

National Report to be prepared in advance of the 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

San José, Costa Rica, 10-18 May 1999

The new format is based on the Ramsar Strategic Plan 1997-2002 adopted by COP6. (If necessary the Bureau can provide additional copies of the Strategic Plan, which is also available on the Ramsar World Wide Web site at <http://iucn.org/themes/ramsar/>). This report format contains key questions related to each of the eight General Objectives of the Strategic Plan, although Contracting Parties are welcome to respond in more detail concerning the specific actions listed under each objective in the Strategic Plan. In preparing their National Reports, countries are urged to seek input and comment from National Ramsar (or similar) Committees where they exist and, as appropriate, the Convention's non-governmental partner organizations and others with expertise in wetland management. These reports should be considered as an official status report by the Contracting Party on its implementation of the Ramsar Convention and Strategic Plan.

The Ramsar Bureau would prefer to receive National Reports in both electronic (diskette or e-mail) and hard copy versions. To assist with the preparation of electronic versions, a copy of this format will be placed in the Ramsar World Wide Web site and in the Ramsar Exchange (e-mail mailing list). Floppy disks containing the format can also be obtained upon request to the Bureau.

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 June 30 1998

Contracting Party: Poland

Designated Ramsar Administrative Authority: Ministerstwo Ochrony Środowiska, Zasobów Naturalnych i Leśnictwa (MOŚEZN i L) - Ministry of Environmental Protection, Natural Resources and Forestry

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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.

Poland's neighbours are already Parties to the Convention, so major activity is directed to bilateral cooperation. There is an agreement with Germany to establish a transboundary protected area to be submitted to the Ramsar List, embracing the Lower Odra Valley as an important ecological migration corridor. This area will include, among others, the Polish Ramsar site S³ońsk, one of more important inland breeding and resting site for migrating waterfowl of a surface of 4,166 ha and the Gottesheide Site on the German side of the Odra River. Talks are under way with Ukraine to establish another transboundary wetland site of Poleski National Park (Pl) and Szacki National Park (Ue) combined.

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?
- 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.

- 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)?

A National Wetland Strategy has been developed in Poland in 1998, to the order of the Ministry of Environmental Protection, Natural Resources and Forestry. The strategy relates to basic documents of the state ecological policy including Act on Nature Conservation (1991), Act on the Protection of Agricultural and Forest Land, State Ecological Policy and the National Biodiversity Strategy (draft). This strategic elaboration entitled: "Conservation of wetlands in Poland. Status and perspectives" has been published in Polish and English languages in 1998. The publication was financially supported by the Ramsar Convention Secretariat and in part by the Polish Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Economy. The document in question has already been adopted by the Minister of Environmental Protection, i.e. the Minister responsible for Ramsar matters, and has been consulted with the Ministers of Agriculture, Transportation and Maritime Economy as well as with other sectors.

The document presents an overview of all wetland types in Poland including rivers, lakes, dam reservoirs, ponds, sea coast with gulfs, peatbogs and mires in addition to an analysis of their conservation status (nature reserves, national parks and landscape parks). Recommendations were given as to the future strategy of wetland conservation. Special emphasis was put on the need to change binding legal regulations concerning preservation of water quantity and quality, since they are amongst the most important factors conditioning sustainability of wetland sites in Poland. The recommendations for wetland conservation strategy include a definition of wetland to be used for domestic purposes and criteria of wetland identification according to the Ramsar Convention. In addition to the criteria based upon waterfowl, the criteria were taken into account which relate to the size and biological and landscape diversity of a site. Amongst the wetland types in Poland the following wetland importance categories have been identified:

- of international importance - including biosphere reserves unique in the country scale, some national parks and nature reserves of special value;
- of national importance - wherein belong most of the water and mire reserves, national and landscape parks, and
- of local importance - embracing wetlands which hitherto have not been subject to any form of conservation

A necessity for developing educational programmes to promote and support the idea of wetland conservation and wise use has also been put forward.

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 above document is in the preliminary stage of implementation

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 responsibility for implementation of wetland conservation strategy is entrusted to the Ministry of Environmental Protection, Natural Resources and Forestry as the designated Ramsar Administrative Authority.

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.

The document on the „Conservation of Wetlands in Poland” provides elements of analysis of laws and practices which influence the status of wetland sites in this country. The document will be taken into account when drawing recommendations by

the Ministry of Environmental Protection for the purpose of improving existing laws on nature and biodiversity conservation in Poland.

