

**14th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands**

**“Wetlands Actions for People and Nature”
Wuhan, China and Geneva, Switzerland, 5-13 November 2022**

Ramsar COP14 Doc.18.15 Rev.2

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

1. RECALLING Article 8.2 of the Convention, on the duties of the Secretariat concerning reporting on the status of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites) for the consideration and recommendations of the Conference of the Contracting Parties on these matters, and Article 6.2.d), concerning the competence of the Conference to make general or specific recommendations to the Contracting Parties regarding the conservation, management and wise use of wetlands;
2. APPRECIATING the designation of 125 new Ramsar Sites by Contracting Parties between 21 June 2018 and 30 June 2022;
3. ALSO APPRECIATING the work done by 42 Contracting Parties that updated the Ramsar Information Sheets (RISs) for 221 Ramsar Sites within their territories during this period, and by 68 Parties that provided updated information on an additional 601 Sites;
4. NOTING that, for 1,826 Ramsar Sites, representing 75% of the 2,439 Sites that had been designated by 30 June 2022, either RISs or adequate maps had not been submitted, or relevant RISs or maps had not been updated for over six years, so that recent information on the status of these Sites was not available;
5. NOTING that changes to Ramsar Site boundaries and areas reported in updated RISs “...*should only occur where the change is so minor that it does not substantially affect the fundamental objectives for which the site was listed, and:*
 - a) *the site boundary has been drawn incorrectly and there has been a genuine error; and/or*
 - b) *the site boundary does not accurately match the description of the boundary as defined in the RIS; and/or*
 - c) *technology allows for a higher resolution and more accurate definition of the site boundary than was available at the time of Listing” (Resolution VIII.21) and/or*
 - d) *where it is possible, to increase relevant “intertidal Ramsar Site boundaries [to] include the entire ecosystem of importance to migratory waterbirds and other dependent species, including inland roost and feeding sites” (Resolution XIII.20, paragraph 44);*
6. NOTING that substantive changes to Ramsar Site boundaries, arising from extensions or restrictions of the area of a Site, should also be reported in updated RISs;
7. CONSIDERING the need for Contracting Parties, as a matter of high priority, to put in place mechanisms “... *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, **as the result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference**, and to report any such change without delay to the Ramsar Bureau [Secretariat] so as to implement fully Article 3.2 of the Convention” (Resolution VIII.8);

8. EXPRESSING ITS APPRECIATION to those Contracting Parties that have provided “Article 3.2 reports” to the Secretariat about Ramsar Sites where human-induced changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring, or may occur, as listed in Annex 4a of the *Report of the Secretariat pursuant to Article 8.2 on the List of Wetlands of International Importance* (document COP14 Doc.10);
9. NOTING that 84% of the Contracting Parties reported in their National Reports to the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP14) that they had arrangements in place to be informed of negative human-induced changes or likely changes in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites in their territories; but AWARE that fewer than 42% of Parties have submitted reports of all instances of such changes or likely changes;
10. CONCERNED that, as of 30 June 2022, only three of the Ramsar Sites included in the Montreux Record have been removed from the Record since COP13;
11. ALSO CONCERNED about the length of time that it has taken to address changes to the ecological character of Ramsar Sites (Article 3.2), the continuing lack of information on the status of many open Article 3.2 files, and the lack of response by some Contracting Parties to address concerns raised by third parties about potential changes to Sites; and
12. NOTING the importance of Ramsar Advisory Missions as a monitoring procedure underlined by Contracting Parties through Resolution XIII.11 (2018), to provide technical assistance for addressing problems and threats to Ramsar Sites that could lead to a change in ecological character;
- 12.Bis. RECALLING Article 2.1 of the Convention, which states: “Each Contracting Party shall designate suitable wetlands within its territory for inclusion in a List of Wetlands of International Importance” and that “The boundaries of each wetland shall be precisely described and also delimited on a map”;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

13. URGES the Contracting Parties that have not submitted a Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) or a map for all Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites) that they have designated (listed at Annex 3a of the *Report of the Secretariat pursuant to Article 8.2 on the List of Wetlands of International Importance* [document COP14 Doc.10 **Rev.1**], to provide such information in advance of the 62nd meeting of the Standing Committee (SC62); and INSTRUCTS the Ramsar Secretariat to contact the relevant Contracting Parties to offer any necessary technical support;

