

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 1

To progress towards universal membership of the Convention.

- 1.1 Describe any actions your government has taken (such as hosting regional or subregional meetings/consultations, working cooperatively with neighbouring countries on transfrontier wetland sites) to encourage others to join the Convention.
No action taken at this time. The Bahamas participated in the Neo-Tropical Ramsar meeting in Costa Rica in June 1998. The Bahamas has no transfrontier wetland sites.

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 2

To achieve the wise use of wetlands by implementing and further developing the Ramsar Wise Use Guidelines.

- 2.1 Has a National Wetland Policy/Strategy/Action Plan been developed, or is one being developed or planned for the near future? No.
- a. What are/will be its main features? Not applicable.
- b. Was it, or is it, intended that the Policy/Strategy/Action Plan be adopted by the whole of Government, the Minister responsible for Ramsar matters or through some other process. Please describe. To be adopted by the whole of Government.
- c. How does it relate/will it relate to other national environmental/ conservation planning initiatives (e.g., National Environmental Action Plans, National Biodiversity Action Plans, National Conservation Strategies)?
It will be closely integrated with the National Biodiversity Action Plan, which is very close to completion.
- 2.2 If a policy is in place, how much progress has been made in its implementation, and what are the major difficulties being encountered in doing so?
No policy yet in place.
- 2.3 If a Policy/Strategy/Action Plan is in place, is the responsibility for implementing it with :
- a. a single Government Ministry,
b. a committee drawn from several Ministries, or
c. a cross-sectoral committee?
- Please provide details. See comment under 2.2.
- 2.4 For countries with Federal systems of Government, are there Wetland Policies/Strategies/Plans in place, being developed or planned for the provincial/state or regional levels of Government? Not applicable.

2.5 Has a review of legislation and practices which impact on wetlands been carried out, and if so, has this resulted in any changes which assist with implementation of the Ramsar Convention? Please describe these.

Forestry legislation is being reviewed and will impact wetlands as mangroves are treated as

forests for the purposes of the legislation. The Conservation and Protection of the Physical

Landscape of The Bahamas Act of 1997, administers and regulates excavation and mining of coastal areas.

2.6 Describe the efforts made in your country to have wetlands considered in integrated land/water and coastal zone planning and management processes at the following levels:

a. national None

b. provincial None

c. local None. Local Government was introduced in 1996.

2.7 Have there been any publications produced, or practices documented, which could assist other countries to promote and improve the application of the Ramsar Wise Use of Wetlands Guidelines? No

2.8 Noting COP6 Recommendation 6.14 relating to toxic chemicals and pollution, please advise of the actions taken since then “to remedy and to prevent pollution impacts affecting Ramsar sites and other wetlands” (Operative paragraph 9).

Pesticide legislation has been drafted and this would reduce risks of pesticides impacting on

wetlands and their fauna. Park management at the Inagua National Park monitors and regulates

pesticide application for insect control.

2.9 Describe what steps have been taken to incorporate wetland economic valuation techniques into natural resource planning and assessment actions. None.

2.9 Is Environmental Impact Assessment for actions potentially impacting on wetlands required under legislation in your country?

No. There is a policy requiring EIAs for all development projects, but it is not yet legislated.

2.11 Is wetland restoration and rehabilitation considered a priority in your country? No.

If Yes, describe the actions that have been taken to identify wetlands in need of these actions and to mobilise resources for restoration or rehabilitation.

Nevertheless, preliminary studies have been carried out on the island of Andros and two restorations are planned for the near future in conjunction with an International NGO. A major wetland in New Providence (the Adelaide Wetland) was restored a few years ago. This was spearheaded by the Bahamas National Trust.

2.12 Describe what actions have been taken to “encourage active and informed participation of local communities, including indigenous people, and in particular women, in

the conservation and wise use of wetlands.” (refer to Actions 2.7.1-4 in the Strategic Plan).
None.

2.13 Describe what actions have been taken to “encourage involvement of the private sector in the conservation and wise use of wetlands” (refer to Actions 2.8.1-4 in the Strategic Plan). Has this included a review of fiscal measures (taxation arrangements, etc.) to identify and remove disincentives and introduce incentives for wetlands conservation and wise use?
None.

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 3
To raise awareness of wetland values and functions throughout the world and at all levels

3.1 Is there a government-run national programme for Education and Public Awareness in your country which focuses on, or includes, wetlands? No. If yes, what are the priority actions under this programme and who are the target groups? (Refer also to question 9.4 and to 3.2 below).

3.2 Describe the steps taken to have wetlands issues and Ramsar’s Wise Use principles included as part of the curricula of educational institutions. Has this been at all levels of education (primary, secondary, tertiary and adult)? Please give details.

There is an environmental component in the curricula at the primary and secondary levels which addresses all major ecosystems in The Bahamas.

