



Stadt



8th European Ramsar Meeting
20-24 October 2014
Kufstein – Tyrol – Austria

wetlands for our future

Programme and Annotated Agenda

Aim of the Meeting

The Meeting addresses priority issues such as how to manage and use water-related ecosystems sustainably. It aims to identify areas of successful cooperation between different sectors of society, administration and private business. National Ramsar Convention Focal Points from the Ministries, experts on scientific, technical and management issues, those in charge of communication, education, awareness and capacity building, NGO representatives and sustainable development experts will – together – look at progress made with the implementation of the Ramsar Convention, discuss strategic priorities for the coming years, update newcomers about environmental challenges in the water sector and how to make best use of wetland ecosystem services in the long term.

This regional “pre-COP” meeting is the formal opportunity for the 47 European Ramsar Parties to prepare themselves for the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP12) that will take place in Punta del Este, Uruguay, 1-9 June 2015.

Operation of the interactive sessions

The meeting provides *for all participants* an opportunity to discuss and exchange experiences and ideas. Therefore, presentations in plenary are short, and the larger part of the meeting consists of interactive exchanges of information and discussions, followed by brief reports back to plenary.

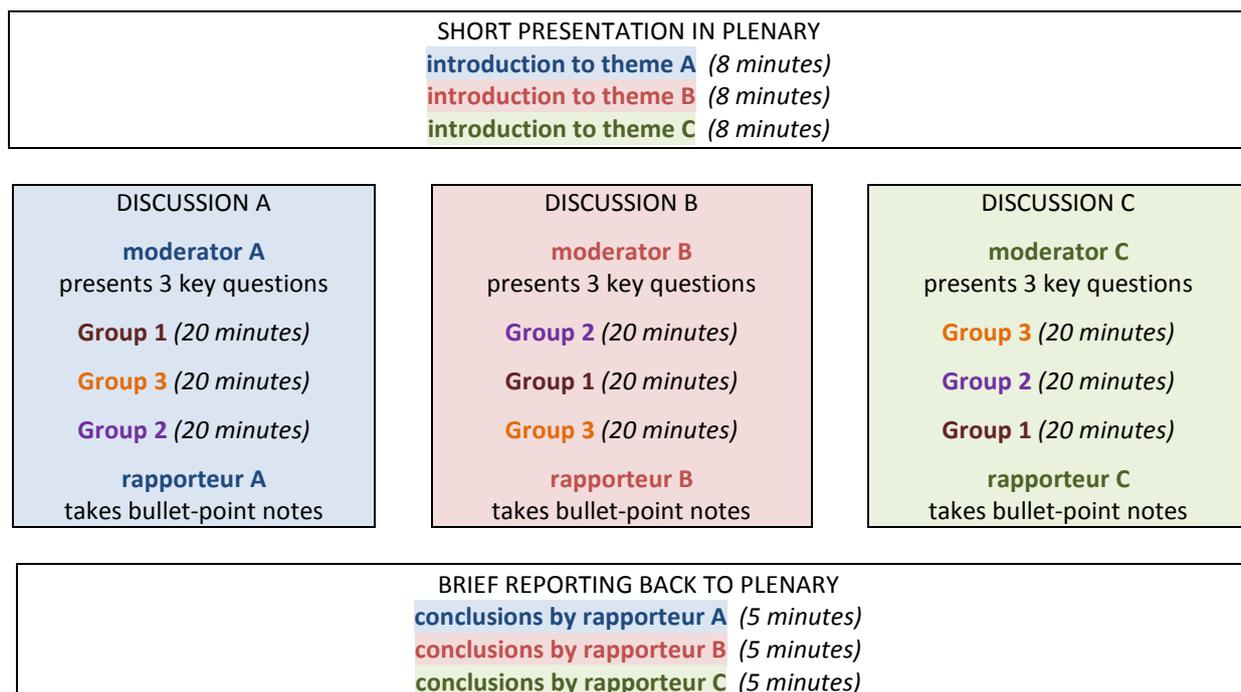
Each of the thematic sessions focuses on practical questions about key topics: after a brief introductory part in plenary - with short stimulating presentations (*8 minutes*) - the audience splits into three groups to address key questions in an interactive way (*60 minutes*).

The group discussions make proposals how to deal with the subject, clarify what are relevant issues and propose solutions. The moderators and rapporteurs prepare conclusions and compile them into one consolidated brief bullet-point report to be presented back to plenary the next day (*5 minutes*).



*The Ramsar Secretariat acknowledges the support received from the:
Austrian Ministry of Agriculture, Forests, Environment and Water Management,
Government of the Federal State Tyrol,
City of Kufstein,
Norwegian Environment Agency,
Biosphere Connections of the Star Alliance airlines group.*

Structure of the interactive sessions



Plenary

Each session starts in plenary with an introduction of three different themes (3 x 8 minutes) and their illustration with concrete aspects. In most cases the introduction is provided by the person who moderates the following group session concerning her/his theme.

Group discussions

Then, the audience splits into three groups (instructions will be given on the spot). Three moderators receive the smaller groups (1/3 of the participants) and discuss with them key questions related to the theme they introduced before in plenary. For each theme, a rapporteur takes bullet-point notes.

After 20 minutes the bell rings, and the groups move from one moderator to the next. The moderator and rapporteur remain at their place and receive the second group. After another 20 minutes, the bell rings again, and they receive the third group.

