

**Implementation of the Ramsar Convention in general,  
and of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 1997-2002 in particular,  
during the period since the National Report prepared in 1995  
for Ramsar COP6 and 30 June 1998**

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**Contracting Party: Denmark and Greenland**

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**I DENMARK:**

## **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.

*None*

## **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? If so:

- a. What are/will be its main features?

*In Denmark the national policy on wetlands has moved from the implementation of a - in principle - total protection scheme for all wetlands other than lakes (> 0.25 ha) and for all lakes (> 0.01 ha) according to the Nature Protection Act adopted in 1992 into a very active phase of restoration and rehabilitation of former wetlands.*

*In 1995 it was as part of the Danish national strategy for the conservation of biodiversity according to the Convention on Biodiversity stated that the area of lakes, marshes, bogs and water-courses during the next 30 years should be increased with 30,000 ha. and in addition 8,000 ha of former salt-marshes should be restored during the same period.*

*Subsequently these targets have been confirmed and to a certain extent increased: In February 1998 a broad political decision was taken by the Parliament to restore - in the period 1998-2003 - 16,000 ha of former wetlands according to the so-called "Action Plan for the Aquatic Environment II" with the specific aim to reduce the emissions of nutrients (Nitrate) to the aquatic environment, e.g. the extensive shallow brackish and marine waters. Further details about this plan is given in sect 2.2. Besides, incentives and considerably efforts have been and are continuously made to reduce eutrophication of the remaining wetland as well as marine wetlands according to the first "Action Plan for the Aquatic Environment" (adopted by Parliament in 1987).*

*Eventually a long term wetland restoration strategy was launched in May 1998 by the National Forest and Nature Agency according to which the long-term aim for the next two decades is to restore 3,000 ha of former wetlands per year, i.e. 60,000 ha corresponding to 2 % of the present farmland areas. These areas shall be restored as lakes, bogs, meadows, marshes and swamp forests etc.*

- 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?

*The revised Action Plan for the Aquatic Environment is adopted by the Parliament in February 1998 (see section 2.2).*

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)?

*In Denmark the national wetland policy is covered by an integrated and a comprehensive set of nature protection and environmental laws and strategies which also complies with Article 6 of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Article 6 states that countries shall prepare national strategies for protecting, and for the sustainable exploitation of biodiversity.*

*The strategy is also mentioned in "Agenda 21", the global action plan that was adopted at the U.N. conference in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. As far as the EU countries are concerned recognition of these obligations was confirmed by the European Council in 1992. Agenda 21 requests that countries conduct national country-wide studies of biodiversity. It has not been the opinion of the Ministry of the Environment and Energy that such a country study is a requisite for a Danish biodiversity strategy. The Danish flora and fauna, and the conditions that affect them, have been studied relatively thoroughly and reports on these topics are published regularly.*

*Denmark has prepared a National Biodiversity Strategy Report after a consultation procedure which involved central and regional authorities and NGO's.*

*The report covers biodiversity in Denmark in general, and it describes the status of biological diversity, reveals problems and indicates forthcoming target areas. These target areas will be manifested in more tangible measures and in any action plans for the areas covered by the report, for instance, for the sectors that utilise and affect biodiversity. Concerning wetlands the strategy suggests to increase the restoration and rehabilitation efforts, cf. 2.1.a.*

*The most relevant legal instruments regarding conservation and wise use of wetlands are the following:*

1. *The Nature Protection Act (1997, revised 1998);*
2. *The Act on the Structure of Agriculture;*
3. *The Raw Materials Act (1997);*
4. *The Act relating to Protection of the Tønder Marsh (1994);*
5. *The Hunting and Wildlife Management Act (1997);*
6. *The Marine Environment Act (1993 revised 1997).*

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?

*Restoration of nature (wetlands) is a main target of the Danish Nature Protection Act, cf. the objective clause of the act.*

*Since 1995, the National Forest and Nature Agency and the regional county councils have in cooperation with other authorities and stakeholders initiated about 25 wetland restoration projects. The average size of the areas is about 200 ha. A new major restoration project concerns 800 ha of Veststadil Fjord (part of Ramsar Site No.153). Besides, the biggest restoration project comprising the restoration of 2,200 ha of the River Skjern Delta (part of and adjacent to Ramsar Site No. 152) has proceeded and is now (1997/1998) coming into the phase of realisation. The construction works to reestablish the former meadows, reed-swamps, shallow lakes and meandering river is foreseen to be concluded in 2001.*

*By June 1998, altogether 7,000 ha have been rehabilitated as wetlands (34 sites > 10 ha), and projects comprising further 5,800 ha (13 sites) are expected to be completed during the next*

few years. The average costs of the restoration projects are currently about DKK 60,000 (USD 10,000) per ha including expenses for land purchase and land consolidation schemes.

