

Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
5th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
Kushiro, Japan
9-16 June 1993

Recommendation 5.2: Guidelines for interpretation of Article 3 ('ecological character' and 'change in ecological character')

RECALLING that Contracting Parties to the Convention agree, under Article 3.1, 'to formulate and implement their planning so as to promote the conservation of the wetlands included in the List';

FURTHER RECALLING that each Contracting Party agrees, under Article 3.2, to 'arrange to be informed at the earliest possible opportunity if the ecological character of any wetland in its territory and included in the List has changed, is changing, or is likely to change as the result of technological developments, pollution, or other human interference';

RECALLING Recommendation 3.9, adopted by the Third Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties on 'Change in ecological character of Ramsar sites', which noted with regret that 'a number of listed sites have been severely damaged or are under imminent threat of degradation' and urged all Contracting Parties 'to take swift and effective action to prevent further degradation and to restore, as far as possible, the value of damaged sites';

FURTHER RECALLING Recommendation REC. C.4.8, adopted by the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, also entitled 'Change in ecological character of Ramsar sites', which, 'emphasizing the fundamental importance of maintaining ecological character of listed sites', once again requested 'Contracting Parties in whose territories are located sites which have incurred or are being threatened by change in ecological character, to take swift and effective action to prevent or remedy such changes';

RECORDING WITH APPRECIATION the frank statements made by Contracting Parties in their national reports, and in the Conference Plenary Sessions and Workshops, about the situation at Ramsar sites in their territories and the difficulties experienced in maintaining ecological character;

WELCOMING the contribution made by the Monitoring Procedure and Montreux Record in helping to maintain the ecological character of listed sites;

EMPHASIZING the value of further guidance in interpreting the complex Ramsar concepts of 'ecological character' and 'change in ecological character';

TAKING ACCOUNT of the discussions in Workshop A during the present meeting, and in particular of the presentation by IWRB, on these concepts;

EMPHASIZING ONCE AGAIN the fundamental importance of maintaining the ecological character of listed sites;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

EMPHASIZES the need for further studies of the concepts of “ecological character” and “change in ecological character” included in the Ramsar Convention; and

INSTRUCTS the Convention Bureau, with the support of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel and partner organizations, to report to the Sixth Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties on the results of such studies.