

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 WESTERN EUROPEAN REGION

1. For the purposes of this report, the Western European Region is considered to include (using the 'short country names' provide by the United Nations Terminology Bulletin no. 347): **Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Holy See, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and United Kingdom.** The names of Contracting Parties have been highlighted.
2. It should be noted that, as of 15 January 1996, no National Report had been received from Greece, Ireland, or Spain. The following overview is therefore based on 17 National Reports. At the time of writing, information on Greenland had not yet been received from the Danish authorities.

General Overview

3. During the period since the 5th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (Kushiro, Japan, 1993), Spain has been the Standing Committee Regional Representative for Western Europe, with Germany as Alternate Representative. M. François Letourneux has been the member for the Western European region on the Convention's Scientific and Technical Review Panel.
4. A joint Regional meeting for Eastern and Western Europe was held in Varna, Bulgaria, in May 1995. The report of the meeting is available in English and French from the Bureau.
5. The information provided below is a summary of the key points provided by the 15 National Reports. The Bureau has generally paraphrased the actual wording used in the reports in order to save space and in order to highlight the points which it seems most important to draw to the attention of the Conference.

A. Basic Information

6. As of 31 December 1995, there were 20 Contracting Parties in the Western European Region, which had, between them, designated 409 sites for the List of Wetlands of International Importance. (number of sites given in brackets):

Austria (8)	Liechtenstein (1)
Belgium (6)	Malta (1)
Denmark (38*)	Netherlands (24*)
Finland (11)	Norway (14)
France (16*)	Portugal (2)
Germany (31)	Spain (35)
Greece (11)	Sweden (30)

Iceland (2)	Switzerland (8)
Ireland (21)	<u>Turkey</u> (5)
Italy (46)	United Kingdom (99*)

7. Underlining indicates entry into force of the Convention since the 5th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (Kushiro, 1993). *A total of 23 sites designated by Denmark, France, Netherlands and UK are located outside the biogeographical boundaries of Europe: 11 in Greenland (DK), 1 in Guadeloupe (F), 2 in French Guyana (F), 1 in Aruba (NL), 5 in Netherlands Antilles (NL), 1 in Cayman Islands (UK), 1 in Hong Kong (UK) and 1 in Turks & Caicos Islands (UK). 5 of the Norwegian sites are in Spitzbergen.
8. Sixty sites designated by Austria (1), France (8), Netherlands (3), Spain (9), Turkey (5) and UK (34) have been added to the Ramsar List since the Kushiro Conference.
9. The names, postal addresses, e-mail addresses and fax/phone numbers of the Government authority responsible for implementing the Convention in each Contracting Party are available from the Bureau, upon request.

Non-Contracting Party States in Western Europe

10. Luxembourg has deposited with UNESCO an instrument of Signature subject to Ratification. The ratification process is ongoing and there are regular contacts between the Bureau and the Luxembourg authorities. In both 1994 and 1995, Luxembourg has made a voluntary contribution equivalent to the amount which would have been invoiced, had formalities for becoming a Contracting Party been completed. Since the Kushiro Conference, Cyprus has renewed its expression of intention to become a Contracting Party. Monaco has also indicated its support for the work of the Convention. The only other non-Contracting Party States in the region are Andorra, Holy See, and San Marino.

B. Information on listed sites

B.1 Deletion or restriction of boundaries of listed sites:

11. **Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and United Kingdom** report that no deletions or restrictions occurred during the reporting period.
12. **Denmark:** since the Kushiro Conference, the boundaries of all listed sites in Denmark (excluding Greenland) have been digitized and highly accurate area measurements are now possible. The revised total area for Danish sites (excluding Greenland) is 732,265 ha (in comparison with the figure of 734,468 previously indicated for the Ramsar Database). The digitization process was linked to a review of EU Special Protection Area and Ramsar site boundaries, carried out by the National Forest and Nature Agency, in consultation with County Councils, relevant Government Departments and concerned NGOs. The Danish authorities are in contact with the Bureau with regard to the details of variations in the boundaries of individual sites. There has been no overall decrease in the total area of wetlands designated by Denmark. The new site boundaries were implemented in Danish law by Ministerial Order in May 1994.
13. **Norway:** the Directorate for Nature Management has approved in principle a minor boundary change for the Ilene and Presterødskilen listed site, but no formal application has been made or approved. If implemented, the change would imply that 0.23 ha be taken out of the site for use as a floating dock in summer. 0.40 ha, with higher ecological value, would be added to the site in compensation.

B.2 *Proposed site designations or boundary extensions*

- 14.**Belgium:** the Flemish Institute for Nature Conservation has identified a list of seven sites which qualify for designation under Ramsar criterion 3. A proposal for designation will be prepared on the basis of this list. An inventory of wetlands of biological interest in the Walloonian Region, including possible Ramsar sites, is currently being evaluated. See also section C.3.
- 15.**Finland:** 50 new sites will be added to the Ramsar list in the near future. The new sites have been chosen on the basis of value for breeding and staging birds, vegetation, fishery potential, and water quality, together with other factors.
- 16.**Germany:** see section C.3 below.
- 17.**Malta:** engineering works to recreate Simar Nature Reserve have been completed and a management plan has been prepared. Steps for Ramsar designation are in preparation.
- 18.**Netherlands:** see section C.3 below.
- 19.**Norway:** see section C.3 below.
- 20.**Portugal:** as foreshadowed at the Montreux Conference of the Parties, steps are being taken for the designation of a further seven listed sites, namely: Paúl de Arzila et Paúl de Madriz (Bas Mondego), Paúl de Boquilobo, lagoa de Albufeira, Estuário do Sado (y compris l'ècluse de Murta et Agualva de Baixo), Lagoa de St^eAndré et Lagoa de Sancha, Ria de Alvor, and Sapal de Castro Marim.
- 21.**Turkey:** see section C.3 below.
- 22.**United Kingdom:** there is a detailed forward programme for Ramsar site listing, complemented by site designation programmes under the European Union Directives on the Conservation of Wild Birds and on the Conservation of Natural Habitats etc. It is expected that the recently increased rate of listed site designations will continue. It is expected that the boundary of Cors Fochno & Dyfi listed site will be extended in 1996.
- 23.The UK is committed to extending the application of the Convention within its Dependent Territories. (*Bureau note:* since the UK National Report was compiled, Mai Po Marshes and Inner Deep Bay, Hong Kong, has been designated for the Ramsar List).

B.3 *Changes in legal status or degree of protection at listed sites*

- 24.**Finland, Malta, Norway, Portugal, and Turkey** report that no changes have taken place since the Kushiro Conference.
- 25.**Austria:** substantial parts of Neusiedlersee Ramsar site were included in 'Neusiedler See - Seewinkel' National Park.
- 26.In line with European Union Directives, several parts of the Donau-March-Auen Ramsar site have been designated as Natura 2000 sites.
- 27.**Belgium:** in 1992, the Ijzerbroeken site was designated as an 'Ecological Impulse Area'(EIA), with financial support available for ecological improvements. A core area of 1,000 ha is to be purchased for conservation, whilst extensive farming practices will be encouraged in surrounding areas. The Schorren van de Beneden Schelde site is also included within an EIA.

28. Plans are being developed with the Netherlands for a trans-boundary landscape park to include Kalmthoutse Heide listed site. Kalmthoutse Heide nature reserve has been extended.
29. The Marais d'Harchies listed site has been designated as a Wetland of Biological Interest by the Walloonian authorities.
30. The use of lead shot is prohibited by law in Flemish Ramsar sites.
31. **Denmark:** All Danish Ramsar sites have also been designated as Special Protection Areas under the EU Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds. They are therefore also covered by the provisions of the EU Habitats Directive. The Ministry of Environment and Energy has purchased some areas of meadows, pasture and fresh water habitats within listed sites with a view to wetland restoration.
32. The Ministerial Order referred to in section B.1 also lays down guidelines and binding rules for administration of the protected areas concerned. Ramsar sites may not be zoned for urban development, construction of holiday dwellings, or extraction of raw materials on land. Prohibited activities also include the construction of major roads, and extension of traffic/technical facilities (e.g. airports, landing strips, ports, overhead cables, windmill parks or refuse disposal sites). Strict regulations apply to mariculture. The Ministerial Order also made environmental impact assessment (EIA) compulsory in Ramsar sites.
33. Most of the Danish listed sites will be designated as Special Areas of Conservation under the EU Habitats Directive.
34. The use of jet skis has been prohibited in all Danish Ramsar sites (in fact, all territorial waters) to prevent adverse impacts on other user groups and on fauna (especially water birds and seals).
35. **France:** the Corsican listed site of Etang de Biguglia was designated as a Natural Reserve (réserve naturelle) in August 1994.
36. At the Golfe du Morbihan, the Special Protection Area designated under the European Union Birds Directive has been extended. Consideration is being given to establishment of a Regional Natural Park (parc naturel régional).
37. At the Baie du Mont Saint-Michel, legal measures have been taken to prevent extraction of shell sand and to control public access.
38. Two Natural Reserves are currently being established in the Etangs de la Champagne humide, whilst proposals for Natural Reserves in the two listed sites in French Guyana (Basse-Mana and Marais de Kaw) are in preparation.
39. **Iceland:** new legislation, from 1993 onwards, requires Environmental Impact Assessment of all major construction projects. This has strengthened the protection status of both listed sites, which are under pressure from further development.
40. **Italy:** measures are under way to clarify the legal status of the Lago di Barrea which had been intended for designation as a listed site.
41. A new law in 1992 provided for the establishment of hunting-free flyway corridors, to include several listed sites. However, the law has yet to be implemented at regional level.
42. The Regione di Sicilia has recently instituted regional protected areas at Biviere di Gela and Stagno di Vendicari listed sites.