It is expected that during the coming years Denmark will continue to restore and rehabilitate former degraded wetlands. The Ministry of Environment and Energy has most recently in 1995 launched a National Policy Plan which includes a target of restoring some 60,000 ha of former wetlands during the next 20 years.

The Action Plan for the improvement of the aquatic environment was adopted by the Danish Parliament, cf. sect. 2.1.a. and a revised plan was adopted in 1998. Until now the full ecological results of these investments have not totally attained. The objective was to reduce the total amount of nitrogen and phosphorus discharge into the environment by 50 per cent and 80 per cent respectively by 1993. By the end of 1993 a significant reduction of the discharge of phosphorus from urban and industrial areas had been achieved, thus the objective to reduce the emission of phosphorous by 80 % was reached for most point-sources, but there is still a considerable diffuse emission from agricultural areas and only a limited reduction in the emission of nitrogen was found.

The revised plan ("The Action Plan for the Aquatic Environment II") has the main objective to reduce the emissions of nitrogen from the farmland to the aquatic environment with further 37,000 tonnes N/year.

The plan describes several ways to cut down the eutrophication load. A most cost-effective way to reduce the emission of nitrogen is by re-establishing former wetlands and according to the plan further 16,000 ha of wetlands shall be restored in the next years (1998-2003). The subsequent expected reduction is estimated to 5,600 tonnes N/year. In order to implement this restoration programme and to reach the goal of app. 3,000 ha/year further 13,3 mio. ECU/year is expected to be available on the Budget.

Besides, the Minister of Environment and Energy shall issue a nation-wide directive designating all low-lying areas (former wetlands), which potentially may become wetlands again. The directive shall safeguard that these areas not becomes subjects to any land-use, which may hinder or impede restoration of wetlands. The directive is expected to be issued late 1998.

Finally, the Water Course Act will be changed and it will be prohibited to lower the ground water table further in areas, which already are artificially drained by pumping off the water. This may in a longer perspective also be an important contribution to the rehabilitation of some former wetlands, especially such which today are farmlands on organic soils.

In order to monitor the current physical and biological parameters and the effect of the Action Plan on the Aquatic Environment, a number of fixed monitoring stations are placed on strategic spots at several Ramsar Sites.

In 1992 Danish environmental NGO's (the Danish Hunters Society, the Danish Ornithological Society and the Danish Nature Conservation Society) proposed an extension of the network of sanctuaries for waterbirds in Denmark by the establishment of more than 50 new wildlife and nature reserves in Ramsar Sites and coastal EU Bird Protection Areas in addition to the existing reserves. In each area at least one extensive hunting free core-zone is defined.

The plan encompasses creation of hunting and disturbance free core-zones surrounded by buffer-zones or management areas. The core-zones should, where ecologically appropriate and possible, include water areas and adjacent transition zones of bird habitats (saltmarshes, meadows, reedbeds, etc.). By June 1998 about 70% of the the extended reserve network has been established, and the plan is anticipated to be accomplished by 2000 as planned.

*Since 1997 exploration and extraction of raw materials in Ramsar Sites may only take place in very exceptional cases in areas which have been subject to environmental assessment and by permission from the Ministry of the Environment and Energy.*

*Since 1997 operations with High Speed Ferries on a regular basis are not allowed in Ramsar Sites without permission from the Ministry of the Environment and Energy based on an assessment of the impacts on species and habitats for which the areas have been designated, to ancient monuments on the seabed and to recreational activities.*

*In 1998 Denmark has implemented the EU Habitat Directive and designated over 1 Mill. ha as Natura 2000 sites including wetlands. All Danish Ramsar Sites are selected as Nature 2000 Sites.*

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.

*The implementation of a comprehensive wetland conservation and management policy is a shared responsibility between relevant Government Agencies and County Councils.*

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?  
Yes/No

If yes, please give details.

*Not relevant for Denmark*

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.