The moderator discusses the same questions in turn with the three groups. By doing so, and through the feedback provided by the participants, key questions and proposed solutions are likely to become more clear, relevant and to the point. Depending on the feedback received, the moderator may amend the questions to better fit the needs of the second or third group. After the passage of all three groups, the conclusions to the questions discussed should be straightforward and consolidated.

After one hour (3 x 20 minutes) each of the groups will have had the opportunity to visit each of the moderators and to discuss the different themes with each of them.

Reporting

At the end of the day, moderators and rapporteurs compare their notes and prepare one concise bullet-point report on their theme. This consolidated report is briefly presented to plenary the next day, with 1 PowerPoint slide (5 minutes), followed by a brief discussion.

During the final discussion in plenary, when reporting back, the rapporteur may add written notes to summarize discussion points, in view of editing a concise text (<1/2 page) to be included in the overall Meeting report, that will be published afterwards.

Programme overview

October	Monday 20	Tuesday 21	Wednesday 22	Thursday 23	Friday 24	Saturday 25
09:00 - 10:30	<i>arrival of participants</i>	2	Reporting back from sessions 1 - 3	5	Reporting back from sessions 4 - 7	optional excursion: Kaisertal hiking
		coffee	coffee	coffee	coffee	
11:00 - 12:30	[meeting of the Austrian Ramsar Committee]	3	4	6	Closing	
		lunch	lunch	lunch side-events	<i>departure of participants</i>	
14:00 - 15:30	Opening	13:50 on-site visit peatland management education programme Interreg project	13:50 on-site visit karst wetlands peatland restoration Interreg project	7		
		coffee		coffee	optional excursion: peatland walk	
16:00 - 17:30	1	Schwemm Walchsee parallel visit to Wilder Kaiser-Going	Wilder Kaiser Going parallel visit to Schwemm-Walchsee	8		
	report preparation	report preparation	report preparation	side-events report preparation		
evening	individual get-togethers	dinner reception Kufstein Fortress	video show poster exhibit	closing dinner		

Annotated Agenda

MONDAY - 20 OCTOBER

Opening Session

Monday 20 October

- 14:00** **Welcome** by
Viktoria Hasler, IUCN National Focal Point, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, Austria
Christian Plössnig, Government Office, Tyrol Federal State
Doina Catrinoiu, Chair of Ramsar Standing Committee, Romania
- 14:20** **Ramsar in Austria** - an audiovisual show introduced by
Wolfgang Pelikan, Chair of the Austrian Ramsar Committee
Gert Michael Steiner, STRP Focal Point, Austria
 Since 1992 the Austrian National Ramsar Committee helps to implement Ramsar commitments on the ground. The 23 Austrian Ramsar Sites show the diversity of Austrian landscapes and wetland ecosystems.
- 14:40** **The new Austrian Floodplain Strategy**
Ulrich Schwarz, Fluvius Ltd
Gerhard Schwach, National Focal Point, Austria
 Floodplains have important functions for flood protection, biodiversity conservation and for the ecological quality of rivers. The Austrian Floodplain Inventory contains 823 sites larger than 3 hectares and provides the basis for a new Austrian "Floodplain Strategy 2020".
- 15:00** **The future of our wetlands** - a video presentation by
Christopher Briggs, Secretary General, Ramsar Convention

15:10 Strategic challenges

Tobias Salathé, Ramsar Secretariat

“Wetlands for our future” is the theme of COP12 and World Wetlands Day 2015. It concerns also the new Strategic Plan in the making. The rationale for the new plan is presented, and the preparatory work undertaken explained as an introduction for the interactive session on Thursday.

15:20 Practical guidance through the Meeting programme and its operation

15:30 *coffee break*

Session 1 - cooperation at river basin level

Monday 20 October

Note: Several Draft Resolutions (DR) are in preparation for COP12. Moderators, rapporteurs and participants are requested to read the **draft texts** – available on the new www.ramsar.org homepage, in the top right corner as agenda documents for the **48th meeting of Standing Committee**. Please identify improvements needed and provide comments during the group sessions. Rapporteurs please note proposals for improved text and give them to the Secretariat. DRs related to this session are:

SC48-28: DR on wetlands and disaster risk reduction

SC48-27: DR on conservation of Mediterranean Basin island wetlands

SC48-30: DR on ecological flow

16:00 Introduction to three interactive sessions
(*brief presentations in plenary: 3 x 8 minutes*)

1.1 A tool for Ramsar Sites – the SEE River project

Introduction: *Alexander Zinke*, External expert of the Federal Environment Ministry, Austria

Rapporteur: *Ulrich Schwarz*, Fluvius Ltd

The South East European River project has tested integrative river corridor management in ten pilot areas along six rivers (Bodrog, Drava, Neretva, Prut, Soča, Vjosa) in eleven countries (www.see-river.net). The key to achieve economic development and increased nature conservation was active participation and cooperation among different stakeholders. The lessons learnt were integrated into a Toolkit that was developed for use beyond these river basins. How can this method be used for the management of Ramsar Sites?

Three questions will be addressed in the interactive session:

- which are the types of land use that affect the ecological character of Ramsar Sites, how to take them into account when aiming for a sustainable high ecological quality,
- stakeholders who have vested interests that need to be integrated for the management of Ramsar Sites,
- which are the lessons learnt during the cooperation with different sectors, and what needs to be done to achieve “state-of-the-art” management of Ramsar Sites?