13.bis. DECIDES to REPEAL the former decision that Contracting Parties are to submit their updated information in RIS-reports on sites designated for the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance at least once every six years; ALSO DECIDES that updated RIS-reports further on are to be provided at least every ninth year; URGES the Contracting Parties to make sure they do not lag behind in reporting;

14. REQUESTS the Contracting Parties listed in Annex 3b of the *Report of the Secretariat pursuant to Article 8.2 on the List of Wetlands of International Importance* (document COP14 Doc.10 Rev.1) to update, as a matter of urgency, the ~~RIS~~ data provided for their Ramsar Sites that are older than nine years at least once every six years (as urged in Resolution VI.13 on *Submission of information on sites designated for the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance*);

14.bis. ENCOURAGES the Secretariat to assist Contracting Parties in reducing their work load in the provision of revised data for Ramsar Sites in line with Resolution VI.13 on *Submission of information on sites designated for the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance by prioritizing the most important data justifying the application of Ramsar criteria as part of its review of submitted information*;

15. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to adopt and apply as appropriate, as part of their management planning for Ramsar Sites and other wetlands, a suitable assessment and monitoring regime, such as that outlined in the Annex to Resolution VI.1 on *Working definitions of ecological character, guidelines for describing and maintaining the ecological character of listed sites, and guidelines for operation of the Montreux Record*, as well as the Convention's *Wetland Risk Assessment Framework* (Resolution VII.10), in order to be able to report change or likely change in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites in accordance with Article 3.2;

16. REQUESTS Contracting Parties with Ramsar Sites for which the Secretariat has received reports of change or likely change in their ecological character (listed in Annexes 4a and 4b of the *Report of the Secretariat pursuant to Article 8.2 on the List of Wetlands of International Importance*, in document COP14 Doc.10) 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 SC62 and each subsequent Standing Committee meeting until the issue is resolved; and FURTHER REQUESTS the Secretariat to provide technical support to these Parties to address the threats to their Sites, with priority being given to most threatened the longer-standing Sites, and to report back at SC62;

17. ENCOURAGES the Contracting Parties to continue to use the Montreux Record questionnaire at Annex 1 of the present Resolution to determine the inclusion or removal of a listed Site in the Montreux Record;

18. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties, when submitting a report in fulfilment of Article 3.2, to consider whether the Site concerned would benefit from listing on the Montreux Record;

19. INSTRUCES the Secretariat to assist Contracting Parties in their actions in response to change or likely change in the ecological character of a Ramsar Site or Sites, for example by providing advice, when requested, on the application of the wise-use principles, or, when relevant, proposing to Parties to add the Site or Sites to the Montreux Record or to invite a Ramsar Advisory Mission;

19. quater INSTRUCES the Secretariat to compile a full report on Sites on the List of Wetlands of International Importance, (as in "Report of the Secretariat pursuant to Article 8.2" Ramsar COP14 Doc.10 Rev.1) for the meeting of the Conference of the Parties only. The report annexes showing work that lags behind is to be sorted according to years of delay instead of name of the countries.

19. quinquies INSTRUCES the Secretariat to compile a report on the Status of Ramsar Sites with reports confirmed by Parties of human-induced negative changes having occurred, occurring or likely to occur (Article 3.2), (as in "Report of the Secretariat pursuant to Article 8.2" Ramsar

COP14 Doc.10 annex 4a and 4b) only to each of the intersessional Standing Committee meetings.

19.bis REQUESTS the Secretariat to prepare a technical report on the procedure undertaken by the Secretariat to include a site on the List of Wetlands of International Importance, that covers all the steps of this process, for consideration at the 62nd meeting of the Standing Committee;

19.ter. DECIDES to defer consideration of Draft Resolution Doc.18.16 Rev.1 to COP15, to be informed by the results of the technical report and relevant discussions at the upcoming Standing Committee meetings; and

20. REPEALS Resolution XIII.10 on *The status of Sites in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance*, which is replaced by the present Resolution.

Annex 1

Montreux Record – Questionnaire content

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

Nature of the change

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

Management measures in place

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

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

Management measures in place

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

Assessment for removal of the Ramsar Site from the Montreux Record

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