*Following the last major revision of the Danish Nature Conservation legislation in 1992 the regional authorities have subsequently mapped and registered all wetlands covered by the general protection scheme (e.g. all wetlands defined as bogs, marshes, moors and the like, salt marshes, swamps and coastal meadows; and humid permanent grasslands and uncultivated, dry meadows, when such habitat types total more than 2,500 sq.m and all lakes of more than 100 sq.m and water-courses). According to this scheme, cf. § 3 of the Nature Protection Act (1992), altogether about 120,000 specific wetland sites have been identified totalling about 290,000 ha or 6,8 % of the Danish land territory. According to the act it is prohibited to alter the state of such habitats. This prohibition does not apply, however, to any normal maintenance activity in watercourses. In comparison to this general protection, about 140,000 ha (19 % of the Danish Ramsar Sites) are under specific legal protection.*

*In 1996 The Danish Ministry of Environment and Energy has accomplished a registration on the landareas protected pursuant to the Nature Protection Act. A total of 43,600 ha (1 % of the total Danish landareal) of salt marshes, swamps and coastal meadows, 90,000 ha (2.1% of the total Danish landareal) of bogs and moors, 103,700 ha of meadows (2.4 % of the total Danish*

landarea) and 56,700 ha of natural lakes (1.3 % of the total Danish landarea) are generally protected.

*The Danish environmental legislation is currently revised. The revised Action Plan for the Aquatic Environment (1997) may enhance the implementation of the Ramsar Convention.*

- 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
  - b. provincial
  - c. local

*The division in the three levels is not relevant for Denmark.*

- 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? Yes/No

*No publications which strictly refers to the application of the Ramsar Wise Use of Wetlands Guidelines. Several reports, books, booklets and videofilms on conservation, management, restoration and rehabilitation of wetlands and water-courses either generally or site-specific has been published, e.g. by the Ministry of Environment and Energy and various county councils. Most new publications and video-films are in Danish, but some has also been issued in English. More details can be obtained from the National Forest and Nature Agency.*

If Yes, please provide details and copies.

- 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).

*Initiatives to reduce pollution has been intensified, cf. the revised Action Plan for the Aquatic Environment. There is a total ban against use of toxic chemicals in wetlands.*

*Dumping of dredged material is prohibited in Ramsar Sites without permission from the Ministry of the Environment and Energy. Dredging will only be permitted if the dredged material is totally uncontaminated, if it is similar to seabed sediments at the dumping site, and if investigations have proved that the dumping will not harm species and habitats for which the areas have been designated or if other means of disposal have proved to be economically and practically impossible.*

*A further reduction of Nitrogen discharge to watercourses and other wetlands (see paragraph 2.1) may prevent or mitigate the pollution of wetlands including Ramsar Sites.*

- 2.9 Describe what steps have been taken to incorporate wetland economic valuation techniques into natural resource planning and assessment actions.

*No steps have been taken by June 1998.*

- 2.10 Is Environmental Impact Assessment for actions potentially impacting on wetlands required under legislation in your country? Yes/No

*For all wetlands (and other uncultivated/semi-natural areas) bigger than 300 ha. This includes also wetland restoration projects, where the reestablished water-surface is bigger than 300 ha or where more than 75 landowners are affected, cf. statutory orders September 1994.*

- 2.11 Is wetland restoration and rehabilitation considered a priority in your country? Yes/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.

*Today wetland restoration and rehabilitation is a top priority in Danish nature management. See section 2.1 - 2.2 for details.*

- 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).

*The implementation of the adopted strategy for the extended network of nature and wildlife reserves includes cooperation with local communities. The action plan has formulated specific roles for participation of local stakeholders in the planning process, and the National Forest and Nature Agency has encouraged concerned NGO's and landowners to form community based user-groups to ensure that local opinions on the issues raised can be integrated in the conservation and management scheme for each site.*

*Besides, designation of sites to be encompassed by the NATURA 2000-network of sites protected by the EU Directive on Protection of Habitats (which includes many important Danish wetlands and habitats for endangered/vulnerable fish species, the Otter (*Lutra lutra*) etc. has also been discussed intensively following public advertising of the proposals for designating areas (>100 sites). Several thousand reactions and contributions were submitted from individuals, private landowners, local and regional communities, NGO's, the scientific communities etc. and the proposals for each individual sites were subsequently in most cases modified according to the received information and arguments.*

- 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).

