramsar sites

27. Refer also to Ramsar COP7 DOCS. 13.3 and 15.2. Canada advise the following in their National Report: *“Several Ramsar sites have been heavily impacted by overgrazing by migratory geese including sites in the subarctic zone including the Queen Maud Gulf and McConnell River Migratory Bird Sanctuaries in the Northwest Territories. The extent of this is being surveyed this year and habitat recovery strategies as well as species control plans are under consideration. The Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area site in southern British Columbia is the subject of discussions between Canadian and United States agencies. The site may be impacted by irregular water flows resulting from a new water regulatory regime established upstream on the Columbia River. The United States requirements for endangered species habitat protection are forcing establishment of new seasonal flows of water released from the Libby Dam in the USA, believed to be one of the causes of increased dyke erosion and habitat impact on the downstream Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area, a Ramsar site.”* Mexico indicate that there have been changes in ecological character due to unsustainable human uses but no specific details are provided. The USA’s National Report in this section refers only to their efforts to restore the Montreux Record site, the Everglades.

Montreux Record sites

28. Refer also to Ramsar COP7 DOCS. 13.3 and 15.2. There is only one Montreux Record site in North America, namely, the Everglades of the USA. In their National Report the USA states that they have *“undertaken a massive restoration effort”* of this site. They advise that this restoration work, for an area 96 by 480 kilometres, is the largest of its kind in the USA. The Report further indicates that *“in partnership with the State of Florida and tribal and local governments, the Administration is working to improve water quality, restore natural hydro patterns, and reduce the loss of water for the watershed to meet the needs of the environment and economy.”* No indication is given by the USA of the likely time frame for removing the Everglades from the Montreux Record.

Sites referred to in COP6 Recommendation 6.17

29. This does not apply to any of the Contracting Parties from this region.

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 6

To designate for the Ramsar List those wetlands which meet the Convention’s criteria, especially wetland types still under-represented in the List and trans-frontier wetlands.

National inventories and directories of “important” wetlands

30. Both Canada and Mexico indicate that they do not have national wetland inventories. However, Canada advises that a number of their provinces do have complete inventories (Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick) and many of the existing datasets

have been integrated into a national database of wetland and peatland inventories. Mexico also indicates that some regional scale inventories have been done and that the Ducks Unlimited of Mexico programme has more specific inventories covering areas such as the north coast of Sonora and the coastal wetlands of Tabasco, Campeche, Yucatan and Quintana Roo. The USA advises that their National Wetland Inventory (NWI) project was established in 1975. Since 1979 this project has produced wetland maps for 88 per cent of the conterminous United States, 30 per cent of Alaska, all of Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands and all of the US Pacific Insular areas. Since 1981 the NWI project has also been moving to provide digital form maps and since 1994 these have been available through a Web site free of charge.

31. In terms of Directories or similar listings of “important” sites Mexico advises that 32 priority sites were identified at some time in the 1990s by the Natural Resources Use Directorate based on studies by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Canada says there are no comprehensive lists for their country although some regions have priority waterbird habitats identified. The USA, like Canada indicates that there is no Directory of important wetlands or similar, even though some wetlands are included in other national processes for identifying important natural areas.

Estimates of wetland area and rates of loss and conversion

32. The USA provides comprehensive information of its remaining wetland resources, broken down by broad type. Although it is stressed that the work is in progress, they provide the following information for the USA: there are an estimated 100.9 million acres (40.9 million hectares) of wetlands remaining in the conterminous USA. Ninety-five per cent of these are inland freshwater wetlands and five per cent are intertidal estuarine systems. Freshwater forested wetlands make up the single largest category with 47.9 million acres (19.4 million hectares). Congressional mandates require the NWI to produce status reports to Congress every ten years. In 1982 the NWI produced its first comprehensive report and in 1990 the first update. The USA report that, although the area of wetlands continues to decline, preliminary results suggest the rate has slowed. Between 1985 and 1995 the estimated average annual net loss of wetland area was 117,000 acres (47,370 hectares). This rate of loss is 60 per cent lower than the loss rate reported for the period between the mid-70s and the mid-80s.
33. Mexico reports that it has 3,318,500 hectares of wetlands, of which 47 per cent are coastal and 53 per cent continental. They advise that 35 per cent of these have suffered to some degree, although the meaning of this is not clear. Canada reports that their latest compilation in 1998 indicated that there were 148 million hectares of wetlands of all types in Canada although this is likely to be an underestimate given that there is not a national inventory completed. Canada advises they have no data on trends of wetland loss and conversion.

