

**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**

Contracting Party:

Designated Ramsar Administrative Authority

Full name of the institution:

Natural Resources Conservation Authority

Name and title of the head of the institution:

Mr. Franklin McDonald
Executive Director

Mailing address for the head of the institution:

53 1/2 Molyne's Road
Kingston 10

Telephone: (876) 923-5125, 923-5166 Fax: (876) 923-5070 Email: nrca@infochan.com

Name and title (if different) of the designated contact officer for Ramsar Convention matters:

Mailing address (if different) for the designated contact officer:

Telephone:

Fax:

Email:

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 has yet been taken.

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:

Yes.

What are/will be its main features?

“Mangrove and Coastal Wetlands Protection Draft Policy and Regulation” and Draft “Coral Reef Protection and Preservation Policy and Regulation” have been developed. The wetland policy outlines wetland functions and uses, identifies the major issues affecting wetlands in Jamaica as well as the policy goals, key principles and specific policy strategies. Proposed strategies relate to the following:-

- Protection against sedimentation from land based activities.
- Protection against dredging, filling and land development.
- Protection against harmful effluent discharge.
- Encouragement of sustainable use of wetlands.
- Implementation of financial/tax incentives to protect wetlands.
- Environmental Impact Assessments.
- Establishment of protected areas, which include wetlands.
- Improving public awareness.

The Draft “Coral Reef Protection and Preservation Policy and Regulation” outlines functions, uses of coral reefs, problems, government’s roles/responsibilities, goals, key principles, strategies and recommends regulatory measures. Strategies relate to improving coral reef management through the establishment of water quality standards, appropriate land use practices, zoning, improved management of tourist/visitor activities, development of appropriate regulations and establishment of protected areas. Another important component of the policy is the promotion of capacity building through the establishment of marine research stations, support of formal and informal education programmes and dissemination of material to encourage participation in coral reef management.

Jamaica, as one of the countries which launched the International Coral Reef Initiative, has developed a coral reef action plan.

- 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 document is adopted by the Government of Jamaica. A draft statement of Government Policy-a Green Paper-is circulated for nationwide discussion and commentary. It is then revised and becomes official policy upon approval by Parliament and Cabinet.

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)?

The development of the above-mentioned policies have been proposed in the Jamaica National Environmental Action Plan. It is expected that the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan will include components of these policies.

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?

The documents are presently in draft stage.

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.

b. The Ministry of Environment and Housing, specifically it's agency the Natural Resources Conservation Authority, will have primary responsibility for implementation of these policies.

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

N/A

If yes, please give details.

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.

Though such a review has not yet been formerly undertaken, the Wetland and Coral Reef Policies do recommend specific regulatory provisions.

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

A Council on Ocean and Coastal Zone Management has been established to provide a formal mechanism for effecting integrated coastal zone management. Participants include representatives from local government, private sector, shipping, fishing, marine interests, marine park management entities, and selected international/regional agencies involved in marine and ocean management. Plans exist to have standing committees at the parish/local level with representation from parish non-governmental organizations, parish councils, local health departments and the Natural Resources Conservation Authority. A coastal zone management programme is underway.

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

Yes.

If Yes, please provide details and copies.

Documentation includes the "Mangrove and Coastal Wetlands Protection Draft Policy and Regulation" and the "Coral Reef Protection and Preservation Policy and Regulation". In addition, two Draft Environmental Policy Frameworks (EPFs) have been prepared for specific areas; Palisadoes/Port Royal and St. Elizabeth both areas with significant wetland resources and Jamaica's first Ramsar site. EPFs are a means of planning and sustainably managing areas of high environmental sensitivity and seek to take a "whole-ecosystem approach by addressing a broad area, parish or watershed so that important linkages and the surroundings of sensitive areas...may be addressed".

- 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).

The Natural Resources Conservation Authority Act, 1991, though not specifically identifying wetlands, requires that no person shall "discharge on or cause or permit the entry into waters, on the ground or into the ground, of any sewage or trade effluent or any poisonous, noxious or pollution matter" without a licence.