*No specific actions have been taken, but one private foundation (Aage V.Jensens Foundation) has in recent years made major contributions to wetland conservation especially in Denmark but also contributions in certain other countries. The Foundation has e.g. purchased a most important Danish wetland “Vejlerne” (5,500 ha) situated as the core area of the Ramsar site No 156, and the foundation has during 1996-98 implemented important restoration projects and improved public access and nature interpretation facilities to the area. Besides, the Aage V.Jensen Foundation has also purchased other important wetlands areas and improved their conservation values, e.g. the island Æbelø and islets, which is a core area within the Ramsar site No. 166.*

*Apart from this no specific fiscal measures has been introduced as incentives for wetlands conservation.*

*Decisions made pursuant to relevant acts or by administrative authorities may be appealed to the Nature Protection Board for consideration. As a rule a public authority, a person who has a substantial or individual interest in the decision, and Danish environmental NGO's ( the Danish Nature Conservation Society, the Danisk Fisheries Association, the Danish Ornithological Society, Greenpeace Denmark etc.) have the right to appeal.*

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? Yes/No

If yes, please provide details.

### **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? Yes/No? If yes, what are the priority actions under this programme and who are the target groups? (Refer also to question 9.4)

*The National Forest and Nature Agency is in close cooperation with county councils running a nature oriented awareness programme which includes a ranger system. The counties and State Forest Districts as well as private NGO's and Foundations are organising workshops, guided nature-tours and issuing brochures, booklets and pocket guides. The Danish Nature Conservation Society and the Danish Ornithological Society are issuing newsletters and journals to the members where wetlands related issues including management problems are debated. The publications are expressing the views of the societies, and the issues raised may enhance awareness not only within the members network, but also in wider circles.*

*The arrangements are not especially focusing on Ramsar matters, but give the public a general information on wetland issues.*

- 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.

*No actions have been taken.*

### **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*.

*The Wildlife Management Council represents various NGO's including ornithology, nature conservation, hunting, forestry, agriculture and animal welfare. The Board is debating wildlife and hunting issues, and are formulating recommendations to the Minister of Environment and Energy.*



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 Yes/No? If yes, please indicate the major findings of the review.

*No comprehensive review has been undertaken.*

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

*No review, but a number of people dealing with wetland management in various countries have visited Denmark on short-term study tours etc.*

c. the development of training modules or a training programme specifically for wetland managers. If yes, please give details. Yes/No?

*Some training is taking place as part of curricula at the universities and some technical schools.*

d. people from your country have gained wetland-related training either within or outside the country. Yes/No? If yes, please give details.

*Not relevant for Denmark where nature related issues are considered as a comprehensive element in the overall nature conservation policy.*

## **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? 1
- b. fully prepared? 5
- c. being implemented? 4

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

*Management plans are prepared and partly implemented for:*

- 1. Fiil-Sø No. 151 (plan prepared and under implementation for the remaining lake and the riparian zone);*
- 2. Ringkøbing Fjord No. 152 (a plan for the peninsula Tipperne is fully prepared, and a plan for the River Skjern restoration scheme is under preparation);*
- 3. Stavns Fjord No. 164 (a plan for grass-land management on the islands is prepared and under implementation);*
- 4. The Wadden Sea No. 177 (a trilateral management plan is prepared and will as far as possible be implemented over the next four years; in Denmark the plan has initiated a review and revision of the nature and wildlife conservation order; site management plans for the island of Langli and the peninsula Skallingen are prepared and currently implemented).*

*The above mentioned management plans are prepared and implemented by the National Forest and Nature Agency or by County Councils in cooperation with NFNA. A management plan for Vejlerne No. 156 is prepared by the Aage V. Jensens Foundation ( private).*

- 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.

*All the plans mentioned are subject to regularly monitoring. The monitoring programmes will give exact information or indications on ecological changes (positive or negative).*

- 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? Yes/No. If Yes, please give details.

*It is difficult to give details for all Danish Ramsar Sites. In general the water quality in fjords, rivers and other water-courses is improving due to the implementation of the Action Plan for the Aquatic Environment which may have a positive impact on Ramsar Sites in fjords and coastal waters.*

*Concerning the Limfjord (including three Ramsar Sites) the County Councils in cooperation with the Danish Fisheries Research Institute are preparing a management plan for fisheries in which special conservation measures are considered in order to improve conditions for aquatic vegetation such as Zostera and the abundance and distribution of blue mussel.*

*The restoration of Fiil-Sø has significantly improved the ecological character of the lake. The abundance and distribution of submerged vegetation has increased, some waterbird species (waders and raptors) have returned as breeders, and the lake is now one of the most important roosts for migratory waterbirds in this part of West Jutland.*

*Special attention must be paid to Ringkøbing Fjord as the site is on the Montreux Record (see section 5.4 for details).*

- 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?