43. **Germany:** three listed sites (Schleswig-Holsteinisches Wattenmeer and Unterer Niederrhein) have benefited from the designation or extension of National Parks and Nature Reserves. Nature Reserve extensions are planned at two additional listed sites (Galenbecker See and Niederung der Untere Havel/Gölper See). Changes in ownership which are favourable for the conservation of the wetlands concerned have taken place at nine listed sites.
44. **Liechtenstein:** in spring 1996, Parliament will pass a new act on nature and landscape protection. As a consequence, the ordinance on protection of Ruggeller Riet listed site will be revised.
45. **Netherlands:** the conservation status of the following listed sites has been enhanced by new protected area designations: De Biesbosch (National Park, 1994), Groote Peel (National Park, 1993), Wadden Sea (additional 80,000 ha designated as State Nature Reserve - 90% of the 180,000 ha intertidal area now designated; part of site designated under UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme; 26% designated as permanently closed for cockle and seed mussel fishing), Oosterschelde (14% designated as permanently closed for cockle and seed mussel fishing).
46. **Portugal:** although no significant changes have occurred in listed sites, certain negative factors exist. These include the long-term decline of traditional salt production, and the likely negative impact of a major bridge which will link the eastern part of the Lisbon with the left bank of the Tagus estuary (listed site). The bridge is likely to have adverse consequences, despite the mitigation measures put in place by the relevant authorities and by the bridge constructors.
47. **Sweden:** two new nature reserves have been designated within Falsterbo-Foteviken listed site.
48. **Switzerland:** Federal Ordinances concerning the protection of nationally important lowland marshes and the protection of nationally important alluvial areas entered into force in October 1994 and November 1995 respectively. These two laws strengthen substantially the degree of protection of wetlands of national importance in Switzerland. All listed Ramsar sites are covered by one or both of the ordinances.
49. **United Kingdom:** during the reporting period, 28 listed sites have benefitted from enhanced protection through designation as Special Protection Areas under the European Union Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds.
50. At least 40 UK listed sites have been wholly or partly identified as possible Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) under the European Union Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora. Annexes I and II of the Directive list a number of wetland habitats and species which are to be treated as priorities in the designation of SACs. The Directive is implemented in Great Britain by the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 1994, and in Northern Ireland by the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland). These regulations build on a range of existing domestic legislation and place additional duties on certain statutory authorities to ensure that the requirements of the Directive are met.

B.4 Changes in ecological character at listed sites:

51. **Liechtenstein, Switzerland, and Turkey** note that no significant changes have taken place since December 1992.
52. **Austria:** at the Neusiedlersee, Seewinkel and Hanság listed site, the following adverse changes have been noted: slow, but progressive drying out of some reedbed areas; vegetation succession and drying out of some salt lakes. However, a new sluice regulation and steps to block drainage ditches have helped to raise water levels, and a set-aside scheme has been introduced in

adjacent vine-yards to establish a buffer zone. Additional mowing of wet meadows invaded by reeds has been carried out since 1993.

53. At Untere Lobau listed site, projects to restore (or simulate) natural water flow dynamics, including diversion of water to inundate the site, are under way.

54. **Belgium:** at the Zwin listed site, siltation of saltmarshes and mudflats is continuing as a result of artificial sand supply to nearby tourist beaches and extension of Zeebrugge port. Construction projects within the buffer zone of the site have recently been cancelled.

55. Blankaart lake was dredged between 1992 and 1995 and sewage treatment has been improved. Nevertheless, eutrophication is still very high as a result of intensive farming in the catchment. Further restoration measures are under way.

56. Extensive winter flooding in the Yzer valley in 1993/94 and 1994/95 has led to growing conflict between nature conservation and agriculture, with pressure for increased drainage, dredging, and dike-building, together with sluice-gate improvements to speed the flow of flood water from the catchment into the North Sea. Such work would seriously affect the ecological character of the Izerbroeken listed site and an integrated water management plan is needed urgently. The area is also under threat from possible construction of the A19 highway, which, if approved, would bisect the Yzer valley.

57. A container terminal is under construction immediately adjacent to the Schorren van de Beneden Schelde (tidal marshes along the Lower Scheldt river) listed site (also on the Montreux Record) and is liable to cause disruption of tidal currents and sediments. Compensation measures are under discussion. In May 1995 it was decided that all privately owned intertidal land, not already under conservation status, will be expropriated to create one large State Nature Reserve.

58. **Denmark:** one Danish listed site, Ringkøbing Fjord, is presently included in the Montreux Record. The Danish authorities have indicated to the Ramsar Standing Committee that the ecological character of the site has improved steadily since 1988 as a result of major restoration and rehabilitation efforts, and that the site should now be removed from the Montreux Record.

59. Actual or potential eutrophication is a significant factor at many Danish listed sites (e.g. Stadil & Veststadil Fjords, Nissum Fjord, Nissum Bredning, Vejlerne & Løgstør Bredning, Randers & Mariager Fjords, South Funen Archipelago, Nakskov Fjord & Inner Fjord, and Maribo Lakes. Pollution of the Wadden Sea (due to discharge of nutrient-rich river water and inflow of pollution from the North Sea) is increasing.

60. A lack of sufficient cattle grazing, leading to overgrowth of vegetation in some important salt marsh and meadow areas, is another widespread management challenge (e.g. Nissum Fjord, Vejlerne & Løgstør Bredning, Ulvedybet & Nybe Bredning, Læsø, Lillebælt, Nærá Coast, and Præstø Fjord.

61. Extraction of raw materials from the sea bed may have contributed to coastal erosion at 'Waters North of Anholt'. Sedimentation is a problem at Horsens Fjord & Endelave. There is heavy hunting pressure in the open sea areas in the 'Waters Southeast of Fejø & Femø Islands' listed site. Negotiations concerning sustainable use of the Wadden Sea's natural stock of mussels (*Mytilus edulis*) have been initiated by the Ministry of Environment and Energy.

62. **Finland:** the increase in American mink (*Mustela vison*) is a concern at Aspskär islands and Söderskär-Långören islands; capture efforts have been intensified. Patvinsuo has been adversely affected by Canadian beaver (*Castor canadensis*). Långören has suffered from increased recreational boating.

63. Efforts to improve the vegetation for nesting birds have proved successful at several listed sites (Aspskär Islands, Söderskär-Långören Islands, Björkö-Lågskär islands).
64. The rapid rise of land relative to sea level at Valassaaret-Björkögrunden islands and Krunnit islands listed sites is causing vegetational succession and the establishment of new habitats.
65. During the 1970s, effluent from the town of Porvoo was discharged directly into Porvoonjoki estuary, which includes Ruskis listed site. Water quality is now improving as a result of treatment measures. Expansion of reedbeds is diminishing the area of open water in the site.
66. The discharge of sewage effluent to Vanhankaupunginlahti bay (which includes Viiki listed site) was stopped in 1987. It is hoped that the severely degraded submerged flora and fauna of the bay will recover as water quality improves.
67. Several coastal/marine island listed sites are potentially vulnerable to the effects of oil pollution.
68. **France:** in the Golfe du Morbihan, harvesting of shellfish has caused some disturbance to water birds and damage to beds of eelgrass (*Zostera*). During 1995, a one-month season was authorized. The Government of France will evaluate the impact of this activity in terms of conservation.
69. **Germany:** *Bureau note:* for each site, as far as data availability allowed, the German National Report provides information under the following headings: (1) Adverse anthropogenic impacts and disruptions, classified as: sustained adverse impact; new adverse impact; reduction of adverse impacts/improvement achieved through conservation and management policies and measures. (2) Consequences for the ecological features of the sites concerned, classified as: very positive over all development, gradual positive over all development; positive development with regard to certain areas or aspects; over all situation largely unchanged; negative development with regard to specific areas or aspects; gradual negative over all development; very negative over all development. No sites are recorded as having either very positive or very negative developments.
70. Sustained adverse impacts are recorded for 16 listed sites. Eutrophication, intensive agricultural use and disturbance from recreational activities are amongst the most frequently mentioned sustained adverse impacts. Reduction of adverse impacts / improvement is recorded for 9 listed sites.
71. The following six sites are reported to have undergone gradual positive overall development in their ecological features:
- Schleswig-Holsteinisches Wattenmeer
Ismaninger Speichersee & Fischteichen
Ammersee*
Starnberger See*
Chiemsee*
Unterer Inn, Haiming - Neuhaus
- (*Bureau note:* for these three sites it is noted that the overall aquatic ecosystem has improved, although there have been declines in numbers of waterbirds)
72. The following eight sites are reported to have undergone gradual negative overall development in their ecological features:

