



12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Punta del Este, Uruguay, 1-9 June 2015

Resolution XII.6

The status of Sites in the Ramsar 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 Ramsar Sites for the consideration and recommendations by the Parties at ordinary meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP) on these matters, and Article 6.2(d) concerning the competence of the COP to make general or specific recommendations to the Contracting Parties regarding the conservation, management and wise use of wetlands;
2. CONGRATULATING the Contracting Parties on the designation, between 13 July 2012 and 28 August 2014, of 149 new Ramsar Sites;
3. CONCERNED that for 1,238 Ramsar Sites, representing 57% of 2,188 Sites, either Ramsar Information Sheets or adequate maps have not been submitted, or relevant Ramsar Information Sheets or maps have not been updated for over six years, such that information on the current status of these Sites is not available;
4. NOTING that changes to Ramsar Site boundaries and areas reported to the Secretariat in updated Ramsar Information Sheets can only include extensions or recalculations of areas including through more precise boundary delineations;
5. RECALLING that in Resolution VIII.8 (2002) the COP expressed concern that many Contracting Parties do not have in place the mechanisms to fulfil Article 3.2 of the Convention, and urged Contracting Parties to promptly “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”;
6. NOTING that 73% of the Contracting Parties reported to the 12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP12) that they have arrangements in place to be informed of negative human-induced changes or likely changes in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites in their territories in line with Article 3.2, but AWARE that fewer than 21% have submitted reports of all instances of such changes or likely changes;
7. FURTHER NOTING that Contracting Parties have placed no additional Ramsar Sites on the Montreux Record since COP11 and ENCOURAGING Contracting Parties that have any concerns over the management of their Ramsar Sites to continue to use the tools of the Ramsar Convention that are available to them, for instance the Montreux Record;

8. CONCERNED that of all Ramsar Sites included in the Montreux Record as of 28 August 2014, only one Site has been removed from the Record since COP11;
9. CONCERNED about the average four years that it has taken to close Article 3.2 files, the continuing lack of information on the status of many open Article 3.2 files, and the lack of response by Contracting Parties to some concerns of potential changes to Sites raised by third parties; and
10. NOTING the importance of Ramsar Advisory Missions as a tool for Contracting Parties who are seeking to quickly evaluate the situation in their Ramsar Sites, which are in war or conflict zones, after a conflict has been resolved, and the importance in such instances of the Ramsar Secretariat informing all Contracting Parties involved in the conflict of the findings of the Ramsar Advisory Mission;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

11. EXPRESSES APPRECIATION to those Contracting Parties that have brought their Ramsar Information Sheets up to date for all the Ramsar Sites within their territory;
12. URGES the Parties listed at Annex 3a of the Report of the Secretary General pursuant to Article 8.2 (document COP12 DOC.7), in whose territories lie Ramsar Sites for which the Ramsar Information Sheet or map have not been submitted since the time of designation, to provide such information as a matter of urgency and in advance of the 51st meeting of the Ramsar Standing Committee, and INSTRUCTS the Ramsar Secretariat to contact all relevant Contracting Parties listed in Annex 3a on all outstanding cases at least once a year;
13. REQUESTS Contracting Parties listed in Annex 3b of the report of the Secretary General to fulfil, as a matter of urgency, the terms of Resolution VI.13 and submit updated information of Ramsar Sites at least every six years using the most up-to-date format of the Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS), now available online through the new Ramsar Sites Information Service, and also to use this RIS for designating new Sites and extending existing Sites;
14. REAFFIRMS the commitment made by the Parties in Resolution VIII.8 to implement fully the terms of Article 3.2 on reporting change, and to maintain or restore the ecological character of Ramsar Sites by employing all appropriate mechanisms to address and resolve as soon as possible any matters leading to Article 3.2 reports; and subsequently to submit a further report on the outcomes of those mechanisms, so that both positive outcomes and changes in ecological character may be fully reflected in reports to meetings of the COP in order to establish a clear picture of the status and trends of the Ramsar Site network;
15. CONTINUES TO ENCOURAGE Contracting Parties to adopt and apply, as part of their management planning for Ramsar Sites and other wetlands, a suitable monitoring regime, such as that outlined in the Annex to Resolution VI.1 (1996), which incorporates 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 line with Article 3.2;
16. EXPRESSES ITS APPRECIATION to those Contracting Parties which 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 4a of the Report of the Secretary General pursuant to Article 8.2;

17. REQUESTS those 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 Secretary General) 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 in advance of the 51st meeting of the Standing Committee and each subsequent Standing Committee meeting;
18. INSTRUCTS the Ramsar Secretariat to consider options for assisting and encouraging Parties in their actions in response to change or likely change in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites, such as direct advice, when requested, on the application of the wise use principles, or, when relevant, proposing to Parties to add the Site(s) to the Montreux Record or to invite a Ramsar Advisory Mission;
19. REITERATES ITS ENCOURAGEMENT to Contracting Parties, when submitting a report in fulfilment of Article 3.2, to consider whether the Site would benefit from listing on the Montreux Record, and to request such listing as appropriate;
20. REQUESTS the Contracting Parties to use the redesigned 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. REQUESTS the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to investigate the costs of options for working with UNEP-GRID to assist Parties who wish to do so to access such data and monitoring tools, for example by working with the Standing Committee and Parties to investigate the potential value and feasibility of gathering satellite data on changes to Sites; and
22. Encourages Contracting Parties to use tools and information provided by technical partners in assessing changes to the ecological character of Ramsar Sites.

Annex 1: Montreux Record – Questionnaire content

Section One: 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 and services 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 threat categories in RIS Guidance Appendix F, Resolution XI.8 Annex 2).
6. Reason(s) for the change / likely change described above.

Management measures in place

7. Date when the latest Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) was submitted.
8. Monitoring programme 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).
9. Assessment procedures in place, if any (how is the information obtained from the monitoring programme used).
10. Ameliorative and restoration measures so far in place or planned, if any.
11. Any other analogous or linked Site intervention processes activated or planned, e.g. under other multilateral environmental agreements.
12. List of attachments provided by the Contracting Party (if applicable).
13. List of attachments provided by the Ramsar Secretariat (if applicable).

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

Management measures in place

1. Date when the latest Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) was submitted.
2. Monitoring programme 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. Ameliorative and restoration measures so far in place or planned, if any.

Assessment for removal of the Ramsar Site from the Montreux Record

5. Success of ameliorative, restoration or maintenance measures (if different from those covered in Section One of this questionnaire).
6. Proposed monitoring and assessment procedures (if different from those in Section One of this questionnaire).
7. Extent to which the ecological components, processes and services of the Site have been restored or maintained (provide details).

8. Rationale for removing the Site from the Montreux Record (refer to Guidelines for Operation of the Montreux Record, the specific issues identified in Section One of this questionnaire, and any advice given by the STRP or arising from a Ramsar Advisory Mission, where applicable).
9. 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.
10. Measures that the Contracting Party will implement to maintain the ecological character of the Site with clear indicators for follow up.
11. List of further attachments (if applicable).