*By Notification 1994/7 the Ramsar Convention directed the attention to Ringkøbing Fjord (int. no. 152), and the Bureau invited Denmark to submit information on the ecological situation of the fjord to the Standing Committee of the Ramsar Convention. In 1994 the Danish Ministry of the Environment informed the Standing Committee about the current situation and ecological conditions of the Fjord.*

*Changes in the operation of the North Sea sluices and the restoration project for the River Skjern Delta and catchment are anticipating to enhance the ecological character of the Fjord including important breeding and staging sites for waterbirds on islands and adjacent marshlands.*

*In September 1996 the Ramsar Bureau on invitation of the National Forest and Nature Agency visited Ringkøbing Fjord in order to assist in a procedure, with the view to eventual removal of the Fjord from the Montreux Record.*

*The Management Guidance Procedure made the following recommendations in order to have the site removed from the Montreux record:*

- 1. a revised Information Sheet for the site should be submitted to the Ramsar Bureau;*
- 2. an eventual extension of the Ramsar Site should be considered to include the River Skjern restoration project area, e.g. after a successful implementation of the project;*
- 3. efforts should be made to strengthen exchange of information between different actors;*

4. *an integrated monitoring project should be incorporated into a management plan for the river;*
5. *monitoring of the site should, if possible, include resumption of regular aerial waterbird surveys;*
6. *experiences gained from Ringkøbing Fjord should be used as a case study for use at other sites; and*
7. *the STRP should be invited to review the report at a coming meeting in order to provide further guidance to the Danish authorities and the Ramsar Bureau on the removal of the site from the Montreux Record.*

*So far, the recommendations under 3, 4, 5, and 6 are considered and implemented.*

*Concerning recommendations under 1, 2 and 7, a revised Information Sheet will be prepared as soon as possible. An extension of the site has not yet been discussed, and at the present time it could be a difficult procedure. It would be helpful to have guidance from STRP on the removal of Ringkøbing Fjord from the MR.*

*However, it is the view of the National Forest and Nature Agency that sufficient information on the enhancement of the ecological character is available in order to have the site removed from the Montreux Record by the time for COP7.*

- 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 relevant for Denmark.*

## **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/No.

If no, are there plans for this to be done? Yes/No.

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

*The Ministry of Environment and Energy (the National Forest and Nature Agency, the National Environmental Agency, and the National Environmental Research Institute) and the County Councils are currently collecting information on wetlands including, e.g. water quality, mapping of vegetation in coastal waters, mid-winter aerial surveys of waterbirds, mapping of topographical features (saltmarshes, meadows, bogs, reed-beds, etc.).*

*The first countrywide aerial survey of waterbirds was completed and published in 1973 by the Game Biology Research Institute (now the National Environmental Research Institute - NERI), and this research was, together with a review of important bird sites in the counties compiled by the Danish Ornithological Society, the main sources of information for the designation and delimitation of Ramsar Sites and SPA’s. In 1997 updated information on the numbers and distribution of waterbirds in Denmark 1987-1989 was published by NERI.*

*The information is kept as publications and more recent material is stored in different databases.*

*The county councils have in 1996-97 finalised regional inventories of all wetlands in each county bigger than 0.01 ha (lakes and ponds), viz. bigger than 0.25 ha (or types of terrestrial wetlands).*

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

If yes, please provide details of when it was finalised, where it is kept, what criteria for “important” were used, and the types of information it contains.

*A publication from 1996: EF-fuglebeskyttelsesområder og Ramsarområder (SPA’s and Ramsar Sites), includes revised maps of the internationally important sites, a brief description of each site and its birdlife, conservation measures taken and nature management activities. The criteria for considering a site internationally important are those developed by the Ramsar Convention, e.g. the 1% criterion.*

*The publication is issued and sold by the National Forest and Nature Agency.*

- 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.

*The total area of inland wetlands is at present about 300,000 ha.*

*It is estimated that more than 60 % of the shallow wetlands (lakes, marshes, reed-swamps, fresh meadows, shallow coastal lagoons) in Denmark has disappeared since 1870 mostly due to drainage and land-reclamation. This includes more than 260 lakes and inlets with water surface > 10 ha (in total 55,000 ha) and of coastal shallow waters 33,000 has been embanked. At the same time the coastline of the country has been shortened by 14 % (1,168 km).*

*However, due to changes in legislation and the abolishing of former public schemes subsidising drainage there have been no significant losses of wetlands in Denmark during the last 10-15 years*

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:
- meet the criteria for fish habitat (Resolution VI.2),
  - meet the 1% criterion for waterbird populations using data provided by the International Waterfowl Census (Resolution VI.4),
  - are subterranean karst or cave wetland systems (Resolution VI.5),
  - are peatland ecosystems (Recommendation 6.1)
  - are coral reefs and associated systems (Recommendation 6.7)
  - 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/No? If yes, please describe these actions.