Niederelbe, Barnkrug - Otterndorf
 Elbeaue, Schnackenburg - Lauenburg
 Dümmer See
 Diepholzer Moorniederung
 Steinhudermeer
 Krakower Obersee
 Galenbecker See
 Unterer Niederrhein (Montreux Record site)

(*Bureau note:* the detailed information provided under this heading extends to seven pages of the National Report and only a brief summary has been provided above. Copies of the full report are available, upon request, from the Bureau)

73. There are two listed sites on the Montreux Record: Ostfriesisches Wattenmeer & Dollart, and Unterer Niederrhein.

74. In its letters of December 1994 and March 1995, the Federal Ministry for the Environment informed the Bureau of the measures taken to maintain the ecological character of Ostfriesisches Wattenmeer & Dollart (specifically in the area known as Leybucht). Particular reference was made to a judgement of the European Court of Justice which found proposed construction in the Leybucht area would not degrade the ecological features of the site.

75. In its letter to the Bureau of April 1995, the Ministry provided information on the steps being taken to achieve a progressive reduction of adverse impacts on the site by securing land for conservation, implementation of an ecologically oriented planning process, and improved monitoring. The Bureau has been asked to remove both sites from the Montreux Record.

76. **Iceland:** detailed information on the status of Mývatn-Laxá and Thjórsárver listed sites (formerly both included in the Montreux Record) were presented to the Fourth and 5th meetings of the Conference in Montreux and Kushiro. After the Kushiro Conference, both sites were removed from the Montreux Record on the basis of information presented by the Government of Iceland on measures taken to safeguard them. At Lake Mývatn (part of Mývatn-Laxá listed site), a new diatomite mining permit was issued in 1993 which grants limited extraction until 2010. At Thjórsárver, plans still exist to submerge about 16 km² by damming of the river Thjórsá.

77. **Italy:** changes in ecological character have been reported for the following listed sites: Isola Boscone (vegetation degradation), Palude di Ostiglia (petroleum pollution), Gorino (engineering works), Palude Brabbia (need for improved water circulation and fire prevention measures), Diaccia Botrona (inflow of salt water), Stagno di Vendicari (drying out of wetland), Punta Alberete (vegetation management needed), Valle Campotto (drainage), Valle Santa (drainage).

78. In 1988, the National Italian Financial Law made a strong commitment (approximately 90 million Swiss Francs) to restoration measures for internationally important wetlands around the city of Cagliari in southern Sardinia, notably for Stagno di Molentargius, a Montreux Record site. The Ministry of Environment has worked closely with the regional government of Sardinia and with national and international experts to identify the technical, scientific, planning and administrative measures necessary.

79. Restoration measures financed under the European Commission's LIFE regulation have been developed for the Laguna di Orbetello (Montreux Record) and Lago di Sabaudia listed sites.

80. **Liechtenstein:** at Ruggeller Riet, vegetation maps from 1971 and 1995 are being compared in an effort to determine whether nutrient-rich water draining from surrounding agricultural land has caused any adverse changes.

- 81.**Malta:** exotic vegetation, planted prior to Ramsar designation, is being replaced by indigenous species at Ghadira listed site.
- 82.**Netherlands:** eutrophication, pollution and over-extraction of both ground and surface water for domestic, industrial and agricultural purposes are still matters of great concern and action is being taken at local, regional, national and international levels. A number of listed sites would have lost most of their unique wetland character had it not been for the implementation of costly hydrological management techniques, including the establishment of hydrological buffer zones at the following sites: Zwanenwater, Groote Peel, Deurnese Peel, Naardermeer, Weerribben, Bargerveen, Engbertsdijksvenen and De Deelen.
- 83.A number of listed sites are ultimately dependent on the river Rhine for their water supply, which results in high loadings of pollutants and nutrients.
- 84.Dredging and removal of polluted soils is under way at De Biesbosch and Naardermeer, but inflow of polluted surface water and agricultural runoff still pose problems. Water management at Groote Peel is directed specifically at isolating the wetland from inflow of eutrophic surface water.
- 85.Measures are being implemented at the Boschplaat and Griend to minimize the adverse impacts on nature conservation of coastal erosion.
- 86.The ecology of the Oosterschelde/Markiezaat site is still changing as the result of major hydrological engineering works carried out between 1958 and 1987 (year of Ramsar designation). The Markiezaat was isolated from tidal influences in 1984, whilst a flood protection barrier was constructed in the Oosterschelde. It will take several decades before a new equilibrium is reached.
- 87.Predation of vulnerable species of ground nesting waterbirds (especially purple heron *Ardea purpurea* and spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*) red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) is a problem at Zwanenwater and control measures have been increased.
- 88.A number of species reintroduction programme have been carried out in Dutch wetlands, including listed sites. Between 1988 and 1991 European beavers (*Castor fiber*) were introduced at De Biesbosch; the population now numbers 60 animals. Red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) have been introduced at Oostvaardersplassen.
- 89.Since 1993, use of lead shot in wetlands (including all listed sites) has been banned.
- 90.Within the frameworks of the Dutch Wadden Sea Agreement and the Dutch Memorandum on Coastal Fisheries, guidelines have been formulated to enable the sustainable exploitation of marine resources in the tidal areas of the Netherlands.
- 91.**Norway:** there have been no substantial changes in ecological character at any of the Norwegian listed sites, although a gradual change (or likely change) has been observed at some sites (e.g. as a result of eutrophication from agricultural run-off). Long-range (largely trans-boundary) air pollution affects many wetlands adversely, especially in southern Norway, but increasingly in the western part of the country too.
92. At the listed site of Åkersvika, successful treatment of waste water and agricultural run-off has resulted in a marked decrease in nutrients and hence a reduction in biomass production. However, this has accelerated erosion of islands and numbers of waterbirds have also fallen. Proposals for future management measures are currently out to consultation. With reference to construction of an Olympic ice-rink adjacent to the Åkersvika Ramsar site (referred to in the

1993 National Report), measures to reduce adverse impacts included tree planting to screen the building, extension of the nature reserve by 10 ha, and establishment of a 1 million Norwegian Kroner (approximately 180,000 Swiss Francs) fund for managing the reserve.

93. At Tautra and Svaet consideration is currently being given to altering the causeway built prior to Ramsar designation in order to restore the site's ecological character.

94. The Directorate for Nature Management has proposed stricter regulations, especially for agricultural and recreational activities, at Jæren and plans to extend the protected area are out to public consultation.

95. A total of 750,000 Norwegian Kroner (c. 135,000 Swiss Francs) has been allocated for a three-year study on the effects of hunting and recreational boating at Nordre Øyeren.

96. At Ørlandet, an application to construct a causeway between two islands, crossing a 1 km stretch of shallow water within the Ramsar site, was rejected in 1994, although an appeal may be made against this decision.

97. **Sweden:** no significantly adverse changes have been noted at listed sites.

98. The restoration project at Lake Hornborga has been completed, and other restoration measures or management improvements have been implemented at a further nine sites:

Falsterbo-Foteviken, Klingavälsån, Åsnen, Öland, Östen, Kilsviken, Hjälvstaviken, Svartån, Hovran.

99. **United Kingdom:** *Bureau note:* the UK National Report provides detailed information for each of the 91 sites which had been designated at the time of report compilation, under the headings 'Change in Legal Status', 'Change in Ecological Character', and 'Management Plan'. Copies of this section of the report, which extends to some 30 pages, are available from the Bureau on request. The following is a summary of what appear to be the key points regarding 'Change in Ecological Character'.

100. There has been no change in ecological character during the reporting period at 46 (just over 50%) of the UK's listed sites.