New Ramsar sites, COP6 priorities for Ramsar listing and statements of intent

34. In this triennium there were a total of 7 new Ramsar sites designated in North America; two in the USA, two in Mexico and three in Canada. The USA has also extended the area of its existing Caddo Lake Ramsar site. Of these sites, Canada draws attention to their efforts to respond to the call at COP6 for more peatland sites and that the new sites they have

designated are of this type, as are many of their other previously designated sites. The two sites designated by the USA, one in South Dakota and one in California are important sites for migrating birds.

Transfrontier sites Ramsar sites

35. In terms of transfrontier sites, Mexico refers to the Delta of the Colorado River site as being shared with the USA but that there are no further plans at present for future designations of transfrontier sites. Canada advises that while they have no transfrontier sites, four sites (Creston Valley in British Columbia and St Clair and Long Point in Ontario and Lac St Francois in Quebec) *“are affected by waters shared with the United States”*.

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 7

To mobilise international cooperation and financial assistance for wetland conservation and wise use in collaboration with other conventions and agencies, both governmental and non-governmental.

Bilateral or multilateral activities for shared wetlands, watersheds and species

36. Within this region all three countries cooperate with the implementation of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. Mexico also reports that there are several bilateral committees and commissions with the USA for addressing water resource management for the High Gulf Biosphere Reserve and the Delta of the Colorado River. Canada and the USA have a bilateral agreement for protecting migratory birds, which was established in 1916 and amended in 1997. Canada also has bilateral agreements for migratory species conservation with the Russian Federation, Ireland, Iceland and the United Kingdom. In addition, Canada has bilateral projects and programs in place with several countries of the Neotropics (Costa Rica and Suriname, for example), and migratory species initiatives are supported in partnership with several countries through the Environment Canada Latin American Program. In addition, Canada is a participant in the Circumpolar Polar Bear Agreement and has a treaty with the USA for migratory caribou.
37. All three countries are participating in the International Important Bird Areas programme coordinated by BirdLife International. There are more than 12 of these areas (in the USA) and many are wetland sites. The USA, along with 22 other countries (not including Canada), is also a signatory to the Pan American Convention (on Nature Protection and Wildlife Preservation in the Western Hemisphere). Between the USA and Mexico there is the bilateral Migratory Bird and Game Mammal Treaty, adopted in 1936. In addition, the USA has bilateral agreements for migratory bird conservation with Canada, Japan and the Russian Federation.

“Twinned” sites

38. There are no twinned sites in Canada; however, several Canadian Ramsar sites are part of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN) and are twinned through that initiative. This includes the twinning of Chaplin Lakes in Canada with Marismas in Mexico

and the Bay of Fundy in Canada with Bigi Pan in Suriname. Mexico also refers to a site twinning with Cuba.. Three Canadian sites, including the Long Point and Point Pellee Ramsar sites, are identified under a Monarch Butterfly Accord and are twinned with three sites in Mexico.

Coordinated implementation of international conventions

39. Refer to General Objective 2, paragraph 24 above.

Support from bilateral or multilateral donors

40. Mexico advises that they have received such support, and cite the example of the support of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.