*Ref. a. no*

*Ref. b. criterion for designation of Danish Ramsar Sites in 1977 and SPA’s in 1979.*

*Ref. c. not relevant for Denmark.*

*Ref. d. considered in relation to designation of SPA's and SAC's.*

*Ref. e. considered in relation to designation of SAC's.*

*Ref. f. not relevant for Denmark.*

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.

6.6 Please advise which of the sites included in the Ramsar List from your country are transfrontier wetlands (Refer also to 7.1).

*The Wadden Sea No. 177.*

6.7 Describe any plans, or actions being taken for further transfrontier sites to be listed (Refer also to 7.1).

*The Wadden Sea is the only coastal wetland in Denmark which is shared with another country.*

## **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).

*At the 8th Trilateral Governmental Wadden Sea Conference in 1997, the ministers from Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands approved a trilateral management plan for the Wadden Sea. The plan comprises policies, activities and projects agreed by the three countries. The plan is a framework for a comprehensive and common management of the Wadden Sea area. The plan will be implemented by relevant national agencies and county councils.*

*The plan will be subject to regular review.*

7.2 Do you have Ramsar sites that are "twinned" with others, either nationally or internationally? Yes/No.

If yes, please give details.

*The Wadden Sea is considered as "twinned" with The Wash in UK, West African wintering sites for migratory waterbirds, and Arctic and Subarctic breeding sites. In order to improve management and conservation of such important twinning sites, the Trilateral Cooperation on the Wadden Sea has initiated cooperation with the governments of Russia and Guinea-Bissau and with English Nature. The cooperation has resulted in a programme for water bird surveys in Guinea-Bissau and support to the establishment of reserves in the Russian Arctic.*

- 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:
- Convention on Biological Diversity
  - Framework Convention on Climate Change
  - Convention to Combat Desertification
  - Convention on Migratory Species
  - World Heritage Convention

*The Danish administration of the Ramsar and Biodiversity conventions is based in the same division at the National Forest and Nature Agency, which also has the general responsibility for the coordination of international issues in cooperation with two other divisions concerning the Convention on Migratory Species and the World Heritage Convention. The conventions mentioned under b. and c. are under the general ministerial coordination.*

- 7.4 Is your country cooperating as part of any bilateral or multilateral activities directed at the conservation of migratory wetland species? Yes/No.

If yes, please provide details.

*Although this mainly takes part as integrated activities or are effects of the activities resulting from the co-operation on wetland issues in a broader sense, cf. sect. 7.7.*

- 7.5 Are there multilateral and/or bilateral donors supporting projects which contribute to implementation of the Ramsar Convention in your country? Yes/No.

If yes, please provide details.

*A few wetland restoration projects have been partially funded by the European Union (LIFE-programme etc.).*

- 7.6 Does your government make an annual budgetary allocation to support the conservation and wise use of wetlands within your country? Yes/No.

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

*The budget is supporting conservation of wetlands in general including the establishment and management of nature and wildlife reserves.*

*During the years 1989-1997 a total of about DKK 460 million (ECU 61 million) have been spend on nature management and wetland restoration. For 1998 due to a political compromise on the Financial Act the allocated financial support for nature management including wetland restoration will increase.*

- 7.7 If your country has a development assistance programme, does it include funds earmarked for wetland conservation and wise use in other countries? Yes/No. If yes, please give details.

*The Danish assistance for wetland conservation, wise use and restoration is not earmarked, but an integrated part of either the general assistance programmes and in most recent years also of the new environmental programmes.*

*The Danish assistance for these issues has increased during the last years and it is foreseen, that this development will continue for still some years.*

*In addition to the Danish development assistance, which amounts to 1% of the GDP, and which to a degree is spent also on projects in the field of environmental protection or on projects including other environmental aspects, the Danish Parliament has allocated additional funds to be gradually increased by 2005 to 0.25 % (est. 3,434 bio. DCR (c. 500 mio. US \$) of the GDP especially for environmental assistance. Another 0,25 % is similarly being earmarked for disaster relief, both combined in the "Environment and Disaster Relief Facility (EDRF).*