101. Positive factors are noted at the following 16 sites:

- Bure Marshes (improved water quality)
- Hickling Broad & Horsey Mere (recovery of macrophytes)
- Minsmere - Walberswick (reedbed restoration)
- North Norfolk Coast (wetland restoration at Holkham)
- Holburn Moss (improved water level management)
- Irthinghead Mires (improved water level management)
- Martin Mere (improved grassland management; establishment of reedbed filter system)
- Upper Severn Estuary (improved grazing management; habitat creation)
- Pagham Harbour (improved grassland management; reduced impact of site visitors)
- Gruinart Flats (improved hydrological management)
- Old Hall Marshes (improved hydrological management)
- Upper Solway Flats & Marshes (improved grazing management in part of site)
- Roydon Common (clearance of invading vegetation)
- Nene Washes (improved hydrological management)
- Benfleet & Southend (controls on cockle fishery)
- Broadland (removal of phosphate and nutrient-rich sediments from part of site)

102. Negative factors are noted for the following 22 sites:

Lochs Druidibeg, A'Machair & Stilligary (agricultural changes; impact of rabbits & feral animals)
Loch Leven (eutrophication)
North Norfolk Coast (saltwater flooding at Cley)
Ouse Washes (excessive spring/summer flooding)
Abberton Reservoir (eutrophication)
Rostherne Mere (eutrophication)
Silver Flowe (fire damage; acidification)
Chesil Beach & The Fleet (nutrient enrichment)
Dee Estuary (*inter alia* impact of coastal defences; dumping; cockling; recreational disturbance)
Loch of Skene (nutrient enrichment)
Redgrave and South Lopham Fens (groundwater abstraction)
Llyn Idwal (overgrazing; erosion; acidification)
Esthwaite Water (eutrophication)
Walmore Common (increased efficiency of drainage)
Exe Estuary (*inter alia* unauthorized shellfish collection)
Chippenham Fen (water abstraction)
Burry Inlet (unregulated digging for fishing bait)
Loch Ken & Dee Marshes (pollution)
Crymlyn Bog (encroachment by scrub vegetation)
Hamford Water (erosion due to sea-level rise)
Midlands Meres & Mosses Phase I (eutrophication)
Broadland (drying out of reedbeds)

Bureau note: in view of the significance of the impacts at the 12 underlined sites, the UK considers that their ecological character has changed, is changing, or is likely to change (negatively) as a result of technological developments or other human interference. However, the report states that, "none of these [changes] are considered sufficiently serious to warrant the inclusion of additional UK sites on the Montreux Record". In many cases the report provides information on the measures being taken to tackle the adverse changes recorded.

103. Possible negative factors in the future are noted for the following 10 sites:

Cors Fochno & Dyfi (oil/gas exploration; shellfish harvesting)
Lough Neagh & Loch Beg (water abstraction)
Claish Moss (impact of adjacent conifer plantation)
Derwent Ings (impact of mining)
The Swale (construction adjacent to the site)
Rutland Water (chemical treatment to avoid algal blooms)
Lower Derwent Valley (impact of mining)
Humber Flats & Marshes Phase I (flood defence works)
Broadland (flood alleviation scheme)
Portsmouth Harbour (housing construction)

B.5 Status of sites mentioned in Kushiro Recommendation 5.1

104. *Bureau note:* Recommendation 5.1 is applicable to Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Malta, Portugal, Netherlands, Spain, and UK.

- 105.**Austria:** (*Bureau note:* Recommendation 5.1.3 made reference to the development of a Danube Basin Ecological Convention. The preparation of such a treaty is at an advanced stage, with a fourth draft text discussed in Budapest in September 1995. Austria plays an active role in other international mechanisms which aim to promote the conservation and wise use of the Danube, including the 'Convention on Cooperation for the Protection and Sustainable Use of the Danube River Basin'.)
- 106.**France:** (*Bureau note:* Recommendation 5.1 welcomed the statements of France, and other Contracting Parties, that further sites would be designated for the Ramsar List after the Kushiro Conference. France designated 8 sites between December 1993 and September 1995.)
- 107.**Germany:** see section B.3 for information on the Montreux Record site Ostfriesisches Wattenmeer & Dollart (Leybucht). The National Report provides further information concerning the cessation of plans for harbour construction in the site, measures taken to reduce the impact of the Statoil pipeline construction (completed in 1994), and ongoing disturbance from low altitude military aircraft operations.
- 108.**Iceland:** see section B.3.
- 109.**Malta:** see section B.1 for information on possible new listed site.
- 110.**Netherlands:** Recommendation 5.1 expressed the concern of the Conference of the Contracting Parties with regard to possible new gas exploitation in the Dutch sector of the Wadden Sea. Subsequently, the Dutch Minister of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries sent an explanatory letter to the Secretary General of the Convention, setting out the measures being taken to safeguard the environment as part of a five-year exploitation agreement. (*Bureau note:* the National Report provides a one-page summary of the explanation given to the Bureau; copies are available on request).
- 111.**United Kingdom:** (*Bureau note:* Recommendation 5.1 welcomed the statements of the UK, and other Contracting Parties, that further sites would be designated for the Ramsar List after the Kushiro Conference. The UK had designated 34 such sites by 31 December 1995).

B.6 *Implementation of Resolution 5.7: Management Planning for Ramsar Sites*

- 112.**Austria:** management plans have been prepared and are being implemented at four sites, including Donau-March-Auen (Montreux Record site). Management plans are in preparation at a further three sites.
- 113.**Belgium:** the management plan for the Marais d'Harchies is currently under revision.
- 114.**Denmark:** it has been decided not to develop specific management plans for all listed sites as a general procedure, since most human activities are already regulated pursuant to physical planning, and nature and environment protection legislation. Nevertheless, specific management plans will be developed and implemented at selected sites, where additional measures are needed.
- 115.**Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands** have agreed to establish a tri-lateral management plan, including a series of 'ecological quality' targets for the Wadden Sea; progress will be assessed at the 8th Trilateral Governmental Conference on the Wadden Sea in 1997.
- 116.**Finland:** a management plan is being implemented for Vanhankaupunginlahti bay (which includes Viiki listed site), and a management plan is in preparation for Koitelaiskaira mire.

- 117.**France:** so far, no overall Ramsar site management plans have been prepared. However, most listed sites benefit from national protected area designations, notably Natural Reserves (more strict protection) and Regional Natural Parks. These two designations carry the obligation to develop a management plan (in the case of Natural Reserves) or legal framework/charter (in the case of Regional Natural Parks). Local committees established for each listed site are responsible for ensuring that Ramsar obligations are integrated in these plans and charters. It is therefore not considered necessary to develop separate Ramsar management plans.
- 118.**Germany:** the National Report includes a table showing the status of management planning at each of the 31 listed sites in Germany. Nine sites are entirely covered by management plans, whilst a further 18 sites have partial management plans or plans that are in preparation. Four sites (Lech - Donau - Winkel, Ismaninger Speichersee & Fischteichen, Starnberger See, and Mühlenberger Loch) have no management plan.
- 119.The following general difficulties are noted: the objectives of existing management plans to not necessarily take account of the objectives of the Ramsar Convention; in many cases, only parts of listed sites are covered and there is inadequate coordination between the plans for differing parts of the same site; the formulation of management targets is too static in nature; the financial means and staff resources available to the authorities responsible for implementing the management plans are insufficient.
- 120.**Iceland:** the Physical Planning Agency, in cooperation with the Nature Conservation Council, has initiated physical planning of the Mývatn-Laxá area, based on the Environmental Impact Assessment completed in 1993. Research and monitoring at the site is directed toward ecosystem management. At Thjórsárver, a special committee advises the Nature Conservation Council on conservation issues in the Ramsar site.
- 121.**Italy:** a management plan has been prepared for Palude Brabbia and is being implemented with support from the Regione di Lombardia.
- 122.**Liechtenstein:** a new management plan is in preparation for the listed site of Ruggeller Riet. During 1994 a series of permanent sample plots was established at the site, with the aim of monitoring possible changes in vegetation. A three-year study of hydrological conditions, soil characteristics and agricultural uses commenced in 1995.
- 123.**Netherlands:** all listed sites are covered by the implementation of agreed management plans. The Wadden Sea is managed within the framework of the common management plan developed with Denmark and Germany.
- 124.**Norway:** management of protected areas, including Ramsar sites, has been delegated to each County Governor's Environment Department. Increasing attention is being paid to the development of site-based management plans for all protected areas, although the Ramsar guidelines are not applied directly. The Directorate of Nature Management is preparing a manual on management planning, for distribution by the end of 1995. Management plans already exist for Åkersvika, Tautra and parts of Ørlandet Ramsar sites, and are in preparation, or soon to be initiated for other listed sites, including those in Svalbard.
- 125.**Portugal:** management plans have been developed or are in progress for several important wetland protected areas, including the Sado Estuary proposed listed site. Management measures to improve water quality are under way at Ria Formosa listed site.
- 126.**Sweden:** the Government has instructed the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency to develop guidelines for management of all Ramsar sites. However, only a limited number of sites yet have management plans in place.