1.2 Are natural water retention measures the right answer to a changing climate?

Introduction: *Goran Gugić*, Lonjsko Polje Ramsar Site, Croatia

Rapporteur: *Marijana Jurić*, National Focal Point, Croatia

During the disastrous 2014 flood events in the Western Balkans the importance of natural water retention measures and the questionable role of hydropower stations in extreme flood events appeared. There is a need to rethink the current concept of “flood control”, particularly under the aspect that the region faces increasing drought periods, too. Are natural water retention measures the adequate answer or do we need more?

Three questions will be addressed in the interactive session:

- what is the role of hydropower stations in extreme flood events and how to deal with them,
- are there enough potential floodplains and natural retention areas available, how should they be dispersed, are there good case studies in Europe,

- what elements should be considered in physical planning of natural retention areas, are retention measures adequate answers or do we need more, a new culture of adaptation to floods?

1.3 **Island wetlands in Greece – a useful case for the Mediterranean**

Introduction: *Thanos Giannakakis*, WWF Greece

Rapporteur: *Katerina Stylogianni*, National Focal Point, Greece

WWF undertook a project to assess the ecosystem values and the strong pressures on Greek island wetlands from tourist and urban development. The results demonstrated significant values and clarified the pressures, likely to be similar on all Mediterranean islands increasingly under stress from water abstraction and land use change, as indicated also by remote sensing studies.

Three questions will be addressed in the interactive session:

- why focusing specifically on island wetlands in the Mediterranean,
- what measures should Mediterranean countries implement to ensure the conservation of their island wetlands,
- who are the stakeholders (citizen, business, etc.) that have major influence and could contribute most to the wise use of Mediterranean island wetlands?

16:30 Interactive sessions in parallel

Discuss improvements proposed to the draft texts of these Draft Resolutions:

SC48-27: DR on conservation of Mediterranean Basin island wetlands

SC48-28: DR on wetlands and disaster risk reduction

SC48-30: DR on ecological flow

The audience splits into three groups for interactive sessions to discuss the questions listed above. The groups move to cover the three themes subsequently (3 x 20 minutes). The moderators and the rapporteurs remain at their place and receive the participants of the three consecutive groups in turn.

16:50 Groups move to the second moderator.

17:10 Groups move to the third moderator.

17:30 Closing of the group sessions.

Time for rapporteurs to prepare their short consolidated bullet-point report.

Evening Informal gatherings and discovery of Kufstein's historic city centre.

TUESDAY - 21 OCTOBER

Session 2 - *land use and land use change*

Tuesday 21 October

09:00 Introduction to three interactive sessions
(*brief presentations in plenary: 3 x 8 minutes*)

2.1 **Wetlands, water resources and agricultural practices**

Introduction: *Libuše Vlasáková*, Standing Committee, Czech Republic

Moderators: *Martina Eiseltová & Jan Květ*, Czech Republic

Rapporteur: *Hana Čížková*, Czech Republic

Ramsar Parties adopted in 2002 a Resolution on agriculture, wetlands and water resources. How was this implemented in different regions of Europe? We aim to distil the main issues of concern for sustainable practices, under the constraints of a changing climate, increasing land use pressures and dwindling wetland resources.

Three questions will be addressed in the interactive session:

- what is your experience with implementing the Resolution on agriculture, wetlands and water resources in your country,

- are there good examples of wetland restoration projects in agricultural landscapes,
- which are useful incentives and legislation in support for wetland management in agricultural landscapes?

2.2 **Bringing farming stakeholders together for the sake of wetlands**

Introduction: *Eva Hernandez*, WWF Spain
 Rapporteur: *Dimitar Popov*, Green Balkans

Farming uses on average 70% of available freshwater resources of the planet. In many cases, farming practices drain wetland ecosystems that provide the freshwater resource upon which they depend. Bringing all stakeholders along the production chain together (producers, transformers, retailers, etc.) to improve farming practices can have very beneficial impact on wetland ecosystems worldwide.

Three questions will be addressed in the interactive session:

- what are the key issues agriculture should improve to reduce its impact and possibly even to benefit wetlands,
- what is the best way to improve farming practices,
- what role for the Ramsar Convention to help improving farming practices?

2.3 **Are we focusing sufficiently on Arctic wetlands?**

Introduction: *Tatiana Minayeva*, Wetlands International
 Rapporteur: *Jan-Petter Huberth-Hansen*, National Focal Point, Norway

During COP11 the Ramsar Convention signed a cooperation agreement with the working group on Conservation of Arctic Fauna and Flora (CAFF) of the Arctic Council. This provides an opportunity to share knowledge on Arctic habitats and species and to progress with work on monitoring these fragile ecosystems and their links with other parts of the world, e.g. through migratory species.

Three questions will be addressed in the interactive session:

- what are the main knowledge gaps on Arctic wetlands (diversity, distribution, ecosystem services, conservation needs),
- do we need mire Ramsar Sites in the Arctic,
- how to build up synergies with CAFF, the Nordic Council, UNFCCC, CBD and CCD?

09:30 Interactive sessions in parallel (*cf. instructions provided for Session 1 on page 5*).

09:50 Groups move to the second moderator.

10:10 Groups move to the third moderator.