As a result of reviewing the Polish law with respect to its harmonization with legal standards of the EU, an important document for wetland status has been developed in 1998, i.e. The Polish Code of Good Agricultural Practice. The draft document was established jointly by Institute of Soil Science and Fertilization (IUNG) in Puławy, Institute of Grassland and Melioration (IMUZ) in Falenty and Institute of Agricultural Construction, Mechanization and Electrification (IBMER) in Warsaw. Assistance was provided by the Danish Agricultural Advisory Centre. The above document takes account of the EU Directives (Directive 80/68/EEC on the protection of ground water against pollution caused by certain dangerous substances; Directive 80/778/EEC relating to the quality of water intended for human consumption and Directive 91/676/EEC on nitrate pollution) as well as of provisions of the Helsinki Commission on the Protection of Baltic Sea Waters (HELCOM). Albeit the Code in question does not have actual binding force and is currently subject to intersectoral discussions, its provisions are based upon acts adopted by the Polish Parliament as well as upon regulations issued by the Minister of Agriculture, Food Economy and the Minister of Environmental Protection. The Ramsar Convention provisions on the wise use of wetlands were also accounted for in a special chapter on wetland conservation.

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 strategic basis for activities in the field of integrated physical planning and management and for issuing regulations and establishing conditions for sustainable use is the Act on Spatial Management of 1994 which regulates the extent and ways of procedures required for designating land for specific uses and land management principles. Ways of integrated land management are also subject to the provisions of the Act on the Protection of Agricultural and Forest Land and the Act on Nature Conservation which institutes an obligation to prepare protection plans in national and landscape parks. Assumptions of these plans need to be taken into account when establishing spatial management plans.

Over the last years the Water Law and the Act on the Protection and Management of the Environment have been modified to improve procedures of establishing Local Spatial Management Plans which have the status of binding local laws. The Water Law (amended in 1997) is an instrument of special importance for wetland management since it regulates the use and protection of water resources, checks on the use of water, fees for abstraction and fines for non-compliance with relevant provisions. The Minister of Environmental Protection has issued the Regulation introducing a catchment based system for management of water resources.

An array of actions have been undertaken of which the most important in both national and local scales are further legislative initiatives intended for preventing environmental degradation. Of special importance here are the provisions covered by the novel Act on the Protection and Management of the Environment of 1997. In 1998, the Minister of Environmental Protection has issued two regulations supplementing this Law, one of which, Regulation No 591 regulates economic

activities that could substantially deteriorate environmental quality and concerns in particular Environmental Impact Assessments for actions which involve changes in water management of an area.

The Act on Spatial Management of 1994 already changed considerably the siting procedures of new developments and the spatial planning procedures by introducing an obligation to establish the so-called Prognosis of Effects of Provisions of the Local Spatial Plan upon the Natural Environment and another obligation that this Prognosis be included into the Local Spatial Management Plan.

In addition, in 1995, the Minister of Environmental Protection in cooperation with the Minister of Health and Social Care issued a regulation setting up requirements for the Prognosis in order to eliminate solutions and avoid provisions in Local Spatial Plans which could lead to the deterioration of the state of the environment, including the state of wetland sites.

A duty to include an Environmental Impact Assessment into applications for licenses on prospecting exploration of mineral deposits was imposed by the Mining and Building Laws of 1994.

In 1996, the Minister of Agriculture and Food Economy joined the Minister of Environmental Protection in concluding the Agreement Concerning Co-operation in the Field of the Small Scale Retention Programme. Efforts undertaken under this Programme have been aiming at increasing water retention in reservoirs and soil in all respective voivodeships (counties).

As to the management of the coastal zone, Poland being a Party to the Helsinki Convention on the Protection of Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea, has enforced legal regulations and solutions in compliance with the above Law, to guide the Ministry of Transportation and Maritime Economy, Marine Offices and local level administration in their decisions concerning economical activities which could deteriorate environmental quality.

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.

If Yes, please provide details and copies.