- 127.**Switzerland:** all listed sites already have plans for their protection and management. However, there are still certain difficulties in the detailed implementation of these plans, due mainly to often diverging economic interests.
- 128.**Turkey:** management plans for Burdur Gölü (Burdur lake) and Kus Gölü (Kus Lake) have been prepared by the Ministry of Environment. Progress is being made towards the development of site-specific plans for the other three listed sites: Seyfe Gölü (Seyfe lake), Sultan Sazlı_ı (Sultan marshes) and Göksu Deltası (Göksu delta).
- 129.**United Kingdom:** the form of management planning in the UK closely follows that recommended by Kushi Resolution 5.7. A total of 75 UK listed sites now have management plans in preparation or being implemented (*Bureau note:* a list of the 75 sites, together with notes on the management measures taken at individual sites, is available on request, from the Bureau). Such plans are developed by a range of organizations depending on ownership and jurisdiction over sites. It is intended that management plans be prepared by the statutory conservation agencies for all remaining listed sites by 2004.
- B.7 Additional comments on listed sites*
- 130.**Denmark:** it is considered that the procedure and aims for development of the common management plan for the Wadden Sea could serve as a model for other complex wetland ecosystems, especially transboundary sites.
131. (*Bureau note:* the Danish National Report includes detailed information for all 27 listed sites in Denmark - excluding Greenland. The headings given for each site are: Area number, Name, County, Geographical Coordinates, Total area, Protection, Ownership, Habitat, Gradual ecological changes, Active intervention in the environment, Potential threats, Formalised protection measures, Current operations or management for the benefit of waterbirds. These data are available from the Ramsar Convention Bureau, on request).
- 132.**Iceland:** further developments at listed sites, and possible additional designations, will be brought to the attention of the Brisbane Conference.
- 133.**Norway:** information boards and brochures have been produced for all listed sites in mainland Norway, and observation towers have been built at some sites. Information centres have been established at Ilene, Jæren and Stabbursneset.
- 134.**Sweden:** it is intended that all listed sites will become part of the Natura 2000 network under the European Union Habitats Directive.
- 135.**United Kingdom:** the Ramsar Monitoring Procedure was implemented at the Dee Estuary in November 1994. The objective was to assist in finding solutions to long-standing conservation problems at the site and to enable its removal from the Montreux Record. The Ramsar team met with representatives of Government, local authorities, statutory bodies, NGOs and estuary users. Two days were spent visiting key sites around the estuary, whilst a third day was devoted to a workshop discussion of the issues identified. The report produced (copies available from the Ramsar Bureau) by the Ramsar team contained recommendations currently under consideration by the UK Government.

C. Wise Use of Wetlands

C.1 Progress towards formulation and application of a national wetland policy

- 136.**Austria:** in June 1995, the National Ramsar Committee (Austrian state and federal governments) agreed on the preparation of a National Wetland Policy. Preliminary work has already begun, although the financial resources for realization of the agreement have not yet been secured.
- 137.**Belgium:** in the Flemish Region, adverse factors for wetlands include: inadequate sewage treatment and water purification (despite recent and on-going improvements); eutrophication as a result of very intensive agricultural practices; low water tables because of pumping to maintain drainage for agriculture (especially excessive dung production); small and fragmented nature of wetlands making them vulnerable to adverse external influences. Following consultation in 1994, the Flemish Nature Policy Plan was revised to include a 'Green Structure' map with the aim of establishing a coherent network of core areas, nature development areas and corridors, including all major wetlands and river valleys. The Green Structure will be incorporated into a new, over all physical planning map for Flanders. Pilot nature development projects have been established in five areas, two of which are Ramsar sites. Several committees for integrated water management in major river valleys have been established.
- 138.**Denmark:** at least 260 former wetland areas larger than 10 ha (covering a total of 55,000 ha), together with many other smaller wetlands (covering 107,000 ha) have been drained and converted in the last 100 years, notably to increase agricultural production. 1,200 km of coastal areas have been embanked. Against this context, the aim of the entire nature and environmental conservation effort in Denmark, including that related to wetlands, is the maintenance of biological diversity, and restoration of wetlands is a key element of the Nature Protection Act (approximately US\$ 60 million were allocated for nature management and wetland restoration projects between 1989 and 1994).
- 139.The requirement for a national wetland policy is met by an integrated and comprehensive set of nature protection and environmental laws and strategies, which also comply with Article 6 of the Convention on Biological Diversity.
- 140.During 1995 the Danish Forest and Nature Agency prepared a national Biodiversity Strategy Report, in consultation with central/regional authorities and NGOs.
- 141.In 1993, a country-wide ban on use of lead shot pellets was implemented, with the exception of forested areas.
- 142.(*Bureau note:* the Danish report provides detailed information on the provisions (as they influence conservation and wise use of wetlands) of the Nature Protection Act (1992), the Act on the Structure of Agriculture, the Raw Materials Act (1990), Action Plan for the Aquatic Environment (1987), the Act related to Protection of the Tønder Marsh (1994), the Hunting and Wildlife Management Act, the Marine Environment Act (1993), Action Plans for conservation measures on land and at sea, and an Action Plan to extend the Wildlife and Nature Reserve Network in Denmark. Further information is available from the Ramsar Convention Bureau, on request.)
- 143.**Finland:** became a member of the European Union in 1995; some adjustments to existing legislation will be required in order to implement fully the provisions of EU Directives relating to nature conservation.
- 144.The Water Act (1991) contains more provisions than any other Finnish Act. At its core are measures to prohibit wetland alteration, pollution and drainage.
- 145.Implementation of national wetland policies is considered to be an integral part of over all Finnish conservation policy.

146.**France:** to mark World Water Day, the Ministry of Environment presented a wetland protection and restoration plan to the Council of Ministers in March 1995. This plan was drawn up following the publication in September 1994 of a report evaluating the impact of government policies on wetlands. The main aims of the action plan are:

- to inventory wetlands and strengthen monitoring and evaluation;
- to ensure consistency of government policies;
- to put into effect wetland restoration measures;
- to launch a publicity and awareness programme

(*Bureau note:* further information on these four priorities, as presented in the French National Report, is available from the Ramsar Convention Bureau, on request.)

147.**Germany:** in 1991, common approaches for future nature conservation measures in Germany were formulated for the first time by the Federal and Länder Governments in the so-called 'Lübeck Principles'. These state that natural and near-natural wetlands should be given top priority with regard to prevention of detrimental changes and establishment of restoration and rehabilitation measures. Particular attention is being paid to the alluvial plains of major river systems (Rhine, Danube, Elbe, Havel and Oder), and to tidal flats, the Baltic Sea coast, the Mecklenburg lakes and the wetlands of the alpine foothills.

148. Implementation, on a step by step basis is based primarily on landscape management, specific conservation programmes and concepts, the designation of extensive protected areas and improved legal provisions at Federal and Länder levels. Efforts are under way to reduce the widespread adverse impacts arising from the use of particular substances and materials, through a more nature conservation-oriented approach and the establishment of a uniform monitoring system. The approaches and considerations set out in the Lübeck Principles could be developed further to shape a national wetland policy.

149.**Iceland:** the Nature Conservancy Council (NCC), which advises Government on conservation matters, established a wetland conservation policy in 1978. This is being implemented by the establishment of wetland nature reserves, and the development of legislation covering large areas (e.g. Act on the Conservation of Breidafjörður Bay, 1995). The NCC, acting on behalf of the Icelandic Government, has incorporated wetland policy within its over all conservation policies. See also section B.2 above.

150.**Italy:** within the framework of the 'MedWet' initiative for Mediterranean wetlands, a strong element of which involves promotion of national wetland policies, Italy cooperates with other Mediterranean States and NGOs. The programme is funded largely by the European Commission, through its ACNAT and LIFE regulations. The Italian Ministry for the Environment has hosted and funded the MedWet Secretariat, in conjunction with WWF-Italy. Among the most significant results from the first phase of MedWet has been the demonstration of a clear need for more national coordination of activities affecting Mediterranean wetlands. A major MedWet Conference will be hosted by Italy in Venice in June 1996.

151. The Nature Conservation Service of the Ministry of Environment has prepared a National Wetlands Plan, which, on the basis of the results of MedWet, and in accordance with the national framework law for protected areas. Five basic themes have been established: background research, creation of a new 'national network' of wetlands; identification of new integrated management and sustainable development strategies; identification of demonstration activities; monitoring and dissemination of results.

152.**Netherlands:** the 1990 Nature Policy Plan (NPP) has resulted in actions to improve the conservation of wetlands, including establishment of a National Ecological Network (NEN). The

aims of the NEN include strengthening of wetland ecological corridors, such as rivers between lakes. Specific instruments such as the Regulation on Land Management Agreements, which provides for financial compensation to farmers who adopt 'nature-friendly' practices, are applied in buffer zone management. The NPP and NEN are becoming increasingly integrated into major strategic planning documents such as the Third Water Management Policy Plan and the National Environmental Policy Plan.