10:30 *coffee break*

Session 3 - responding to changing water resources and climate

Tuesday 21 October

11:00 Introduction to three interactive sessions
 (*brief presentations in plenary: 3 x 8 minutes*)

3.1 **Paludiculture – win-win, win-lose, or lose-lose?**

Introduction: *Bettina Hedden-Dunkhorst*, STRP Focal Point, Germany
 Rapporteur: *András Schmidt*, National Focal Point, Hungary

Rewetting of cultivated peatland soils is seen as a means to restore peatland ecosystem services, especially climate protection. But how can rewetted soils maintain farmers' incomes? We discuss challenges and opportunities of paludiculture, a land management technique that claims to produce biomass on rewetted and wet peatlands under conditions that maintain the peat body, facilitate peat accumulation and sustain the ecosystem services associated with natural peatlands.

Three questions will be addressed in the interactive session:

- what is the current status of paludiculture, and what are opportunities, challenges and pitfalls of paludiculture under different conditions,
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- what are the open research questions of paludiculture, are there alternatives to restore ecosystem services of cultivated peatland soils,
- is paludiculture, or alternative technologies, to be promoted by the Ramsar Convention?

3.2 How much is a wetland worth?

Introduction: *Ivan Hristov*, WWF Bulgaria

Rapporteur: *Bohdan Prots*, WWF & National Academy of Sciences, Ukraine

By the end of the 20th century, nearly 80% of the Danube floodplain wetlands were lost as a result of projects driven rather by prevailing ideologies than by socio-economic arguments. Nowadays, an overview of policies prevailing along the middle and lower Danube floodplains shows major differences re wetland ecosystem maintenance and restoration.

Three questions will be addressed in the interactive session:

- what methods are used to evaluate wetland restoration projects and their results, are they worth their investment,
- what real change in wetland management policies since the end of centrally planned economies,
- what opportunities exist to introduce payments for ecosystem services (PES) as a tool for sustainable management and an incentive for future restoration activities?

3.3 The French Ramsar Association – an innovative site manager approach

Introduction: *Jean Jalbert*, Association Ramsar France

Rapporteur: *Ghislaine Ferrère*, Standing Committee, France

The French Ramsar Association was created in 2011 to federate French Ramsar Site managers and to improve Ramsar Site management. The process of its creation and the first results almost three years later and lessons to be learnt are presented. How could this approach be replicated elsewhere?

Three questions will be addressed in the interactive session:

- how isolated (or connected) are the Ramsar Site managers in my own country,
- should such a national association also tackle other Ramsar-related issues,
- is it feasible and useful to set up a similar association in my own country, why?

11:30 Interactive sessions in parallel (*cf. instructions given for Session 1 on page 5*).

11:50 Groups move to the second moderator.

12:10 Groups move to the third moderator.

12:30 *light buffet lunch*

Wetland on-site visits

Tuesday 21 October

13:50 Bus departures in front of the conference hall.

Two field visits organised in parallel, according to a specific programme.

17:30 Return from field visits.

Time for rapporteurs to prepare their short consolidated bullet-point report.

Dinner reception

Tuesday 21 October

18:30 Departure in front of the conference hall – **by foot**

Dinner reception at the nearby fortress **Festung Kufstein** overlooking the river Inn.

19:15 Master of Ceremony: *Nicole Schreyer*, Manager Kaisergebirge Protected Area

Welcome by

Ingrid Felipe, Deputy State Governor, State of Tyrol

Martin Krummschnabel, Mayor of Kufstein

Wolfgang Pelikan, Chair Austrian Ramsar Committee

Tobias Salathé, Senior Adviser, Ramsar Secretariat

- 20:00 Dinner
 21:15 Special performance by the society for traditional costumes “Edelraute” (*Artemisia*).

WEDNESDAY - 22 OCTOBER

Reporting-back session

Wednesday 22 October

- 09:00 Brief reports back from the interactive sessions (*9 x 5 minutes*)
 The reports cover proposals for text improvements to Draft Resolutions:
SC48-27: DR on conservation of Mediterranean Basin island wetlands
SC48-28: DR on wetlands and disaster risk reduction
SC48-30: DR on ecological flow
- 1.1 A tool for Ramsar Sites – the SEE River project
 1.2 Are natural water retention measures the right answer to a changing climate?
 1.3 Island wetlands in Greece – a useful case for the Mediterranean
- 09:15 Discussion
- 2.1 Wetlands, water resources and agricultural practices
 2.2 Bringing farming stakeholders together for the sake of wetlands
 2.3 Are we focusing sufficiently on Arctic wetlands?
- 09:45 Discussion
- 3.1 Paludiculture – win-win, win-lose, or lose-lose?
 3.2 How much is a wetland worth?
 3.3 The French Ramsar Association – an innovative site manager approach
- 10:15 Discussion

10:30 *coffee break*

Session 4 - Ramsar Sites to show the way

Wednesday 22 October

Note: Several Draft Resolutions (DR) are in preparation for COP12. Moderators, rapporteurs and participants are requested to read the **draft texts** – available on the new www.ramsar.org homepage, in the top right corner as agenda documents for the **48th meeting of Standing Committee**. Please identify improvements needed and provide comments during the group sessions. Rapporteurs please note proposals for improved text and give them to the Secretariat. DRs related to this session are:
SC48-25: DR on evaluating and ensuring effective management and conservation of Ramsar Sites
SC48-29: DR on Ramsar Community accreditation

- 11:00 Introduction to three interactive sessions
(brief presentations in plenary: 3 x 8 minutes)
- 4.1 **Ramsar Community accreditation – an innovative approach**
 Introduction: *Denis Landenbergue*, WWF International
 Rapporteur: *Delmar Blasco*, MedWet Coordinator

Over 50% of the world population lives in urban areas, an increasing trend. Growing urbanization makes services by urban wetlands for biodiversity, education, recreation, micro-climate, flood retention, water purification, etc. more significant. In this context, the recognition by Ramsar of cities leading in forging the links between local communities and urban wetland ecosystems is proposed.