Poland has already got extensive expertise as concerns national inventories of mires, peat deposits and grasslands, restitution and renaturalization of wetlands and relevant publications are available in both Polish and English languages. The most important works on wetland inventories and restoration projects over the last years include:

- Computerized database on wetlands and grasslands in Poland. IMUZ - Falenty 1995. In Polish.
- Restoration and Management of Fens. Conference Proceedings. IMUZ - Falenty 1996.
- Application of remote sensing methods to detection of shrub encroachment within the area of the Biebrzanski National Park IMUZ - Falenty 1997. In Polish.
- Strategy of implementing the ECONET-Poland national ecological network. Wetlands in ECONET-Poland. IUCN 1998.

- Economical and natural valorization of fishponds in Poland. IUCN 1995. In Polish.

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).

Establishing new procedures concerning assessment of chemical safety has been carried out in Poland under the auspices of the International Programme on Chemical Safety and in the framework of the cooperation with FAO within the scope of pesticide use. The process has gathered momentum after Poland was accepted into the OECD in 1996.

The new Act on Chemical Substances is under preparation which is conceived so as to regulate a whole of threats by chemical substances in the environment. Regulations on the trade in chemical means of plant protection, their application and safety have been already enforced (Act on the Chemical Means of Crop Plant Protection of 1995).

The prevention of damage resulting from emergencies involving chemicals lies within competencies of the State Fire Brigades and the State Inspectorate for Environmental Protection (PIOE) as bodies responsible for preventing and rescuing operations in cases of toxic chemical spills and/or leakages into, among others, wetland sites and for monitoring potential sources of such accidents.

An additional threat to wetlands, and to other ecosystems, is posed by the disposal of toxic waste; in this sphere a monitoring system conducted by the PIOE has been functioning since 1991. Various other actions have been carried out under the Act on Wastes to reduce the amount of hazardous wastes and sludges disposed to the environment.

Poland as a Party to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and Their Disposal (since 1992) has fully implemented provisions prohibiting exports of hazardous waste for final dumping. National policy in relation to the protection of inshore waters of the Baltic Sea assumes, in accordance with the Executive Programme to the National Environmental Policy for the years 1994-2000, a 50% reduction of untreated sewage discharged to waters and a 30% increase in the amount of wastewater treated biologically and chemically. Within the framework of long-term goals to be achieved in the years 2000-2020, it is assumed that the load of pollutants discharged to Baltic will be reduced by 80% mainly owing to the construction and modernization of wastewater treatment plants on coastal rivers and in coastal towns and to the limitation of pollution loads brought in by Vistula and Odra Rivers.

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

Such action of economic valuation of wetlands is envisaged by the Ministry of Environmental Protection, Natural Resources and Forestry to be undertaken in the near future.

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

Yes. As it has been specified under item 2.6., the most important is the Regulation No 591 to the Act on the Protection and Management of the Environment which relates to EIA for activities threatening with deterioration of the environment, and, especially, in case of developments involving water management. In Poland EIA is a basic requirement for all economic actions affecting the environment.

2.11 Is wetland restoration and rehabilitation considered a priority in your country?

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.

The great majority of wetland areas in need of renaturalization/upgrading actions has been identified within the framework of the strategy for wetland restoration established to the order of the Ministry of Environmental Protection in 1998. There exists also a detailed database of peatlands and grasslands in Poland (in IMUZ - Falenty) complete with site descriptions as a result of comprehensive inventory conducted by the Institute of Melioration and Grasslands (IMUZ). Those sites were evaluated from the perspective of environmental protection needs.

The reconstruction of small retention, water cleaning and wetland renaturalization are priority goals of the State Environmental Policy. This is to be seen in the amount of means allocated annually to water protection actions by the National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management (wastewater treatment plants) and by the Ecofund and GEF/Small Grants to assist in renaturalization of wetlands or otherwise protect wetland sites. Over the last two years the Ecofund has provided finances to support both the local governmental administration and NGOs projects as follows:

- Renaturalization of „Bartniki” bird refuge in Kiwity commune;
- Maintenance and restoration of natural values of the Barycz River Valley - project conducted by the Polish Friends of Nature „Pro Natura”;
- Protection of „Middle Warta River Valley” bird refuge through liquidation of draining channel and restoration of original water management conditions - project conducted by Zagórow commune;
- Renaturalization of ecological conditions in the vicinity of Piskory Lake in Lublin voivodeship - project by the National Foundation for Environmental Protection;
- Project to protected mountain wetlands - carried out by the Greenworks Association;
- Renaturalization of the former military site „Muszaki” in Masurian Lakeland - project carried out by the Jedwabno Forest Superintendency;
- Protection of the Czarna Konecka River against desiccation - project conducted by the Voievodeship Melioration Board in Piotrków Trybunalski;
- Protection of „Serafin” mire in Ostro³êka voievodeship - project conducted by the Voievode of Ostro³êka;
- Mire, grassland and spring area protection plan in the Drawieński National Park - project by the Drawieński National Park;
- Active protection of mire ecosystems in Karkonosze and Izerskie Mts - project carried out by Karkonosze Foundation.