Budgetary allocations for wetlands conservation and wise use outside the country and consultation between the development assistance agency and the Ramsar Administrative Authority

41. This applies to Canada and the USA. The Canadian International Development Assistance Agency (CIDA) provides support for a range of wetland projects including the IUCN Zambezi Basin Project in Africa, the Nile Delta Water and Wetlands Project in Egypt (with assistance from Ducks Unlimited Canada) and projects in India (with assistance from Wetlands International). Canada's International Development Research Centre also indirectly contributes to several wetland development programs. CIDA liaises closely with Environment Canada on development assistance projects which may affect wetlands. This is consistent with Canada's Federal Policy on Wetland Conservation.

42. USAID also supports wetland-related projects around the world and through this contributes to the global implementation of the Convention. The USA also provides the funds for the Wetlands for the Future initiative and supports the intern positions within the Ramsar Bureau for Africa and the Neotropics. In terms of consultation between USAID and the Ramsar Administrative Authority, the National Report advises "*there may be need for one. However, such consultations can be conducted informally.*"

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 8

To provide the Convention with the required institutional mechanisms and resources.

Budgetary allocations for wetlands conservation and wise use in the country

43. In the USA six Federal agencies receive funding for wetland-related activities and another 30 agencies are engaged in promoting monitoring and stewardship actions and avoiding and mitigating potential impacts to wetlands. In Mexico the National Report advises that fund are provided as part of larger natural resource management programmes, but no details are given. Canada advises that while there is no direct Federal Government allocation, funds are provided through a variety of programmes, and especially through the North American

Waterfowl Management Plan, which sees annual expenditures on wetland and associated upland habitat conservation of in excess of CA\$50m annually. Funds are also directed to the management of Canada's extensive protected areas which contain large areas of wetlands.

Annual and voluntary contributions

44. The annual contributions to the budget of the Convention are up to date for Canada and the USA. Mexico made is up to date except for making only a partial payment thus far for 1999. Canada and the USA have also made several voluntary contributions towards other activities under the Convention, in Canada's case supporting several workshops and the involvement of the North American STRP representative in meetings. The USA has provided additional voluntary resources for the Wetlands for the Future Programme (refer to General Objective 4 above), and toward the costs of COP7. The USA also supports the intern positions within the Ramsar Bureau for Africa and the Neotropics. In 1998, an officer from the US EPA was seconded to the Ramsar Bureau as a training initiative for a 4 month period.

Optional section - Participation of non-government organizations in the implementation of the Convention

In this **optional** section of the National Report, Contracting Parties were asked to describe the nature of the cooperation and relationship with any other international, regional, national and provincial NGOs operating within their countries.

NGOs which have wetlands as part of their regular "business" in the country

45. Canada and the USA made no specific analysis but both advise that there are a large number of NGOs active in their country ranging from international to local groups. Details of some of these are given in their respective National Reports. Mexico advises that there are five international and 10 national NGOs that work regularly on wetland matters.

Consultative mechanisms involving NGOs for wetland conservation and Ramsar implementation

46. In the USA a National Ramsar Committee was formed in 1996 to give NGOs an opportunity to provide their advice to the government departments implementing the Convention. US Government officials are invited to attend these meetings as observers. In Canada there is no formal mechanism for consultation with NGOs although Wildlife Habitat Canada and Environment Canada, in conjunction with regional and provincial agencies, have convened three national meetings on wetland management since 1993. As indicated under General Objective 1, consultation within the government occurs through the North American Wetlands Conservation Council. In Mexico there are no formal mechanisms for consultations with NGOs.

NGO representative on official delegation to Ramsar COPs

47. Both Canada and the USA have, on occasion, included NGO representatives on their official delegations in the past. Mexico has not done so.

NGOs as part of site management committees

48. This is the case for a number of sites in Canada, and Mexico advises that they do not have site management committees.

Areas of Ramsar work where NGOs are most active

49. In Canada NGOs are considered most active in the implementation of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. For the USA, the National Report indicates that NGOs are most active in the areas of education and public awareness and wise use of wetlands. Mexico indicate that NGOs are most active with implementation of Strategic Plan General Objectives 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7.