Three questions will be addressed in the interactive session:

- what are the reasons for Ramsar recognition of leading communities in wetland site conservation,
- which criteria need to be fulfilled to comply with a specific Ramsar recognition,
- how can such a recognition scheme function and what costs are implied?

Discuss improvements proposed to the draft text of this Draft Resolution:

SC48-29: DR on Ramsar Community accreditation

4.2 Towards the effective management of Ramsar Sites

Introduction: *Gordana Beltram*, National Focal Point, Slovenia

Rapporteur: *Juris Jatnieks*, National Focal Point, Latvia

Ramsar Sites are faced with multiple threats and with challenges for their managers. There is growing concern that many protected areas are not achieving the objectives for which they were established. This requires regular and open evaluations of the management effectiveness, and to learn from successes and mistakes. One response has been emphasis on the need to increase the effectiveness of protected area management. To help this process, a number of tools have been developed. During a Ramsar seminar last June, experts concluded that the globally available, simple to use, Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) could be helpful to assess the management effectiveness of Ramsar Sites.

Three questions will be addressed in the interactive session:

- what are the key management activities to be undertaken at Ramsar Sites and what are effective management cycles (planning, intervention, evaluation),
- what tools are available to evaluate management effectiveness and how efficient are they, how best to adapt the METT tool to the Ramsar context,
- how to assure compatibility of this method with Natura 2000 reporting requirements in EU states, and how to report most effectively on site management, e.g. in Ramsar National Reports to each COP?

Discuss improvements proposed to the draft text of this Draft Resolutions:

SC48-25: DR on evaluating and ensuring effective management and conservation of Ramsar Sites

Those interested to continue exchanges on the METT tool are invited to meet up with the moderators on Thursday 23 October after Session 8, at 17:40.

4.3 The Ramsar Culture Network to celebrate culture in wetlands

Introduction: *Thymio Papayannis*, Ramsar Culture Network

Rapporteur: *Chris Perceval*, Ramsar Secretariat

After having adopted two Resolutions (VIII.19, IX.21) and a Guidance Document in 2008, the opportunity exists now to mainstream culture more fully within societal understanding and recognition of the importance of wetlands via improved knowledge, deeper understanding, wider outreach and substantial incorporation within the new Strategic Plan.

Three questions will be addressed in the interactive session:

- at which Ramsar Sites has culture been important to improve management practices and reach greater effectiveness of wise use,
- what examples of actions, nationally or regionally, have promoted cultural wetland ecosystem services most prominently, and what are the main cultural thematic areas to be taken into consideration for better wetland management,
- who are the main partners that we still need to team up with?

11:30 Interactive sessions in parallel (*cf. instructions given for Session 1 on page 5*).

11:50 Groups move to the second moderator.

12:10 Groups move to the third moderator.

12:30 *light buffet lunch*

Wetland on-site visits

Wednesday 22 October

13:50 Bus departure in front of the conference hall.
Two field visits in parallel according to a specific programme.
Participants switch to the tour not taken the day before.

17:30 Return from field visits.

Time for rapporteurs to prepare their short consolidated bullet-point report.

Wetlands video show and exhibit

Wednesday 22 October

19:00 Opening to the public

People from Kufstein and surroundings and Ramsar participants are invited to visit the exhibition stands and to discuss with poster authors in front of their posters.

19:30 Wetlands video show starts in the conference hall according a specific programme.

21:30 Award ceremony for the three *"best wetland videos"* based on the audience's vote.

THURSDAY - 23 OCTOBER

Session 5 - *using the full the potential of Ramsar Sites*

Thursday 23 October

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09:00 Introduction to three interactive sessions
(*brief presentations in plenary: 3 x 8 minutes*)

5.1 EU tools for integrated river basin management

Introduction: *Frank Vassen*, European Commission DG ENV
Rapporteur: *Gerhard Schwach*, National Focal Point, Austria

Within the EU, successful river basin management relies on a good implementation of both EU Nature and Water framework legislation, and hence on a good cooperation between Natura 2000 and Water managers. While the EU Water Framework Directive requires EU Member States to establish River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) in view of achieving good environmental status of EU waters, Member States are also expected to define, under the EU Habitats and Birds Directives, Natura 2000 site level conservation objectives for species and habitat types of Community Importance, in view of maintaining or achieving their favourable conservation status. In order to promote more strategic investments into the Natura 2000 network, and optimize the use of available funding sources, the Commission is encouraging Member States in developing Prioritised Action Frameworks (PAFs).

