

Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award

1999 Recipients

Category: Government/non-governmental coalition

Pacific Estuary Conservation Program, Canada

Since its creation in 1987, the Pacific Estuary Conservation Program has excelled in its goal of conserving and insuring the long-term sustainable use of estuarine habitat along the coast of British Columbia, in Canada.

Although they comprise less than 3% of the entire British Columbia shoreline, estuaries are used by 80% of all coastal wildlife. They include areas of national and international significance and are important resting and feeding sites along the Pacific Flyway. Their conservation and sustainable use is challenged by the fact that they are located in the fastest growing region of Canada.

The Pacific Estuary Conservation Program is a coalition of five governmental agencies and three non-governmental conservation organizations, whose goal is to secure estuary habitat through acquisition, creation of nature reserves, and stewardship of privately-owned land. By coordinating its members' efforts, focusing their energies and pooling financial and technical resources, the Program has acquired 1,515 hectares and initiated the conservation designation of 45,000 hectares of estuarine and adjacent intertidal habitat. Securing habitat and ensuring its biological integrity has been achieved through community-based approaches and innovative strategies which stand as models to others engaged in similar work.

Category: Individual

The Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award 1999 is being jointly given to two outstanding individuals, Mr Victor Pulido, Peru and Professor Vitaly G. Krivenko, Russian Federation.

Víctor Pulido, Peru

A leader of the wetland conservation movement in Peru for the past 20 years, Victor Pulido has worked indefatigably, first as a government official, then as a private citizen, to ensure the conservation and wise use of the wetlands of Peru. The Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award is being presented to Mr Pulido in recognition of a life of dedication to wetland conservation and wise use, against a background of lasting economic and social challenge.

Victor Pulido's technical work laid the basis for the designation of Ramsar sites in Peru. In his position as Director of Protected Areas in the 80's, he secured the protected status of many sites, including the Lagunas de Mejía Ramsar site, authored three books and over 60

publications on threatened species and wetlands, including a Newsletter, *El Volante Migratorio*.

In spite of the difficult economic and social circumstances, Victor Pulido funded the Wetland Programme of Peru, a model of cooperation between the public, the private, and the academic sectors. This program, which is also the National Ramsar Committee for Peru and which he has headed since 1992, has made significant achievements for wetland conservation in Peru, including the elaboration of a National Wetland Strategy. It is noteworthy to mention that the Program is also a model of participatory multi-disciplinary wetlands management.

Professor Vitaly G. Krivenko, Russian Federation

The Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award is being given in recognition of the lifetime achievements of Professor Vitaly Krivenko, who has worked tirelessly, against a background of scarce resources and other difficult circumstances, for wetland and waterbird conservation. A scientist of international stature, Professor Krivenko has carried out important scientific work on waterbirds and their migrations, leading notably to the designation of a number of nature conservation areas, among them 35 Ramsar sites in the Russian Federation. His scientific work on ecological succession has laid the basis for management of succession at wetland sites. Professor Krivenko has made a considerable contribution to the theory of a short-term and long-term dynamic of climatic and hydrological conditions on the mainland of the Northern Hemisphere, and has created the heliobiological conception of long-term changes in animal number and the theory of cyclical waterbird-areas' dynamics. All of these ideas have helped establish conservation strategies for wetlands in Russia and their biological diversity.

The Russian Federation has a surface area equivalent to 4.8 times that of Western and Central Europe, presenting an enormous challenge for national implementation of an environment convention such as the Ramsar Convention. Professor Krivenko has been instrumental in the designation of 35 Ramsar sites in 1994. His scientific work has formed the basis for nature protection legislation, resulting in these designations for the Ramsar List. Since then, he has been working towards the establishment of management frameworks for these sites and coordinating surveys, throughout the Russian Federation, to identify new sites in the near future.

Professor Krivenko is also a dedicated teacher and has created his own school. He has adopted a multidisciplinary approach to training, including hydrology, climatology, zoology, and conservation economics.

Category: Non-Governmental Organization

The Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award 1999 is being jointly given to two non-governmental organizations, the Society for the Protection of Prespa, Greece and Lake Naivasha Riparian Association, Kenya.

Society for the Protection of Prespa, Greece

The activities of the Society for the Protection of Prespa provide an outstanding example of pioneer approach to wetland management and of cooperation at the local, national and international scales for the sustainable management of a Ramsar site where the situation was previously serious enough for inclusion of the site in the Montreux Record of the Ramsar Convention. It should also be noted that the main long-term goal of the SPP is to re-establish harmony between Man and Nature in the area.

