

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE
ESPECIALLY AS WATERFOWL HABITAT
(Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

6th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
Brisbane, Australia: 19-27 March 1996

**OVERVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION IN THE
NORTH AMERICAN REGION**

A. INTRODUCTION

1. For the purposes of this report, the North American Region is considered to include (using the 'short country names' provided by the United Nations Terminology Bulletin no. 347): **Canada, Mexico** and the **United States of America**. All three countries are Contracting Parties to the Convention.
2. During the period since the 5th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (Kushiro, Japan, 1993), **Canada** has been the Standing Committee Regional Representative for North America, with **Mexico** as Alternate Representative. Dr Tom Dahl has been the member from the North American Region on the Convention's Scientific and Technical Review Panel.
3. There has been no regional meeting for North America, but delegates of all three countries participated in the Second Meeting of the Contracting Parties in the Neotropical Region, which was held in Panamá in June 1995.
4. The information provided below is a summary of the key points provided by the three National Reports. The Bureau has generally paraphrased the actual wording used in the reports in order to highlight the points which seem most important to draw to the attention of the Conference.

B. BASIC INFORMATION

5. As of 31 December 1995 the three countries of the North American Region had designated between them 52 sites for the List of Wetlands of International Importance, as follows:

Canada	33 sites
Mexico	4 sites
United States of America	15 sites

6. Since Kushiro (1993), each of the three countries has included three new sites in the List.

C. INFORMATION ON LISTED SITES

Proposed site designations or boundary extensions

7. **Canada** reports that no formal list of potential Ramsar sites has been prepared out of respect for landowners and the inter-jurisdictional consultation requirements, while the Canadian Wildlife

Service has outlined its commitments and activities for 1995-2000 including comprehensive information on potential Ramsar and other national wildlife sites.

8. The **United States of America** increased the total surface area of the Connecticut River Estuary and Tidal Wetlands Complex in 1995.

Changes in ecological character at listed sites

9. **Canada** informs that the ecological character of its Ramsar sites are not under threat.
10. **Mexico** has requested the removal of Ría Lagartos from the Montreux Record.
11. The **United States of America** indicates that ecosystem restoration continues in the Everglades. On the other hand, in Catahoula Lake successful removal (deep tillage) of lead from the waterfowl food chain has reached the 95% level, and the site is showing 100% plant succession in a second season.

Implementation of Resolution 5.7: Management Planning for Ramsar Sites

12. **Canada** indicates that the province of Ontario has taken a regulatory approach to wetland conservation through land use planning.
13. **Mexico** informs that Ría Lagartos has a management plan which is already being implemented. Several management plans for wetlands are being developed for wetlands within the framework of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (signed between Canada, Mexico and the United States of America).
14. The **United States of America** reports that the National Academy of Sciences has prepared a report on the status of wetland delineation and definition, which is currently under study by Congress. The results of these deliberations will affect the conservation programs throughout the country.

D. WISE USE OF WETLANDS

Progress towards formulation and application of a national wetland policy

15. **Canada** reports that the Federal Policy on Wetland Conservation, announced in March 1992 by the Canadian Government, outlines seven strategies to provide for the wise use and management of wetlands, and promotes a non-regulatory, cooperative approach. It is used at the national level to implement Ramsar's Wise Use Guidelines, and affects all federal government programs and institutions in Canada. The lead agency promoting the policy is the Canadian Wildlife Service, Environment Canada.
16. Development of provincial wetland conservation and management policies is underway in several provinces.
17. **Mexico** indicates that there is a draft National Wetlands Program under revision.

Application of Recommendation 5.7: National Ramsar/wetland Committees

18. **Canada** reports that there is an informal Canadian Ramsar Network, coordinated by the North American Wetlands Conservation Council (Canada), which produces a Ramsar Newsletter as well. This Network strives to link Ramsar wetland managers, researchers and interest groups.

19. **Mexico** informs that a National Wetlands Committee was formed to deal with the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.

20. The **United States of America** indicates that it is considering the reorganization of the National Ramsar Committee.

E. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Consultations on shared wetlands

21. **Canada** is active in several North American and hemispheric initiatives, such as the three habitat (Prairie, Eastern and Pacific Coast) Joint Ventures, with Mexico and the United States of America) within the North American Waterfowl Management Plan; the Great Lakes Wetlands Plan with the United States of America; and Wetlands for the Americas.

22. **Mexico** reports different activities are carried out within the framework of the North American Management Plan.

Consultations on shared species

23. **Canada** is active in several North American and hemispheric initiatives, such as the Artic Goose and the Black Duck Joint Ventures of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, and the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network.

24. **Mexico** reports that it is cooperating with the **United States of America** in the waterfowl censuses, the results of which will soon be published in an atlas.

Wetland Conservation Fund: projects supported since December 1992

25. Only **Mexico** is eligible to apply for grants to the Fund. It received financial support in 1993 for "Strategy for inclusion of Mexican wetlands to the Ramsar List". The National Report indicates that this financial aid allowed the preparation of an outline for inclusion of new sites to the List.

26. **Canada** and the **United States of America** are a major source of voluntary donations to the Fund.

F. WETLAND RESERVES AND TRAINING

Implementation of Recommendation 4.5: Education and training

27. The **United States of America** has made a contribution to finance Wetlands for the Future, a training initiative in the Neotropical Region.

G. GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE CONVENTION AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

28. **Canada** and the **United States of America** have supported a number of Ramsar activities, besides those mentioned in E.26 and F.27 above. These include support for the Second Meeting of Contracting Parties of the Neotropical Region (Panama, 1995) and the elaboration of management plans in Caño Negro (Costa Rica) and Paracas (Peru). For a full review, please refer to the information document INFO 6.15.

29. Sometimes support has been technical rather than financial, as with **Canada's** advice on National Wetland Policies in several cases, or donations of literature, for example.

Effectiveness of the Convention; problems encountered in implementation etc.

30. **Mexico** indicates that it is necessary to have an information and dissemination strategy, which could be used for promotion of the Convention at different levels, both within the Government as well as NGOs.

[INFO 6.11E.WP/Brisbane 7-E]