*By 1998 this additional funding earmarked for environmental assistance had reached 0,13 % of the BNI or about 1,400 mio. DCR (200 mio. US \$). In this context Denmark has also allocated funds to the GEF in addition to the assessed contribution of Denmark. This additional funding ensures that the Danish "response to Rio, 1992" is well above what is required, and is also the basis for a new assistance programme, under which biodiversity including the management of coastal zones is given special priority.*

*The Danish environmental assistance is channellized through the two governmental institutions DANIDA (Danish International Development Assistance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and DANCED, cf. sect. 7.4.*

*Most Danish assistance and cooperation within the field of environment takes place with countries in Eastern and Central Europe, Southeast Asia, Africa and Central and South America. Support is given both to the implementation of relevant international conventions such as the Ramsar Convention on a national level, e.g. by making nation-wide inventories and to important wetlands, e.g. by the establishment and implementation of management plans promoting wetland conservation, sustainable use and restoration and rehabilitation of degraded wetlands.*

*Bilateral cooperation and assistance to national wetland projects linked to the Ramsar Convention has been given or is ongoing with e.g. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Thailand. As an example the cooperation with Thailand should be mentioned. This project included a nation-wide inventory of natural and semi-natural wetlands and was carried out by the Royal Thai Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology in cooperation with local universities. The project aimed to assist Thailand in the preparation of the ratification procedure of the Ramsar Convention and to provide tools for prioritisation of wetlands in the national planning and management procedures .*

*Furthermore a number of projects targets individual Ramsar sites, e.g. Lake Chilwa (Malawi), Tasik Bera (Malaysia), Hortobagy National Park (Hungary), Soomaa National Park (Estonia), the Nemunas Delta (Lithuania). A few projects are targeting wetland species groups, e.g. waterbirds (East Baltic Sea countries) and amphibians (Poland).*

*DANIDA is especially cooperating with the following countries: Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Eritrea, Ghana, India, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam, Zambia and Zimbabwe and is also dealing with multilateral assistance channellized e.g. through the GEF and to the international conventions, e.g. the Ramsar Convention.*

*Since 1994 DANCED has further initiated cooperation with Thailand, Malaysia, South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho and Swaziland in order to define and develop relevant environmental programmes and implementation of projects aiming at improving biodiversity (see also sect. 7.4).*

- 7.8 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? Yes/No

If yes, what is that process.

**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? Yes/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.



## 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?

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

*The Danish NGO’s concerned with wetland issues are normally operating on both national (N) and regional (R) levels. Some are also involved with wetlands internationally (I).*

*Danish Ornithological Society: I (via Birdlife International), N and R.*

*Danish Society for Nature Conservation: N and R.*

*WWF: I and N.*

*Danish Hunters Association: I (via FACE), N and R.*

*The Danish Wadden Sea Group: R.*

- 9.2 Is there a regular forum or mechanism through which these NGOs express their views on wetland conservation and Ramsar implementation:
- to each other? Yes/No
  - to the government? Yes/No

If yes in either case, please give details.

*A formal forum is not established, but concerned NGO’s are regularly consulting the National Forest and Nature Agency. Further, NGO’s are represented in different Advisory Councils where they have the possibility to express their views on nature conservation issues.*

- 9.3 Does your government include one or more NGO representatives on its official delegation to Ramsar COPs? Yes/No
- 9.4 Do any of the NGOs run programmes aimed at Education and Public Awareness about wetlands in your country? Yes/No. If yes, please give details (Refer also to question 3.1).

*For details see sect. 3.1.*

- 9.5 Where they exist, do Ramsar site management advisory committees include NGO representatives? If yes, please give details

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.

## Final comments:

### 10.1 General comments on implementation of the Ramsar Strategic Plan.

*It is the general experience of the Ministry of Environment and Energy that the Ramsar Convention has facilitated the conservation of Danish listed sites and wetlands in general and improved the arguments for their conservation.*

*It is, however, important to stress that a continuing monitoring of wildlife and their available food resources, as well as natural processes, are fundamental to the successful management of wildlife and other natural resources. As an integrated element of the Danish wetland policy the effect of the extended network of wildlife and nature reserves on the numbers and distribution of waterbirds will be monitored and assessed.*

### 10.2 Observations concerning the functioning of, relations with, and services provided by:

On a scale from 1-10:

- a. *The Ramsar Standing Committee: 6*
- b. *The Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel: 10*
- c. *The Ramsar Bureau: 10 + excellent*
- d. *The Ramsar NGO partners: 7*