Three questions will be addressed in the interactive session:

- how can we improve synergies between Ramsar National Planning and the above processes under EU water and nature legislation,
- how can the new LIFE programme, and in particular the LIFE Integrated Projects, contribute to these processes, and
- what is the experience so far with strategic (top-down) planning approaches, which are now being promoted through the LIFE IPs to complement the traditional bottom-up LIFE projects?

5.2 The wetlands tourism experience

Introduction: *Delmar Blasco*, MedWet Coordinator
Moderator: *Magdalena Bernues*, National Focal Point, Spain
Rapporteur: *María José Viñals*, Ministry of Environment, Spain

Based on the guidance provided through Resolution XI.7 on tourism, recreation and wetlands (COP11, 2012). Beyond birdwatchers, a larger segment of less specialized wetland visitors needs also to be addressed. Raising interest and appreciation for wetlands from the general public should increase their engagement towards increased wetland conservation.

We focus on visitor management strategies, incorporating new methods, and visitor activities that create physical, emotional and intellectual links between wetlands and people.

Three questions will be addressed in the interactive session:

- what site managers need to do to attract the general public as well as specific target audiences to wetlands,
- which are the most rewarding wetland visitor target audiences, and
- which techniques to use to create lasting experiences for wetland visitors?

5.3 **Wetland education centres – delivering the Ramsar message direct**

Introduction: *Chris Rostron*, Wetlands Link International, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust

Moderator: *Denis Landenbergue*, WWF International

Rapporteur: *Rob McInnes*, Scientific and Technical Review Panel

Wetland education centres play a crucial role in engaging local people at wetland sites, providing a structure that allows the public, local stakeholders and decision makers to get a sound background in why wetlands are important, as well as carrying out vital conservation work for biodiversity. Currently active networks, such as Migratory Birds for People, NorBalWet and other Wetlands Link International partners, could work even better together for Ramsar.

Three questions will be addressed in the interactive session:

- how can wetland education centre networks work better together,
- what resources and support should Wetland Link International provide to support staff at wetland education centres,
- how can the network benefit those working in wetland education generally?

09:30 Interactive sessions in parallel (*cf. instructions given for Session 1 on page 5*).

Discuss improvements proposed to the draft texts of this Draft Resolution:

SC48-23: DR on the Convention's Programme on communication, capacity development, education, participation and awareness

09:50 Groups move to the second moderator.

10:10 Groups move to the third moderator.

10:30 *coffee break*

Session 6 - moving beyond Ramsar Sites

Thursday 23 October

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SC48-22: DR on partnerships

SC48-24: DR on regional initiatives operating in the framework of the Ramsar Convention

11:00 Introduction to three interactive sessions
(*brief presentations in plenary: 3 x 8 minutes*)

6.1 **Wetlands and ecosystem services – who needs what?**

Introduction: *Rob McInnes*, STRP & Society of Wetland Scientists

Rapporteur: *Adriana Kušiková*, National Focal Point, Slovakia

Ramsar's Scientific and Technical Review Panel is conducting a survey of user needs on tools, knowledge, methodology and data required to support integration of ecosystem service values in planning and decision making. Progress has been made, however two major questions have been identified: who are the users and what do they want?

Three questions will be addressed in the interactive session:

- who needs to understand ecosystem services and what is the context for their understanding (planning, management, reactive assessment),
- how are ecosystem services addressed in management and what is needed to assess them,
- who currently uses or will use any ecosystem service assessment and what additional tool, knowledge, methodology, capacity is required to support integration of wetland ecosystem services in planning and decision making?

6.2 **Challenges for regional cooperation in European regional sea basins**

Introduction: *Delmar Blasco*, MedWet Coordinator

Rapporteur: *Grigore Baboianu*, BlackSeaWet Coordinator

The coordinators of two Ramsar Regional Initiatives for cooperation in the basins of the Mediterranean, Black and Azov Seas present the status of progress with their work and the challenges they are facing. They invite practitioners from other regional sea basins (such as the North Atlantic, Barents, North and Baltic Seas) to discuss how Regional Initiatives for cooperation can contribute to a more effective implementation of the Ramsar Convention?

Three questions will be addressed in the interactive session:

- how to make Regional Initiatives relevant for the majority/all Parties involved and how not to duplicate the work of the Ramsar Secretariat,
- how to establish effective partnerships with other regional/international bodies active in the region and how to establish more effective synergies between Ramsar's different Regional Initiatives,
- under which conditions would Parties be willing to make additional (financial) contributions for the work of Regional Initiatives, and what sort of presences should Regional Initiatives have at Ramsar COP12?

Discuss improvements proposed to the draft text of this Draft Resolutions:

SC48-24: DR on regional initiatives operating in the framework of the Ramsar Convention

6.3 **A framework and plan for partnerships and resource mobilisation**

Introduction: *Chris Perceval*, Ramsar Secretariat

Rapporteur: *Jenny Lonnstad*, National Focal Point, Sweden

Wetlands and their services to humanity still lack sufficient societal recognition. To improve this situation, the Ramsar Convention is preparing a framework and plan to work more in partnership with relevant players and to mobilise more resources to maintain and support wetland services. This needs also active support and participation by Parties through projects, activities and financial support. To this end, the establishment of a platform "Investing in Wetlands" is envisaged.

Three questions will be addressed in the interactive session:

- which are the priority themes to focus and work on with partners,
- how to work with others in order to achieve our goals, what role for the "Investing in Wetlands" platform,
- what other means to use to raise the public profile of wetlands and their services and the supporting Ramsar Convention?