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 4
To reinforce the capacity of institutions in each Contracting Party to achieve conservation and wise use of wetlands.

4.1 Describe the mechanisms in place, or being introduced, to increase cooperation between the various institutions responsible for actions which can have an impact on the conservation and wise use of wetlands. If one of the mechanisms is a National Ramsar/Wetlands Committee, please describe its composition, functions and *modus operandi*.

None, but the BEST Commission is charged with coordination of the various institutions and with facilitating cooperation between these institutions.

4.2 Of the following, indicate which have been undertaken:

a. a review to identify the training needs of institutions and individuals concerned with the conservation and wise use of wetlands No.

b. a review to identify training opportunities for these people both within your country and in other countries. No.

c. the development of training modules or a training programme specifically for wetland managers. No.

- d. people from your country have gained wetland-related training either within or outside the country. No?

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 5

To ensure the conservation of all sites included in the List of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar List).

5.1 Of the Ramsar sites in your country, how many have formal management plans:

- a. being prepared?
- b. fully prepared?
- c. being implemented?

None, but the one Ramsar site in The Bahamas is a National Park.

Please indicate in the attached table of Ramsar sites which sites these are and what category they fall into.

5.2 Of the management plans referred to above, which ones have included a monitoring scheme or programme to allow changes in ecological character to be detected? Please indicate this in the attached table of Ramsar sites also. Not applicable.

5.3 Has there been a change in the ecological character (either positive or negative) at any of your Ramsar sites or is this likely to occur in the near future?

No. The Ramsar site is a protected area in which no development is allowed.

5.4 In the case of Montreux Record Ramsar sites where the Management Guidance Procedure has been applied, what is the status of the implementation of the MGP report recommendations? What is the expected time-frame for removing the site from the Montreux Record?

Not applicable.

5.5 For those countries referred to in COP6 Recommendations 6.17.1-4, "Ramsar sites in the Territories of Specific Contracting Parties", please provide advice on the actions that have been taken in response to the issues raised at that time.

Not applicable.

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 6

To designate for the Ramsar List those wetlands which meet the Convention's criteria, especially wetland types still under-represented in the List and transfrontier wetlands.

6.1 Has a national inventory of wetlands been prepared for your country?

Yes. It was completed in 1982.

Where a national inventory exists please provide details of when it was finalised, where it is kept and what information it contains.

Derek A. Scott and Montserrat Carbonell. (Compilers). 1986. Directory of Neotropical Wetlands. IUCN and IWRB.

Young, R.N., Buckley, D.K., Cant, R., Jefferiss, A., Little, B.G. and Stark, J. 1976.
Land Resources of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas. (Several Volumes of Reports and Maps).
Land Resources Division, Ministry of Overseas Development, Surbiton, Surrey, England.

6.2 Does there exist a list or directory of “important” wetlands for your country or region?
No.

6.3 If it is known, please provide an estimate of the area of wetlands in your country at present and any information on rates of loss or conversion to other activities.

If this information is available, please indicate what definition of “wetland” was used.

6.4 Have any actions been taken in response to the COP6 Resolutions and Recommendations that Contracting Parties should give priority to listing Wetlands of International Importance which:

- a. meet the criteria for fish habitat (Resolution VI.2),
- b. meet the 1% criterion for waterbird populations using data provided by the International Waterfowl Census (Resolution VI.4),
- c. are subterranean karst or cave wetland systems (Resolution VI.5),
- d. are peatland ecosystems (Recommendation 6.1)
- e. are coral reefs and associated systems (Recommendation 6.7)
- f. are under-represented wetland types (which apart from d. and e. above include mangroves and sea grass beds) (Strategic Plan Action 6.2.3)

Yes. A Lands Conservation Committee has been established by a Cabinet Conclusion to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries to identify and recommend an conservation sites in The Bahamas, including wetlands.

6.5 If your government indicated at COP6 that it would be proceeding to list further specific sites, please advise of the status of this action.
No.

6.6 Please advise which of the sites included in the Ramsar List from your country are transfrontier wetlands (Refer also to 7.1).
None.

6.7 Describe any plans, or actions being taken for further transfrontier sites to be listed (Refer also to 7.1).
None.

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 7

To mobilise international cooperation and financial assistance for wetland conservation and wise use in collaboration with other conventions and agencies, both governmental and non-governmental.

7.1 Briefly describe any bilateral or multilateral activities that have been taken, are under way, or are planned for the management of transfrontier wetlands or their watersheds/catchments (Refer also to 6.6 and 6.7).

None.