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

No steps have yet been taken.

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

Yes. Under the Natural Resources Conservation (Permits and Licences) Regulations, 1996, the entire island was declared a prescribed area thus requiring that prescribed categories of enterprise, construction or development may require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment. "Modification, clearance or reclamation of wetlands" is one of the prescribed categories.

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

Yes.

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.

This is primarily in relation to development proposals submitted to the Natural Resources Conservation Authority. Developers have been asked to undertake wetland restoration and rehabilitation activities.

- 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 Environmental Policy Framework process, which provides a basis for the establishment of protected areas, encourages stakeholder involvement in planning and environmental management. Individuals and organizations have been invited to share knowledge, ideas and observations throughout the process. Methods utilized to encourage participation included community meetings, environmental expositions, interviews, and the implementation of projects deemed to be of value to communities.

- 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? Yes/No

There has been some involvement of the private sector in wetland conservation efforts.

If yes, please provide details.

The private sector has primarily been involved in meetings related to planning for the declaration of protected areas which include wetlands. Meetings provided information on the value of wetlands and other ecosystems in these areas.

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)

Yes. A National Environmental Education Action Plan for Sustainable Development in Jamaica covering the period 1998-2010 has been published. It strives to increase awareness of, and encourage action on and commitment to environmental and sustainable development issues. Both the formal education system and non-formal mechanisms are used at the national and community levels. The plan identifies programme areas, potential partners and priority themes. Coastal and marine resources have been identified for priority attention and action. Groups to be targeted include fishermen, coastal communities as well as water sports and hotel operators.

- 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.

Not yet addressed.

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 Environmental Policy Framework (EPF) process which involves planning for broad areas, parishes and watersheds recognizes the importance of collaboration. It seeks to bring together those with an interest in, and responsibility for, areas of high environmental sensitivity. Institutions involved include private and public sector agencies, non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations. The EPF seeks to coordinate stakeholder planning, development and environmental protection activities and results *inter alia* in the development of cooperative arrangements among these groups, particularly in the area of protected area and resource management.

- 4.2 Of the following, indicate which have been undertaken:

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.

Yes, a training needs assessment was conducted.

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

Yes but limited.

c. the development of training modules or a training programme specifically for wetland managers. If yes, please give details.

No.

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

Yes, some training has been offered as part of larger coastal zone training programmes.

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:
- being prepared?
 - fully prepared?
 - being implemented?

b. A management plan is being prepared for the Black River Ramsar Site in the parish of St. Elizabeth.

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.

N/A

- 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.

Research on the ecological character of the recently declared Black River Ramsar Site has not yet been conducted.

- 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?

N/A

- 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.

N/A

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.

An inventory has commenced but has not yet been completed.

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.

Base data has been collected relating to presence/absence of wetlands including coral reefs, mangroves and seagrass beds.

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

Yes.

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.

- 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.

Wetlands were once estimated to cover 2% of Jamaica's total surface area.

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

No information provided.

- 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.

Jamaica's first wetland declared as a Ramsar Site includes peatland ecosystems and mangroves.

- 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.

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

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).

N/A

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

No.

If yes, please give details.

- 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 Natural Resources Conservation Authority is also responsible for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Framework Convention on Climate Change. Jamaica is not a party to Conventions c and d.

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

No.

If yes, please provide details.

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

Yes

If yes, please provide details.

The United States Agency for International Development has assisted with activities leading to the development of Environmental Policy Frameworks for areas, which include significant wetland resources (including Jamaica’s only Ramsar Site). In addition, funding has been and is to be provided for the preparation of management plans for existing and proposed protected areas (including wetlands).

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

Yes.

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

Allocations are primarily made to support coastal zone management and protected area programmes.

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.

No.

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

N/A

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.

No.

If yes, please provide details.

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.

Yes. Budget approval is presently being sought.

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.

- 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.

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

The Ramsar Convention Bureau
Rue Mauverney 28
CH-1196 Gland, Switzerland
tel +41 22 999 0170
fax +41 22 999 0169
e-mail ramsar@hq.iucn.org