Discuss improvements proposed to the draft text of this Draft Resolutions:

SC48-22: DR on partnerships

11:30 Interactive sessions in parallel (*cf. instructions given for Session 1 on page 5*).

11:50 Groups move to the second moderator.

12:10 Groups move to the third moderator.

12:30 *light buffet lunch*

13:30 Two parallel side events

Demonstration of the new Ramsar Sites Information Service

Laura Maíz, Ramsar Secretariat

An on-line presentation of the Internet-based monitoring tool for Ramsar Sites, open to the public, and to be used and updated by Site managers, National Focal Points (Administrative Authorities) and the Secretariat.

Improving business and investment standards and practices

Chris Perceval, Ramsar Secretariat

An informal table discussion to recapitulate the main provisions of Resolution XI.20 and provide an opportunity for sharing experiences, best practices, and developing opportunities with a view to preventing, stopping and reversing the loss of wetlands.

Session 7 - preparing for the future

Thursday 23 October

Note: Several Draft Resolutions (DR) are in preparation for COP12. Moderators, rapporteurs and participants are requested to read the **draft texts** – available on the new www.ramsar.org homepage, in the top right corner as agenda documents for the **48th meeting of Standing Committee**. Please identify improvements needed and provide comments during the group sessions. Rapporteurs please note proposals for improved text and give them to the Secretariat. DRs related to this session are:

SC48-19: DR on the 4th Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2021

SC48-31: DR on peatlands, climate change and wise use: implications for the Ramsar Convention

14:00 Introduction to three interactive sessions
(*brief presentations in plenary: 3 x 8 minutes*)

7.1 How are we implementing Global Actions on Peatlands?

Moderator: *Tatiana Minayeva*, Wetlands International

Rapporteur: *Alexander Zinke*, External expert of Federal Environment Ministry, Austria

COP8 adopted Guidelines for Global Action on Peatlands in 2002, and this triggered much focus on a huge part of all wetlands across the world. The framework for action elaborated at the turn of the century is still relevant. Nevertheless, specific actions probably need adoption to new challenges occurring in a rapidly changing world. Today, new opportunities exist for increased synergies between international conventions, and it is timely to revisit the potential for increased peatland conservation input at national level.

Three questions will be addressed in the interactive session:

- what are the new challenges for peatland conservation,
- what are new possibilities, and incentives and mechanisms for peatland conservation,
- develop a list for urgent actions for Ramsar Parties regarding peatlands?

Discuss improvements proposed to the draft text of this Draft Resolutions:

SC48-31: DR on peatlands, climate change and wise use: implications for the Ramsar Convention

7.2 Satellite tracking of land-use change trends in Mediterranean wetlands

Introduction: *Jean Jalbert*, Tour du Valat research centre for Mediterranean wetland conservation

Rapporteur: *Kathrin Weise*, Jena Optronik Ltd

The GlobWetland-II project by the European Space Agency and Jena Optronik provides remote sensing tools to identify land use trends from 1975 to 2005 for a sample of 214 coastal wetlands in most Mediterranean countries. During this period, the surface of natural wetland habitats decreased by 10%, while the surface of human-made wetlands increased by 54%. Agriculture was the first cause of wetland loss, and since 1990 urbanisation is the principal cause. Increasing water abstraction and changes in water management had a major impact, as revealed by these new earth observation technologies.

Three questions will be addressed in the interactive session:

- what are the most helpful contributions of earth observation technologies for Ramsar Parties from site managers to administrative authorities,
- what are the consequences of these trends: decrease of natural wetlands and increase of artificial wetlands,
- how can decision-makers adapt their strategies to this new situation, are other European regions likely to experience similar trends?

7.3 Planning strategically for wetlands and water

Introduction: *Peter Hislaire*, consultant Ramsar Secretariat

Rapporteur: *Kristina Niikkonen*, Standing Committee, Finland

The draft Strategic Plan is available for discussion and improvement, on the Ramsar homepage as a document for the 48th meeting of Standing Committee. It is based on the recognition that we need to achieve a turning point for wetlands through enhanced action. Feed-back on the draft plan provided through this session will be included in a second draft to be submitted to Standing Committee. COP12 is anticipated to adopt the final Strategic Plan 2016-2021 in June 2015.

Three questions will be addressed in the interactive session:

- the draft plan is based on three major goals and expected outcomes by 2021, do the targets listed cover all major aspects, are the outcomes realistic,
- who are the partners needed to achieve the targets by 2021, how do we need to engage with them,
- what support, also financial, is needed from which sources to reach the targets by 2021?

Discuss improvements proposed to the draft text of this Draft Resolution:

SC48-19: DR on the 4th Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2021

14:30 Interactive sessions in parallel (*cf. instructions given for Session 1 on page 5*).

14:50 Groups move to the second moderator.

15:10 Groups move to the third moderator.

15:30 *coffee break*

Session 8

Thursday 23 October

16:00 Maintenance and restoration of freshwater habitats in the Alpine region

Ján Kadlečík, Carpathian Wetland Initiative, Slovakia

A recent river restoration workshop brought together the European and Danube Commissions, and the Carpathian and Ramsar Conventions, to look at the implementation of EU guidance and directives on water management, hydropower, Natura 2000 and Ramsar Sites. Pressures on wetlands in the Alpine biogeographical region, ways to react, and restoration opportunities were identified.