Other comments and suggestions:

50. Comments were provided by Canada and Mexico:
- i) **General comment on implementation of the Strategic Plan.** In Canada it is suggested that there exists a strong need for a national wetland steering committee to focus on wetland issues, and particularly the evolution of Canada's Ramsar site network. Mexico advises that while they have human and financial resource constraints, and no specific wetland policy, good progress is being made with implementation of the Ramsar Strategic Plan through general national environmental policies. Mexico also advises that improvements to coordination could be made.
 - ii) **Standing Committee** and
 - iii) **STRP.** Canada has been a strong supporter of the operations of these two instruments of the Convention in this triennium, and has made major contributions to various activities they have undertaken. Especially notable among these are the *Guidelines for developing and implementing National Wetland Policies* to be considered by COP7.
 - iii) **Bureau.** Canada and Mexico both express their pleasure with the operations of the Ramsar Bureau. Canada specifically notes and agrees with the evolving roles and staff complement of the Bureau.

§III. Summary statistics

This Summary statistics section has been prepared based on the responses to each question asked in the National Reports prepared by each Contracting Party from the region. In Section I more detailed information is provided and the corresponding paragraphs are indicated in the "Nos" column below. In the table below the response of each Contracting Party to the key questions asked in the approved National Report format have been scored as either Y=Yes or N=No. In some cases

the total of these responses may not be as great as the number of the National Reports submitted for this region because not every question was answered by all Contracting Parties.

This summary table is designed to give a clearer view at both the regional level of those areas of the Convention's Strategic Plan 1997-2002 which have been addressed since the 6th Conference of the Contracting Parties and conversely, where the National Reports indicate there has been little or no activity. Those areas of activity where the National Reports have indicated little activity are shown in **shaded cells**.

Nos	Strategic Plan General Objectives and (Actions)	Y	N
	General Objective 1 - Universal membership		
1-4	Actions taken to encourage accession by non-Contracting Parties (Actions 1.1.1- 2)	3	-
	General Objective 2 - Promoting the wise use of wetlands		
9	Review of legislation and practices which impact on wetlands has been carried out (Action 2.1.1)	2	-
9	Legislative or similar amendments have been made (Action 2.1.1)	1	-
5-8	National Wetland Policy/Strategy/Action Plan in place (Action 2.1.2)	1	2
5-8	National Wetland Policy/Strategy/Action Plan is being developed (Action 2.1.2)	-	-
10	Conservation and wise use of wetlands forms part (or will) of other national environmental / conservation planning initiatives (Action 2.1.2)	3	-
5	For countries with a Federal system of Government, there are Wetland Policies/Strategies/Plans in place, being developed or planned for the provincial/state levels of Government (Action 2.1.2)	1	-
10	Efforts are being made to have wetlands managed as integrated components of land/water and coastal zone resources and environments (Action 2.2.2).	3	-
12	Actions taken to address the impacts of toxic chemicals and pollution on wetlands (Action 2.3.1)	3	-
22	Production of "Wise Use" publication (Action 2.3.2)	3	-
13	Actions taken to incorporate wetland economic valuation techniques into natural resource planning and assessment actions (Actions 2.4.1, 2.4.3)	2	-
14	Environmental Impact Assessment is required for actions potentially impacting on wetlands (Actions 2.5.2, 2.5.3)	3	-
15	Wetland restoration and rehabilitation is being undertaken to some extent (Actions 2.6.1-3)	3	-
16	The participation of local stakeholders in the conservation and wise use of wetlands is being encouraged (Actions 2.7.1- 4)	3	-
17, 18	Private sector involvement in the conservation and wise use of wetlands is being encouraged (Actions 2.8.1-4)	3	-
	General Objective 3 - Raising awareness of wetland values and functions		
19, 20	There exists government-run programmes for Education and Public Awareness in this country which include wetlands (Actions 3.2.1-2)	1	2
19, 20	There exists non-government-run programmes for Education and Public Awareness in this country which include wetlands (Actions 3.2.1-2, 8.3.1)	2	1
21	Wetlands issues and Ramsar's Wise Use principles are included as part of the curricula of educational institutions. (Action 3.2.5)	3	-
	General Objective 4 - Reinforcing the capacity of institutions		
23 & 6-8	Mechanisms are in place, or being introduced, to increase cooperation between the institutions responsible for wetlands management (Actions 4.1.1-2, 8.1.9-10)	3	-
6-8	A National Ramsar/Wetland Committee exists - government only (Actions 4.1.1-2, 8.1.9-10)	-	3