Some initiatives concerning the protection and restoration of wetlands have been financed by the GEF or by GEF and Ecofund jointly, including:

- Protection of mountain wetlands in Rytro - first part in 1996;

- Protection of mountain wetlands - by the Greenworks Association (with Ecofund) - in 1997-8;
- Protection of eagles and other rare predatory birds - by the Eagle Protection Committee (with Ecofund) - in 1997-8;
- Renaturalization and protection of the Wizna Mire - in order to expand the Biebrzański National Park and Ramsar Site - project by the Pó3nocnopodlaskie Bird Protection Society - in 1998;
- Protection of white stork and wetland areas - first in Wroc3aw Voievodeship and later in other parts of the country, funded jointly with Ecofund, under the Programme: Ciconia - an international initiative to conserve the white stork. Materials on methods of protecting the white stork were published. Project was conducted in the years 1994-8;
- Protection of sea mammals on the Hel Peninsula - by the Friends of the Hel Peninsula - in 1996;
- Enlargement of the Siedem Wysp Reserve - Ramsar Site (Polish Academy of Sciences), in the years 1997-8.

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."

In the year 1996 the Government of Poland adopted the National Action Programme for Women until 2000, which contains objectives and recommendations relating to sustainable development, adopted by the IVth UN World Conference on Women. In accordance with Agenda 21, special programmes for women are now being established to promote sustainable consumption models and behaviour, energy, water and raw material conservation, waste segregation and a healthy life style. Thus the above Programme has only indirect links to the actions mentioned under item 2.12.

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

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

An advisory body to the Polish Government on matters concerning nature conservation is the State Council for Nature Conservation; within this body a small Commission for Wetlands has been established the competencies of which range from consultancy and opinion delivery to initiatives as to the execution of conservation issues on Ramsar Sites and on other wetland areas, including the nomination of new sites to the Ramsar List.

4.2 Of the following, indicate which have been undertaken:

d. people from your country have gained wetland-related training either within or outside the country. Yes.

If yes, please give details.

Training within the country:

Annual summer trainings in hydrobiology have been organized for university students at the Hydrobiological Station of the Institute of Ecology of the Polish Academy of Sciences at Mikołajki. Summer courses in hydrobiology have also been set up for the environmental protection service by the Polish Hydrobiological Society and the Hydrobiological Station at Mikołajki.

Training outside the country:

One person from Poland attends annual training courses on wetland management and planning for Ramsar sites, organized by the Netherlands in Lelystad (International Course on Wetland Management). This is considered to be a very good initiative supporting the Nature Conservancy Authorities in Poland. So far three wetland managers have been trained and in 1998 another trainee will be attending the course. The course in Lelystad provides the participant with the knowledge and skills to draw up and implement a wetland management plan. It also helps to understand the wetland functioning within a wider region and to establish a monitoring system for the area. Additionally, in 1998, the participation of two-three people from Poland is envisaged in the training organized by the Scottish Heritage in Stirling (Scotland). The training will provide skills for wetland conservation within the wide context of environmental and social issues.

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? Five (Słowiński National Park, Stawy Milickie- Milicz Fishponds, Biebrzański National Park, Karoë Lake and Słonk)

b. fully prepared? One - already approved (Siedem Wysp Reserve - Oëwin Lake)

c. being implemented? since 1998 Siedem Wysp Reserve

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?

Monitoring of changes in ecological conditions was carried out in the Siedem Wysp Reserve and at S³ońsk. Currently established protection (management) plans envisage ecological monitoring in all the Polish Ramsar Sites, and especially in Łuknajno Lake, Karoë Lake, S³ońsk and Siedem Wysp Reserve.

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.

If Yes, please give details.

Within most of our eight Ramsar Sites some ecological changes have been observed, linked with natural processes of lake shallowing and vegetation succession, and partly due to the anthropogenic eutrophication.