16:15 Status of the European Ramsar Sites

Laura Maíz, Ramsar Secretariat

Based on the hand-out distributed to all participants, the current status of European Ramsar Sites, making up nearly half of all Ramsar Sites in the world, is presented. The urgent need to update information through the new RSIS portal and to address human-induced change in ecological character at about 9% of all European Ramsar Sites is addressed. This presentation relates to:

SC48-21: DR on the status of Sites in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance

16:35 Review of Ramsar scientific and technical guidance

Tobias Salathé, Ramsar Secretariat

COP11 (2012) asked for a review of the delivery, uptake and implementation of scientific and technical advice and guidance to the Convention. This was undertaken during 2014. The conclusions and recommendations to be submitted to COP12 are presented. This relates to:

SC48-18: DR on a proposed new framework for delivery of scientific and technical advice and guidance on the Convention

- 16:55 **Providing the Ramsar Convention with increased visibility**
COP11 instructed the Standing Committee to explore the accommodation of UN languages in the Convention, the elevation of Ramsar visibility and stature, the enhancement of synergies with MEAs, including through Regional Initiatives, and increased involvement in UNEP's initiatives. The results of the group working on these topics during the triennium are briefly presented. This relates to:
SC48-17: DR on follow-up on Res.XI.1: Languages of the Convention, visibility and stature, ministerial COP segments, and synergies with multilateral environmental agreements and other international entities
- 17:15 **Information on remaining Draft Resolutions in preparation for COP12**
Israel expressed a wish to move from the Asian to the European region. A similar move is proposed for the Central Asian countries Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. This relates to: ***SC48-26: DR on regional categorization of Contracting Parties***
- The DR on financial and budgetary matters is not available yet. It will take into account the additional resources needed to implement the DRs proposed for adoption to COP12 addressed above.
- At COP12, a new Standing Committee will be elected for the period 2015-2018. The procedure how to propose four European representatives is outlined.
- 17:30 Closing of the session.
- 17:40 **Two parallel side-events**
- Demonstration of the new GlobWetland II remote sensing tool**
An on-line and hands-on demonstration of the remote sensing tools developed with support from the European Space Agency.
Kathrin Weise, Jena Optronik Ltd
- Demonstration of the Ramsar Site management effectiveness tracking tool**
An informal presentation of the report and tool, specially adapted for the Ramsar Site context after the workshop earlier this year.
Gordana Beltram & Juris Jatnieks, National Focal Points, Slovenia & Latvia

Time for rapporteurs to prepare their short consolidated bullet-point report.

Buffet Dinner

Thursday 23 October

- 19:30 Buffet dinner offered by the Austrian Federal Ministry and the State of Tyrol.

FRIDAY - 24 OCTOBER

Reporting-back session

Friday 24 October

- 09:00 Brief reports back from the interactive sessions
The reports cover proposals for text improvements to Draft Resolutions:
SC48-23: DR on the Convention's Programme on communication, capacity development, education, participation and awareness
SC48-25: DR on evaluating and ensuring effective management and conservation of Ramsar Sites
SC48-29: DR on Ramsar Community accreditation
- 4.1 Ramsar community accreditation – an innovative approach
4.2 Towards the effective management of Ramsar Sites
4.3 The Ramsar Culture Network to celebrate culture in wetlands
- 09:15 Discussion

- 5.1 EU tools for integrated river basin management
 5.2 The wetlands tourism experience
 5.3 Wetland education centres – delivering the Ramsar message direct
 09:45 Discussion

- 6.1 Wetlands and ecosystem services – who needs what?
 6.2 Challenges for regional cooperation in European regional sea basins
 6.3 A framework and plan for partnerships and resource mobilisation
 10:15 Discussion

10:30 *coffee break*

Closing Session

Friday 24 October

- 11:00 Brief reports back from the interactive sessions
 The reports cover proposals for text improvements to Draft Resolution:
SC48-31: DR on peatlands, climate change and wise use: implications for the Ramsar Convention
- 7.1 How are we implementing Global Actions on Peatlands?
 7.2 Satellite tracking of land-use change trends in Mediterranean wetlands
 11:10 Discussion
- 11:20 Reporting back on the interactive session 7.3 on strategic planning. This relates to:
SC48-19: DR on the 4th Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2021
- After the report back and a brief feed-back from plenary, the audience will split into three parallel groups to address specific targets and indicators to be included into the new Strategic Plan 2016-2021.
- 11:35 **Work in three parallel groups on the Strategic Plan**
 Moderators: *Kristina Niikkonen, Ghislaine Ferrère*, co-chairs Strategic Plan Working Group,
Peter Hilaire, consultant
 Rapporteurs: *Reinhard Schnidrig*, National Focal Point Switzerland, *Mihaela Cocai*, NFP Romania,
Alexander Zinke, External expert of Federal Environment Ministry, Austria
- 11:55 Brief reporting back by the working groups (3 x 5 minutes)
 Final discussion and next steps
 Chair: *Kristina Niikkonen*, Standing Committee, Finland
- 12:20 **Closing remarks:** from Kufstein to Punta del Este and beyond
Peter Pouplier, Standing Committee, Denmark
- 12:30 Closing of the 8th European Ramsar Meeting.
- 13:30 *Departure for the optional excursion for registered participants.*