153. The NPP also provides an important policy framework for Dutch links with wetlands in other countries, and in the autumn of 1995 the Dutch Government published a Programme on International Conservation (PIC), based on the following principles: ecological links between the Netherlands and other countries; concern over adverse ecological impacts of Dutch activities abroad; international agreements; Dutch knowledge and experience; integrated international nature policy. Wetlands are a major element of the PIC.
154. As a result of changes in its mandate and in the system by which members are elected, the regional water boards responsible for hydrological management of Dutch waters and polders now include better representation of nature and wetland conservation interests.
155. The Netherlands Antilles Government has drafted a new Nature Management Law which will be presented to Parliament for adoption before the end of 1995. The proposed law obliges all island territories that have Ramsar sites to implement the provisions of the treaty. Aruba passed a similar law in 1994 providing for the establishment of protected areas.
156. Policy documents produced by the Directorate General for International Cooperation of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs have acknowledged the importance of wetlands in natural resource productivity and maintenance of biodiversity. Cooperative projects with other countries are screened, through Environmental Impact Assessment procedures, for possible adverse impacts on wetlands and their values. Care is taken to integrate wise use approaches in approved development projects. A broad expert group - the Dutch Working Group on the Sustainable Use and Management of Tropical Wetlands - has been established as a source of information and platform for discussion.
157. **Norway:** for wetlands not covered by protected areas, wise use is addressed *inter alia* through the Planning and Building Act, which enables integration of nature conservation at municipal and county and national levels. The Act also provides for public participation and environmental impact assessment of major projects. Planning guidance has also been produced on a variety of circumstances relevant to wetlands (e.g. on road construction close to water courses and lakes), and other efforts have been made to minimize adverse impacts on wetlands (e.g. improved use of economic instruments in agriculture, such as removal of grants for drainage and cultivation of peatlands).
158. Norway has, therefore, not developed a single wetlands policy as such, but has strived to integrate conservation and wise use of wetlands as a part of sectoral policies. Wetlands will also be addressed within the Norwegian Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.
159. In 1995, the Ministry of the Environment presented a report to Parliament on Svalbard and the environment, with significant recommendations on strengthening conservation and wise use of the archipelago.
160. **Portugal:** the Minister of Environment presides over the National Water Council which integrates governmental bodies and non-governmental organizations. The National Water Plan has to be developed in the context of integrated catchment management. Within the framework of Drainage Basin Councils, management plans have to be prepared for each

drainage basin. Plans for the Vouga, Guadiana and Tejo have already been started. Various other legal measures have been taken to improve the conservation and wise use of specific areas.

161.**Sweden:** no over all wetland policy has been prepared, but a national plan for peatland conservation has been published. An Action Plan for the Conservation of Biological Diversity is currently in preparation and will incorporate wetlands.

162.All drainage activities within Ramsar sites have been banned throughout Sweden since January 1994. A general prohibition on drainage is in place in the southern municipalities of the country, accounting for about 25% of Swedish territory.

163.The use of lead shot in Ramsar sites was prohibited in 1994.

164.**Switzerland:** there is no national wetland policy as such, in the sense that wetlands are included within the general nature and landscape protection policy. Especially relevant are articles 18 and 21 of the 1966 Federal Law on Nature and Landscape Protection. These articles make special reference to wetlands and led to the establishment of Federal Ordinances concerning the protection of upland and lowland marshes and alluvial areas. The Federal Law was amended in 1995 to provide for additional protection of marshy areas of special beauty and of national importance.

165.**Turkey:** following entry into force of the Convention, the Ministry of Environment published a Circular to all Governmental units concerning the Ramsar commitments accepted by Turkey.

166.Preparation of the National Environmental Action Plan - which will provide for implementing the commitments arising from Turkish ratification of the Ramsar Convention - is being carried out under the auspices of the Ministry of Environment and with financial support from the World Bank.

167.Regulations are in force concerning water pollution control and hunting of waterbirds. Under the latter, a list of endangered species, duration of the hunting season, and other restrictions (e.g. determination of no-hunting zones) are drawn up annually. However, it has not proved possible to implement these controls throughout the country, because of the vast area concerned.

168.**United Kingdom:** the UK safeguards wetlands through a combination of site-based and policy-based mechanisms (*Bureau note:* these are described in detail in the National Report under the headings 'Coastal Policy', 'Estuaries', 'Inland Waters', and 'Peatlands'; copies of these sections - on which the following summary is based - are available on request). A wide range of government departments and organizations implement legislation and policies contributing to the over all process. Good working relations between Government departments, statutory agencies and NGOs, and their combined efforts, generally result in the wise use of UK wetlands.

169.Planning Policy Guidance Note No. 9 and Habitats and Birds Directives Circular 6/95, set out the government's objectives for nature conservation in England and Scotland, respectively, and are used by statutory planning authorities and others involved with development proposals.

170.Coastal Policy: a Coastal Forum has been established in England to bring together key bodies for discussion of coastal issues. In Northern Ireland a consultation paper on coastal management has been published, and a paper is in preparation for Scotland.

171.Seventeen Regional Directories of UK coastal features of environmental importance are being produced for coastal zone planners and decision makers. The directories will be of special use in future consideration of offshore oil exploration licences.

172. As part of its Strategy for Flood Defence and Coastal Defence in England and Wales, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Foods (MAFF) is encouraging the preparation of Shoreline Management Plans.
173. English Nature has launched its marine strategy 'Conserving England's Marine Heritage - A Strategy', focusing on the wider sea, Sensitive Marine Areas and Areas of Special Interest.
174. Experiments are being conducted in south-east England to combat coastal erosion through promoting 'soft engineering' solutions such as allowing development of saltmarsh by managed set-back or controlled breaching of artificial defences.
175. Improvements in quality of coastal waters have been achieved through implementation of EU Directives on Urban Waste Water Treatment, and on Shellfish Waters. Measures are also being taken to reduce pollution from shipping.
176. Estuaries: the UK aims to establish long-term sustainable strategies for the country's 163 estuaries through development of non-statutory integrated management plans. English Nature launched its Estuaries Initiative in 1992. The Government has set a target of 27 agreed plans in England by 1997.
177. Scottish Natural Heritage has launched an initiative for estuaries in Scotland (known locally as 'firths').
178. A major report published in 1993 on 'Disturbance to Waterfowl on Estuaries' has been widely used in planning and conservation casework.
179. The first three of seven volumes of 'An Inventory of UK estuaries' have been published by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee.
180. Inland Waters: the National Rivers Authority (NRA) is in the process of preparing Catchment Management Plans for rivers in England and Wales. The NRA is also carrying out research on the effects of water abstraction on rivers and other wetlands.
181. MAFF is promoting the preparation of Water Level Management Plans for wetland Sites of Special Scientific Interest and other wildlife sites in England and Wales, with highest priority going to internationally important sites.
182. A new Land Drainage Act came into force in England and Wales in September 1994. In addition to giving local authorities the duty to further nature conservation when making decisions relating to drainage and flood defence, the Act empowers Ministers to intervene to prevent damaging drainage schemes.
183. The Forestry Commission has published guidelines to protect and enhance water quality and aquatic/wetland habitats in its woodlands.
184. Thirty-three Eutrophic Sensitive Areas, or SA(E)s, have been designated in England and Wales under the European Union Directive on Urban Waste Water Treatment. In these areas, some of which include Ramsar sites, phosphorous is removed from waste water before it is discharged. A further 20 areas are being considered for possible SA(E) designation.
185. There has been a net improvement in the quality of 26% of monitored river and canal length in England and Wales between 1990 and 1994, reflecting increased investment in treatment.

- 186.English Nature plan to notify 26 rivers as Sites of Special Scientific Interest by 1997. 21 of these rivers currently suffer nutrient enrichment from sewage.
- 187.Under the EU Nitrates Directive (EC 91/676), 72 Nitrate Vulnerable Zones have been proposed for England, Scotland and Wales.
- 188.From September 1997 it is intended that an effective ban on the use of lead shot in wetlands will operate.
- 189.A framework for the Conservation of Amphibians and Reptiles in the UK 1994-1999 has been drawn up by statutory conservation agencies.
- 190.A range of wetland habitat creation and restoration programmes have been implemented, or are being planned, in various parts of the UK.
- 191.Peatlands: Scottish Natural Heritage launched a Peatland Management Scheme in 1992, which encourages traditional, extensive forms of land management to maintain the conservation value of peatlands in northernmost Scotland. A Policy Statement on Peatland Conservation in Northern Ireland was published in 1993.
- 192.Following the report of the Working Group set up in 1992 (referred to in the 1993 UK National Report), the Government issued land-use planning guidelines on peatlands in England in July 1995. Government policies for peatlands include conserving a sufficient range, distribution and number of all peatland habitats and promoting the wise use of the wetland resource. Planning Policy Guidelines on Mineral Working in Scotland were published by the Government in 1994.
- 193.Research on rehabilitation of damaged peatlands has been carried out for the Government, and a report has been published.
- 194.English Nature have completed conveyance of 3,250 ha of lowland peatlands from a commercial horticulture company. About half of this land is now under conservation management.
- 195.In Northern Ireland, planning consent for peat extraction from Ballynahone Bog has been revoked in line with obligations arising from the European Union Habitats Directive. The site is proposed for possible future Ramsar designation.