- Łuknajno Lake - overgrowing with water soldier (*Stratiotes aloides*), steady shallowing of the lake, monitoring of changes is conducted by the Warsaw University Field Station. The expansion of the reserve is planned by joining the neighbouring former agricultural lands (already purchased)

- Karoë Lake - overgrowing with reedbed vegetation, lake shallowing, there are no plans to interfere with natural plant succession

- Ćwidwie Lake - slow eutrophication of lake waters, overgrowing by *Salix* shrubs, monitoring of ecological conditions is about to start in 1998

- S³ońsk Reserve - encroachment of *Salix* sp, there is a plan to introduce ecological farming to prevent forest succession, ecological monitoring has been carried out since 1991

- S³owiński National Park - the extension of the park is envisaged to include inshore waters (local conflicts exist)

- Siedem Wysp Reserve - an improvement in the ecological conditions of the Reserve has been noted due to water level raise. The slow return of aquatic vegetation has been reported. Extension of the site is planned by adding surrounding forests and grasslands.

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

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

In Poland, a comprehensive inventory of wetlands has been done over the last years. The mire and grassland inventory was carried out by the IMUZ and accomplished in 1996. The databases are kept in the IMUZ. The information embraces names of sites, their location and ecological descriptions including notes on their status. The IMUZ disposes also of databases on peat deposits (depth, quality) and mires in Poland (over 50 thousand items).

Results of the review of all wetland types in Poland have been published in the strategic elaboration entitled: "Conservation of wetlands in Poland. Status and perspectives" (1998). They include databases on rivers, lakes, dam reservoirs, ponds, mires and peatbogs as well as on the Baltic seacoast with gulfs. Numbers, surfaces, localizations have been given and ecological status of the objects has been analyzed.

6.2 Does there exist a list or directory of "important" wetlands for your country or region?

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.

In the abovementioned strategic elaboration the list of important wetlands was established on the basis of the Montreaux (1990) and ICBP criteria. 84 sites of European importance have been identified of a joint surface of 1,358,920 ha and 34 sites of national importance of a joint surface of 277,493 ha. As objects of special importance the following sites have been mentioned: Drużno Lake, Jamno Lake, Gop³o Lake, Gulf of Szczecin (international site), Wigierski National Park, Poleski National Park, Ravine part Narew Valley, Mire part Narew Valley, Upper Bug River Valley, Middle Vistula River Valley and Middle Warta River Valley.

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. Wetland definition has been assumed after the Ramsar Convention

The joint surface of wetlands in Poland amounts to about 18,000 sq km, including 4,550 sq km of inland waters (lakes, rivers, ponds) and 13,070 sq km of mires.

There are eight Ramsar Sites of a joint surface of 90,455 ha.

The total surface of wetland sites of importance to waterfowl in Poland is 1,636,413 ha,

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.

There were no such information during the COP6, however, relevant preparations are under way. There is a proposal to nominate the following areas to the Ramsar List: Narwiański National Park, Drużno Lake, Poleski National Park, Calcareous Mires of Che³m and the Gulf of Szczecin.

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

There are no such areas so far, but talks are underway with the German counterparts to establish a transboundary site including S³ońsk and Gottesheide.

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.

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

Yes. The preparation is under way to ratify the agreement on the conservation of these bird species under the African-European Migratory Bird Agreement.

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

The Netherlands provide generous support to the Biebrza Project, assisting in the establishment of the management plan of this Site. In addition they support the participation of one person from Poland annually in the training in Lelystad.

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

This is a part of a larger environment or natural resource management budget.

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.

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?

There are 12 NGOs involved of which only IUCN and Regional Environmental Centre being the international ones, the remaining are either regional or national.

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

In 1998 a regular forum has been established under the name: Agreement for wetlands with the participation of NGOs of national importance including, among others: IUCN, Regional Environmental Centre - Poland, Institute of Melioration and Grasslands and the Institute of Environmental Protection.

9.3 Does your government include one or more NGO representatives on its official delegation to Ramsar COPs? No. For financial reasons.

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

Yes, NGO representatives are members of Scientific Councils at such Ramsar Sites as Biebrzański NP and S³owiński NP as well as of the Landscape Park Warta Mouth, wherein the S³ońsk Ramsar Site is situated. They are entitled to participation in the decision making process as to site management and other issues.