8	A National Ramsar/Wetland Committee exists - it includes non-government representatives (it is cross-sectoral) (Actions 4.1.1-2, 8.1.9-10) - * the USA has an NGO Ramsar Committee to which Government officials are invited as observers	1*	2
25	A training needs analysis has been done or is under way (Action 4.2.1)	-	3
25	A review of training opportunities has been completed (Action 4.2.2)	-	3
25	Training modules or training programmes specifically for wetland managers have been completed, or are being developed (Action 4.2.3).	3	-
25	Nationals of the country have gained wetland-related training either within or outside the country (Action 4.2.4).	3	-
General Objective 5 - Management of Listed sites			
26 - 29	See the table below plus Ramsar COP7 Docs 13.3 and 15.2 - Proposal No.2		

Status of management plans for Ramsar sites (Actions 5.1.2, 5.2.3)

Contracting Party	Number of Ramsar sites	Plans being prepared (or updated)	Plans fully prepared	Plans being implemented	Plans include monitoring
Canada	36	11	21	21	-
Mexico	6	5	1	1	-
USA	17	4	13	13	13
Totals	59	20 (34%)	35 (59%)	35 (59%)	13 + (22% +)

Status of Montreux Record sites and Management Guidance Procedures (Actions 5.1.3-5)

There is only one Montreux Record sites in North America; the Everglades in the USA. There has not been an official Management Guidance Procedure done for the site in this triennium, but the site is undergoing a major restoration programme at present.

General Objective 6 - Designation of Ramsar sites			
30	A national inventory of wetlands has been completed (Action 6.1.2)	-	3
30, 31	A national inventory of wetlands is planned for the near future (Action 6.1.2) - * the USA inventory program is nearing completion	1*	-
34	Actions been taken to list under-represented wetland types on the List or in response to the various related decisions from COP6 (Actions 6.2.1, 6.2.3)	3	-
35	The country has sites included in the Ramsar list which are trans-frontier sites (Actions 6.2.5, 7.1.1) - * site shared by Mexico and the USA	2*	1
General Objective 7 - Mobilising international cooperation and financial assistance			
36-7	Bilateral or multilateral activities have been taken, are under way, or are planned for the management of trans-frontier wetlands or their watersheds/catchments (Actions 6.2.5, 7.1.1)	3	-
38	Countries which have Ramsar sites that are "twinned" with others (Action 7.1.2).	-	2
24	Mechanisms in place to promote cooperative actions between the Ramsar Administrative Authority and the focal points for other international environment Conventions to which the country is a signatory (Actions 7.2.3-5, 7.2.7-8)	-	3
36-7	The country is cooperating as part of bilateral or multilateral activities directed at the conservation of migratory wetland species (Action 7.2.5).	3	-
40	Multilateral and/or bilateral donors are supporting projects which contribute to implementation of the Ramsar Convention in this country (Actions 7.3.3, 7.4.2, 7.4.4)	1	-
41, 42	The government makes an annual budgetary allocation to support the conservation and wise use of wetlands within the country (Action 7.4.1).	3	-
41, 42	The country has a development assistance programme which includes funds earmarked for wetland conservation and wise use in other countries (Action 7.4.2)	2	-

41, 42	There is a formal process in place for consultation between the Ramsar Administrative Authority and the development assistance programme in the country, where one exists (Action 7.4.2)	-	2
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