C.2 *Application of Recommendation 5.7: National Ramsar/wetland Committees*

- 196.National Committees have been established by the following Contracting Parties (an indication of committee composition is given in brackets; contact details for National Committees are available, upon request, from the Convention Bureau):

Austria (members from the nine states, federal government, various NGOs)
France (members from central/regional government, scientific/technical bodies, NGOs)
Germany (members from Federal and Länder Ministries, Federal Nature Conservation Agency, nature conservation organizations, listed site user groups, and private research organizations)
United Kingdom (members from central government, statutory conservation bodies and NGOs)
- 198.**Denmark** has not established a formal National Ramsar Committee, although issues relevant to implementation of the Convention are negotiated with local communities, local and regional authorities and in a Nature and Wildlife Reserve Advisory Board. There is also a long-standing tradition of NGO consultation. In **Finland**, responsibility for day to day implementation of the Convention has passed to the Finnish Environment Agency, with effect from June 1995. In addition to the National Committee, **France** has also established local committees for each

listed site. In **Iceland**, no national committee has been established, but the Nature Conservation Council maintains close contact with scientific institutions and serves as an official advisory body.

199. In **Italy** the National Ramsar Committee has recently been reorganized in order to strengthen monitoring of activities leading to wetland loss and degradation.

200. In the **Netherlands**, the Secretary of State for Nature Management has officially recognized the National NGO Wetlands Committee, which consists of ten NGO members and two observers from the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries. The Committee aims to influence governmental policies related to wetlands and to coordinate NGO activities and consultations with the Ministry.

201. In **Norway**, consideration is being given to the establishment of an advisory committee. In **Sweden**, the advisory committee for international bird conservation issues also functions as a Ramsar Committee.

202. In **Switzerland** there are no plans to establish a national committee for the moment, since existing cooperation between the Federal/Cantonal authorities and NGOs concerned with nature and landscape protection is sufficient to cover the specific issue of wetlands.

203. **Turkey**: preparations for establishing a National Wetland Committee, comprising 19 members from Government bodies, universities and NGOs, have been carried out by the Ministry of Environment. The committee will be formally established when Government Regulations on the protection of wetlands enter into force.

C.3 *Application of Recommendation 4.6: National scientific inventories*

204. **Austria**: a national scientific inventory of wetlands is in preparation.

205. **Belgium**: the Flemish Institute for Nature Conservation has carried out a scientific inventory to identify sites for designation under the European Union's Habitats Directive. Three of the 40 areas identified overlap with listed Ramsar sites. There is an inventory of Walloonian wetlands of biological interest, which includes several potential Ramsar sites, notably the Haute-Sûre.

206. **Denmark**: a bird monitoring programme was initiated by the National Forest and Nature Agency in 1987, whilst special biological research and monitoring programmes have been implemented since 1992. The results of these studies provide information for assessing the need to designate further Ramsar sites and/or to modify conservation measures at existing sites.

207. **France**: there is no comprehensive national wetland inventory. However, as part of the evaluation of government policies on wetlands (see section C.1 above), data were collected for 73 major wetlands considered to be amongst the most important from an ecological viewpoint. 85% of the wetlands concerned had been degraded during the previous 30 years. Work has also been carried out on French Mediterranean wetlands within the framework of the MedWet project. A wetland database is managed by the National Museum of Natural History.

208. **Germany**: assessments have been made in several Federal Länder with a view to the designation of new Ramsar sites. In particular, there are plans to designate part of the Upper Rhine Valley in Baden-Württemberg, parts of the Elbe floodplain in Sachsen-Anhalt, and to extend the existing site 'Niederung der Untere Havel/Gölper See' in Sachsen-Anhalt. 12 potential listed sites were identified by Schleswig-Holstein in 1993. The nature conservation organizations are also compiling a list of 52 sites of national importance which meet the criteria for Ramsar listing.

209. **Iceland:** an inventory of Important Bird Areas, including many wetlands, was prepared for IWRB and (then) ICBP in 1987. The Nature Conservation Council publishes a 'Register of Sites of Conservation Interest and Protected Sites'; the 8th edition is in preparation.
210. **Italy:** the Ministry of Environment published an Inventory of Italian Wetlands in 1992. More than 100 sites were included, many of which are Ramsar wetlands. An evaluation is currently under way to see if further sites qualify for Ramsar designation.
211. **Netherlands:** an annotated list of potential listed sites will be provided to the Bureau in due course.
212. **Norway:** based on inventories of areas important for nature conservation in each county, the Directorate for Nature Management is evaluating eleven potential additions to the List of Wetlands of International Importance, with a view to sending a formal recommendation to the Ministry of Environment. Åkersvika listed site may be extended by 10 ha.
213. **Portugal:** together with IWRB/Wetlands International, Portugal has led the Inventory and Monitoring sub-project of the MedWet programme, cofinanced by the European Commission. As part of this work, a preliminary national wetland inventory was published in 1994. A baseline study has been undertaken with a view to possible establishment of a marine protected areas network. An ecological survey of Paúl do Boquilobo (proposed listed site) was cofinanced by the European Commission.
214. **Sweden:** no coordinated monitoring of wetland flora and fauna has yet been carried out, although discussions of such a programme are under way.
215. **Switzerland:** the 'Inventory of Wetlands of International Importance for Waterbirds in Switzerland' (1976; revised 1987) forms the basis for the selection of sites to designate for the Ramsar List. So far, six of the 22 sites described have been designated.
216. An inventory of areas of international importance for waterfowl and migratory birds is in preparation for publication in autumn 1995.
217. **Turkey:** a project for determining the ecological and biological characteristics of all Turkish wetlands has been initiated by the Ministry of Environment, in cooperation with the Environment Foundation of Turkey. Priority will be given to potential Ramsar sites: Lake Bey_hir, Lake Ak_ehir, Karamik Marshes, Ere_li Marshes and Hotami_ Marshes.
218. Pollution detection has been carried out at a number of important wetland sites.
219. **United Kingdom:** although there is currently no single UK wetland inventory, work is under way to more fully integrate existing data, and the potential for a national wetland inventory is being addressed. The Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) maintains an International Sites Database containing information on all sites that have been identified as qualifying for Ramsar designation. The National Peatland Resource Inventory provides baseline information for those concerned with the protection and wise use of the UK's 1.6 million hectares of peatlands. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds has compiled an inventory of all 879 reedbeds in Great Britain.
- C.4 *Additional information on application of the Wise Use 'guidelines' and 'additional guidance'*
220. **Austria:** implementation of Kushiuro Resolution 5.6 is of the highest priority at all Austrian Ramsar sites.

221.**France:** see section C.1 above.

222.**Germany:** due to powerful economic interests, major prerequisites for implementation of the Wise Use principle have not yet been put into practice consistently in German Wetlands of International Importance.

223.**Iceland:** the Nature Conservation Council works on matters relating to Wise Use, with emphasis on public awareness (especially through work with NGOs), survey and management of important sites, and cooperation on wetland conservation with other Nordic countries.

224.**Netherlands:** the participation of highly organized NGOs, local and regional interest groups and political organizations in decision- and policy-making processes has contributed to a multiple-use approach to wetlands. Efforts are made to ensure that the high population density and demand for wetland-based recreational activities are balanced as far as possible with nature conservation requirements.

225. Growing tourism is placing increasing pressure on listed sites in the Netherlands Antilles. To minimize the negative impact of important socio-economic development, the island of Bonaire has established an ordinance affording legal protection to marine Ramsar sites. Special emphasis is given to sustainable use of marine resources.

226.**Switzerland:** a report on 1993/94 waterbird numbers in Swiss reserves was made available in 1994 by the Swiss Ornithological Station. This report constitutes an important basis for monitoring and wise use of the wetlands concerned.

227.**United Kingdom:** early in 1994, the Government published 'Biodiversity: The UK Action Plan' in response to Article 6 of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The over all goal of the plan, which includes 59 recommendations, is to maintain and enhance UK biodiversity and to contribute to the conservation of global biodiversity. The plan states explicit support for designations under the Ramsar Convention.

D. International Cooperation

D.1 Consultations on shared wetlands

228.**Austria:** frequent and ongoing consultations have been held with the Hungarian authorities concerning coordination of management activities in the transboundary National Park 'Neusiedlersee-Seewinkel'. Further contacts have been made in the frameworks of Austrian-Czech and Austrian-Slovak commissions for transboundary water courses, whilst plans are under consideration for preparation of a trilateral Austrian-Czech-Slovak management concept for the March-Thaya-Auen.

229.**Belgium:** a transboundary landscape park is being established in cooperation with the Netherlands in the region of Kalmtoutse Heide listed site. A further agreement with the Dutch authorities aims at developing former gravel workings along the river Maas for nature conservation. A Belgian-Dutch commission is examining the problem of siltation at the Zwin (see also section B.3). Discussions are in progress with Luxembourg, with a view to establishing a trans-frontier Ramsar site in the Sûre basin.

