

Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
4th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
Montreux, Switzerland
27 June – 4 July 1990

Recommendation 4.9.3: Azraq Oasis, Jordan

NOTING that Jordan has designated the Azraq wetland for the List of Wetlands of International Importance established under the Ramsar Convention;

RECOGNISING the importance of maintaining the ecological character of the wetland for the benefit of human society and as a strategically important area for migratory birds;

RECALLING that the Third Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties held at Regina, Canada in 1987 approved Recommendation 3.8, calling for a proper assessment of the environmental impact of water extraction from Azraq to supply water for the Jordanian capital and urging that there be established a long-term water resources plan guaranteeing the maintenance of the natural properties of the wetland;

FURTHER RECALLING that the Ramsar Monitoring Procedure was operated at Azraq in March 1990 and that the report made thirteen specific recommendations;

INFORMED by the Jordanian delegation to the present meeting that the ecological character of Azraq Oasis, and especially Azraq Wetland Reserve, is likely to undergo further negative change;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

URGES the Government of Jordan to implement, as a matter of urgency, the recommendations contained in the Monitoring Procedure report;

RECOMMENDS in particular that:

- (a) the total annual exploitation of Azraq's water should not exceed the "safe yield" of 20 million cubic metres identified by the Jordanian Government;
- (b) extraction from private wells be strictly controlled;
- (c) wells should be drilled in the B2/A7 aquifer for the purpose of providing a modest supplement to spring flow to the wetland, which has been diminished by over-exploitation of the separate basalt/B4 aquifer; and
- (d) steps should be taken to construct storage reservoirs to aid groundwater recharge; and

FURTHER RECOMMENDS that full environmental impact studies be undertaken prior to any implementation of points (c) and (d) above, and that the Jordanian authorities remain in close contact with the Convention Bureau with a view to seeking technical assistance funds.