Prespa is situated in north-western Greece, at the border with Albania and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The area consists of two lakes, Mikri Prespa and Megali Prespa and of the surrounding forested mountain slopes. It is known because of its natural beauty, its great biodiversity and its populations of rare waterbirds. It is also remarkable for its cultural values (Byzantine monuments, and examples of traditional architecture and cultural peculiarities). The Ramsar site "Mikri Prespa" covers an area of approximately 5,000 hectares and was included on the List of wetlands of international importance in 1975. The whole area has been designated a National Park and a Site of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Founded in 1991, the Society for the Protection of Prespa (SPP) is a federation gathering seven Greek environmental organisations and three from elsewhere in Europe. Its mission is to conserve Prespa's natural environment and cultural heritage as well as to promote sustainable development. The SPP's activities are carried out under the responsibility of scientists living permanently in the area, and by local people who have been trained by the SPP.

Achievements of the SPP to date include:

- Conservation work, notably to rescue the breeding colony of Dalmatian pelicans and an action plan for an endemic fish species. These activities have been carried out in parallel with information campaigns and efforts to propose alternative economic activities to local communities affected by restrictions brought about by these conservation efforts.
- The SPP has successfully gained the participation and involvement of all sectors of the local community (1300 people dispersed in 12 settlements) in planning the future of Prespa. For instance, an integrated development proposal was put together in 1994 by the SPP and local communities and inhabitants. This proposal was accepted by the Government and is being implemented. SPP is providing advice and help to local communities to achieve sustainable management of the area's resource. For instance, technical assistance has been provided to farmers in order for them to gain organic certification of their products, as well as help given for the promotion of traditional products and crafts.
- Great emphasis is placed on public awareness and education. A first Information Centre for visitors, especially for schoolchildren, was established in 1992, and a second one was opened in 1995, dedicated to the fisheries and fish of Prespa. Environmental education and training programmes are being held and publications developed.
- Prespa is a transboundary wetland, and SPP has active contacts with Albania and The FYROM to promote integrated basin management.

Lake Naivasha Riparian Association, Kenya

Lake Naivasha Riparian Association (LNRA) is an example of pioneer work showing a local community taking the lead, initiating major steps and achieving results for the long term conservation and wise use of wetlands. It is an outstanding demonstration of how to implement two major objectives of the Ramsar Convention, namely conservation and wise use of wetlands for the well-being of local populations, on the basis of building consensus about major issues to be addressed and increasing commitment regarding the steps to be taken by various stakeholders.

Lake Naivasha is situated in the Rift Valley in Kenya, at an elevation of approximately 1,880 metres above sea level. The wetland system designated as a Ramsar site in 1995 has an area of 30,000 hectares and comprises a shallow freshwater lake and a deeper crater lake. The Lake is one of the few freshwater lakes in the country (and eastern Africa), and is therefore valuable to people as a source and store of water.

Formed as early as 1926, the Lake Naivasha Riparian Owners Association became the Lake Naivasha Riparian Association in recognition of the fact that landowners were not the only stakeholders. The Association draws its members from a variety of backgrounds, such as small individual plot owners, large horticultural farmers, dairy and ranching operations, hotel owners, pastoralists, fishermen, as well as Government bodies such as the Kenya Power Company, the Kenya Wildlife Service, Naivasha Municipal Council, the Ministry of Water Resources, the National Environmental Secretariat, the Fisheries Department, and the Ministry of Agriculture.

The main objective of the Association is to ensure sound environmental management of the lake's resources. It advocates good practice and establishes mechanisms to implement environmental policy, legislation and regulations with each individual member, group of members and the relevant government and NGO sectors.

Major achievements of the Association include:

- Designation of the Lake Naivasha Wetlands as a Ramsar site;
- Production of a management plan for the area (1996); the initial plan is focused on the Ramsar site, but there is a clear understanding that a catchment approach will be adopted during the implementation process;
- Creation of a Management Plan Implementation Committee, representative of the wider community including Government, to steer the implementation of the plan (1997);
- Development of Codes of Conduct for various groups of stakeholders (flower growers, tourism operators, beef and dairy producers, urban developers, geothermal power generation). These codes of conduct are annexes of the Management Plan and are aimed at ensuring that guidelines are developed and voluntarily adopted as a basis of good practice;
- Acting as a catalyst in processes such as the introduction of dripfeed irrigation, upgrading the Municipal Sewage treatment works, opposing the alienation of riparian land, etc;
- Beginning the long term monitoring process from which to revise and update the management plan.

LNRA fulfils all the criteria for recognition by the Ramsar Award. It is an inspiring example of community leadership, it demonstrates that conservation and wise use of wetlands can be achieved in Africa, and will lead to a better understanding of the objectives of the Convention and how they can be implemented.