7.2 Do you have Ramsar sites that are “twinned” with others, either nationally or internationally? No.

7.3 Where your country is also a signatory of any of the following Conventions, describe what mechanism(s) exist to assist regular dialogue and cooperative actions between the personnel responsible for their implementation and the Ramsar Administrative Authority:

- a. Convention on Biological Diversity
- b. Framework Convention on Climate Change
- c. Convention to Combat Desertification
- d. Convention on Migratory Species
- e. World Heritage Convention

The BEST Commission is the focal point for all the above Conventions.

7.4 Is your country cooperating as part of any bilateral or multilateral activities directed at the conservation of migratory wetland species?

Yes. Partners in Flight (North Carolina State Museum of Natural Science) and the Department of Agriculture, the College of The Bahamas, and the Bahamas National Trust.

7.5 Are there multilateral and/or bilateral donors supporting projects which contribute to implementation of the Ramsar Convention in your country?

No.

7.5 Does your government make an annual budgetary allocation to support the conservation and wise use of wetlands within your country?

No.

If yes, is this a specific allocation to a wetlands programme or as part of a larger environment or natural resource management budget?

7.6 If your country has a development assistance programme, does it include funds earmarked for wetland conservation and wise use in other countries?

No.

7.7 Is there a formal process in place for consultation between the Ramsar Administrative Authority and the development assistance programme in your country, where one exists?

No

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 8

To provide the Convention with the required institutional mechanisms and resources.

8.1 Has your government made voluntary financial contributions, other than the invoiced contributions or to the Small Grants Fund, to further the work of the Convention globally?

No.

8.2 If your country is in arrears with the payment of its annual contributions to the Ramsar Convention, please indicate the reasons for this situation and the prospects for paying these arrears in the near future.

The Bahamas is in credit.

Optional section - Participation of non-government organizations in the implementation of the Convention

These are **optional** questions relating to cooperation with and involvement of non-government organizations in the implementation of the Convention.

At COP6 some 42 NGOs made the “Brisbane NGO pledge of support for the Ramsar Convention”. The Standing Committee agreed that for COP7 there should be an effort made to gauge the level and type of cooperation which is occurring between government Administrative Authorities and the national and international NGOs with an interest in wetlands issues.

In this **optional** section of the National Report, you are asked to describe the nature of the cooperation and relationship with any other international, regional, national and provincial NGOs operating within your country.

9.1 Approximately how many NGOs have wetlands as part of their regular “business” in your country? One.

Please break this down between international, regional and national/provincial organizations.

The Bahamas National Trust (BNT) is a quasi-non-governmental organization. BNT is mandated to manage all national parks in The Bahamas: there are currently twelve of them. The BNT receives a small subvention from government, but the bulk of its funds comes from subscriptions, bequests and income from trust funds.

9.2 Is there a regular forum or mechanism through which these NGOs express their views on wetland conservation and Ramsar implementation:

a. to each other? No.

b. to the government? Yes.

The Executive Director of the National Trust and the staff of the Trust regularly cooperate with the BEST Commission and with other government agencies on environmental matters.

9.3 Does your government include one or more NGO representatives on its official delegation to Ramsar COPs?

No.

9.4 Do any of the NGOs run programmes aimed at Education and Public Awareness about wetlands in your country?

Yes. The Bahamas National Trust runs such courses. The Trust is also spearheading a West Indian Whistling Duck Conservation and Monitoring Project.

9.5 Where they exist, do Ramsar site management advisory committees include NGO representatives? Yes.

The Bahamas National Trust is responsible for the management of the present Ramsar site.

9.6 Describe the themes of the Convention (refer to General Objectives 1-8 of the Strategic Plan) where you perceive the national/provincial NGOs to be most active. Theme 4.

Final comments:

10.1 General comments on implementation of the Ramsar Strategic Plan.
See 10.3.

10.2 Observations concerning the functioning of, relations with, and services provided by:
 a. The Ramsar Standing Committee
 b. The Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel
 c. The Ramsar Bureau
 d. The Ramsar NGO partners
 See 10.3.

10.3 Any other general observations and/or recommendations for the future.
 The Bahamas, as a relatively recent signatory to the Ramsar Convention, has not yet begun to explore the technical assistance services that the Convention, either through the internet or by visits, has to offer. In addition, The Bahamas needs to update its information on wetlands with a view to identifying additional Ramsar site.

Bahamas

Name of site	date	area	map	RIS	MR	M
Inagua National Park	07/02/97	32,600	4	4		

Legend:	
date	Date of designation as a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance
area	Surface area of the site in hectares
maps	Maps were provided for the site
RIS	Ramsar Information Sheet has been provided for the site
MR	Montreux Record site
MGP	Management Guidance Procedure has been undertaken for the site
MR off	Site has been removed from the Montreux Record
Mgt Plan	Management Plan is in preparation (P), completed (C), or being implemented (I)
Mgt + mon.	Management Plan includes monitoring