### 10.3 Any other general observations and/or recommendations for the future.

*Generally, improvements of the ecological conditions in Danish wetlands and their management have in the most recent years also been reflected by the reappearance of sensitive wetlands indicator species, which otherwise have been extinct, rare or less numerous for a number of years. Thus, e.g. the White-tailed Eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) - extinct as a Danish breeding bird in 1912 has recolonised the country (1996, 2 nesting pair, 1998 5 nest-building pairs of which 3 are within Ramsar sites); the breeding population of the Crane (*Grus grus*) is slowly increasing to some 10 pairs; the Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) has increased to a breeding population about 40,000 pairs (now being regulated); the Otter (*Lutra lutra*) is slowly recolonising parts of Jutland, where it was extinct 20-30 years ago - the national population is now estimated at 300-400 individuals, and the Common Seal (*Phoca vitulina*) has recovered in all marine waters following a big reduction in numbers due to an epidemic disease in 1988. Most resting populations of swans, geese and duck species are also either stable or increasing. On the other hand, populations of several long-distance migratory waterbirds, e.g. the White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*) and the Black Tern (*Chlidonias nigra*) are steadily declining illustrating e.g. needs for international cooperation.*

*In the Contracting parties wetland policy, wetland restoration and rehabilitation should be considered as important management options in order to enhance biodiversity.*

## II GREENLAND:

*Greenland is part of the Danish realm but the Home Rule Government has full jurisdiction over all the renewable resources of this huge island. Thus legislation mentioned in Part I (Denmark) does not cover Greenland.*

*Out of Greenland's total area of 2,415,100 km<sup>2</sup>, only 384,850 km<sup>2</sup> of land are not permanently covered by an ice-cap.*

*The people of Greenland, who are still depending on subsistence harvesting of natural resources, treasure these prime wildlife habitats because they yield highly-valued game birds, such as ducks, geese, seals and small cetaceans. Internationally, Greenland is known to host important breeding and moulting places for waterbirds and seabird species.*

*The Greenland Home Rule Government acknowledges that it has a responsibility to safeguard the great importance of its Arctic wetlands with respect to renewable resources, local economy, culture, research and recreation, and to counteract any future infringements which might deteriorate these values.*

*It was therefore a natural and logical step for the provincial Greenland Parliament in the autumn of 1987 to pass unanimously a motion to designate eleven of the most important wetland areas in the country as Ramsar Sites.*

*These Arctic wetlands, now managed under the auspices of the International Ramsar Convention, cover 15,465 km<sup>2</sup> and are distributed on both the west and east coast of Greenland; the southern-most site is at 60°45'N and the northern-most at 81°15'N an amazing distance of 2,275 kms apart.*

*There are no permanent human settlements and the only human activity within the Ramsar Sites is some fishing, hunting and boating. Apart from disturbance in a few Ramsar Sites there are no other imminent dangers threatening the ecological functions of the Greenland Ramsar Sites. However, as some Ramsar Sites are situated in coastal and tidal areas, any marine oil-spills or other hydrocarbon pollution in adjacent waters are certainly potential hazards to the fragile ecological integrity and balance of the wetlands.*

*The Ramsar Site Aqajarua - Sullorsuaq in the Disko area was formerly known to hold about 30,000 moulting King Eiders in August. In recent years there has only been registered a few hundred, and hunting and clam-dredging in the area may have been the main cause of disturbance to wildlife. The total population of moulting King Eiders in late summer at Disko Island is estimated to be 15,000-20,000 individuals, and the population may have declined considerably or have changed its moulting area in recent years.*

*Nordfjord in northwest Disko Island, where the Ramsar Site Qinnquata Marraa is situated in the inner part of the fjord, is at present one of the most important moulting areas for King Eider in West Greenland.*

*At Hochstetter Forland and Kilen within the Northeast Greenland National Park all human activity except traditional hunting for Polar Bear implies a special permission from the Greenland Home Rule and/or the municipal authorities. Furthermore all human activities are prohibited within a distance of*

*500 metres of the Ramsar Site Kitsissut Avalliit as well as sections of Kitsissunnguit and Naternaq from June 1 through August 31 pursuant to national regulations. All the other Ramsar Sites are not protected by national legislation.*

*Hunters may legally shoot birds within all Ramsar Sites except for the closed season, which in general covers the period from June 1 to August 15 for most quarry species. However, a few species have an extended or shorter closed season mostly depending on different local or regional regulations.*

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