230.**Denmark:** the Wadden Sea is a cross-frontier wetland shared by Denmark, Germany and The Netherlands. Since 1982, the protection and management of the site have been coordinated in accordance with the Joint Declaration on the Protection of the Wadden Sea. The European Union also plays a substantial role in this cooperation.

- 231.**Finland:** international agreements on transboundary rivers have been concluded with Norway and Sweden. A similar agreement was also concluded with the former USSR (*Bureau note:* the report does not indicate whether the agreement has been renewed with the Russian Federation).
- 232.**France:** a cooperative programme for joint designation of part of the Rhine river is being conducted by the Governments of France and Germany. Local consultations are under way in each country.
- 233.**Germany:** *Bureau note:* the National Report provides detailed information on consultations with Denmark and the Netherlands within the framework of the Trilateral Agreement between the three States for protection of the Wadden Sea. Specific examples are given in relation to the coordinated establishment and management of a special conservation area; further reduction in cockle fishery; limitation of adverse impact of mussel fishery; establishment of zones free from recreational disturbance; phasing out of hunting of migratory species; prohibition of the use of lead shot from 1993; establishment of aircraft flight routes and altitudes to minimize disturbance to wildlife; reduction of the impacts of military activities; development of a Red List of marine and coastal species and biotopes; development of species conservation programmes; establishment of a wardening system; cooperation in research and monitoring; public information and awareness raising; application of the Ramsar Wise Use principle; use of zonation; and cooperation with regard to flyways. Copies of this lengthy section of the report are available, on request, from the Bureau.
- 234.Germany has also engaged in active cooperation on transboundary wetlands with Austria (Lower Inn river); France (Upper Rhine: on the occasion of the third meeting of the German-French Environment Council in Strasbourg on 31 August 1992, the Environment Ministers of the two countries agreed to establish a European Union special area of conservation along the Rhine. A cross-border designation under the Ramsar Convention is also planned for designation in 1996); Netherlands (Lower Niederrhein); Poland (Lower Oder river valley).
- 235.**Italy:** as noted in section C.1 above, Italy is an active partner in the 'MedWet' initiative for Mediterranean wetlands.
- 236.**Netherlands:** the Netherlands hosted the 7th Trilateral Wadden Sea Conference in November 1994. (*Bureau note:* see also information presented for Denmark and Germany). A Memorandum of Intent between the Trilateral Wadden Sea Co-operation and Guinea Bissau was signed at the Conference. A similar Memorandum concluded in 1991 with the North Norfolk Coast (UK listed site) has yielded valuable results.
- 237.In November 1993, the Netherlands hosted an international conference entitled 'Conserving Europe's natural heritage: towards a European Ecological Network', which led to the subsequent adoption of a Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy at the European Ministerial Conference 'Environment for Europe' held in Sofia in October 1995.
- 238.The Netherlands has also participated in the Rhine Ministerial Conference (December 1994), the International North Sea Ministerial Conference (June 1995). Cooperation agreements relating to the rivers Meuse and Schelde have been signed by the Netherlands, Belgium and France.
- 239.**Norway:** active co-operation is on-going with Finland, Sweden and the Russian Federation. Norway also participates in work on the possible establishment of a circumpolar protected areas network under the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) programme.
- 240.In June 1994, Norway hosted a symposium of the International Mire Conservation Group, which led to the Trondheim Declaration drawing attention to the ecological and other values of peatlands

and the need for their conservation. The declaration also requested that peatlands be a focus of the 6th Conference of the Parties under the Ramsar Convention; this request has been followed up actively by Canada, Norway, the United Kingdom, and other Contracting Parties.

241. **United Kingdom:** there has been regular contact between the UK and the Irish Republic on the protection of internationally important wetlands and species, in particular through an International Designations Group. The UK Joint Nature Conservation Committee has produced an all-Ireland review, identifying candidate Ramsar sites and EU Special Protection Areas.

D.2 Consultations on shared species

242. **Denmark:** within the framework of Danish-Dutch-German cooperation on the Wadden Sea, regular consultations are held with regard to migratory waterbirds, marine mammals (e.g. common seal *Phoca vitulina*, grey seal *Halichoerus grypus*, harbour porpoise *Phocoena phocoena*, bottlenose dolphin *Tursiops truncatus*), and shellfish (notably mussels *Mytilus edulis*).

243. **France:** France played an active role in the negotiations leading to the adoption of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds.

244. A cooperative programme with the German authorities aims to re-establish migratory fish species in the river Rhine. There are also Franco-Swiss Commissions on fishing for the transboundary river Doubs and Lac Léman (Lake of Geneva).

245. **Germany:** certain of the consultations referred to under section D.1 also incorporate consultations on shared wetland species.

246. In 1992, an agreement was concluded between the Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea National Park and the Taymir Peninsula Nature Reserve in the Russian Federation. Both sites play major roles in the East Atlantic Flyway for migratory water birds.

247. **Iceland:** is a party to the 1991 Rovaniemi Declaration concerning environmental protection in the Arctic, and has participated actively in the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna programme (CAFF).

248. **Italy:** the Ministry of Environment recently organized an international meeting on conservation of the threatened slender-billed curlew *Numenius tenuirostris*.

249. **Netherlands:** at a ceremony held in The Hague, the Netherlands joined with 51 other states and the European Community in signing the Final Act on the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds. The Netherlands acts as the depositary for the Agreement (established within the framework of the Convention on Migratory Species), will provide and finance an interim secretariat, and will host the first session of the Meeting of Parties after entry into force of the Agreement.

250. An international workshop on the dark-bellied brent goose (*Branta bernicla bernicla*) in the Wadden Sea was hosted by the Netherlands in September 1994, whilst a seminar on the European Otter (*Lutra lutra*) was held in June 1994.

251. The Dutch Hunting and Wildlife Policy acknowledges international responsibility for migratory species; shooting of golden plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) and gadwall (*Anas strepera*) has been banned since 1994, while a restrictive policy will lead to the banning of hunting in nature reserves (except for essential management purposes). Hunting of teal (*Anas crecca*), pintail (*A. acuta*), shoveler (*A. clypeata*), pochard (*Aythya ferina*), tufted duck (*A. fuligula*), scaup (*A.*

marina), common snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*) and woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*) will be banned in 1996.

252. **Norway:** consultations have been held under the auspices of the Bonn Convention, Berne Convention, Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF), International Waterfowl & Wetlands Research Bureau (IWRB), and the bilateral environmental agreement with the Russian Federation. A bilateral project on the endangered lesser white-fronted goose (*Anser erythropus*) has been initiated with Hungary.

253. **United Kingdom:** the UK played an active role in the inter-governmental negotiations which led to the adoption in June 1995 of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds, under the auspices of the Bonn Convention.

254. Within the UK, waterfowl population monitoring, which contributes data to the International Waterfowl Census, has been enhanced by the establishment in October 1993 of the Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS). WeBS integrated previously existing schemes, in order to enhance coordination and planning of survey work. Cooperation between the UK and the Irish Republic has led to the establishment of I-WeBS, the Irish Wetland Bird Survey.

255. The UK Ruddy Duck Working Group has been established to contribute towards the conservation of the globally threatened white-headed duck *Oxyura leucocephala* and to provide advice on management of the ruddy duck *O. jamaicensis*. An international workshop on the issue was hosted by the UK in March 1993 and the UK has since funded research into ruddy duck population levels and control methods. The Government has proposed changes to domestic legislation to allow for legal control of ruddy ducks.

D.3 *Wetland Conservation Fund: projects supported since December 1992*

256. Countries in the Western European region are not eligible to apply for grants from the Fund. However, the region is a major source of voluntary donations to the Fund.

D.4 *Role of international funding agencies (Recommendation 4.13, Recommendation 5.5)*

257. **Denmark:** in addition to the 1% of GDP allocated to development assistance, a further 0.25% of GDP has been allocated to environmental assistance. Danish Cooperation for Environment and Development (DANCED) was established in 1993 under the Ministry of Environment (now Ministry of Environment and Energy), in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to administer special appropriations for environmental assistance in developing countries and in the Arctic. One DANCED-supported project aims to assist Thailand with becoming a Ramsar Contracting Party. Other relevant projects are being carried out in Thailand, as well as in Malaysia.

258. **France:** the Ministry for Cooperation, the French Environment Fund and the French Development Bank are implementing or developing bilateral wetland projects in Albania, Egypt, Lebanon, Lesser Antilles, Mauritania (Banc d'Arguin and Diawling Ramsar sites), South Africa (St. Lucia Ramsar site), and Tunisia. The Mediterranean countries listed above are covered by a project being proposed for co-financing from the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

259. The Ministry of Environment has supported (either directly, or through the Convention) wetland projects in Bulgaria, Poland, Senegal and Surinam (cooperation with French Guyana). Additional support was given for an Oceanian regional meeting on wetlands, held in Papua New Guinea in 1994. France is also a participant in the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI).

- 260.**Germany:** the Federal Republic of Germany supports the concept that the programmes, projects and measures promoted by the Global Environment Facility should include, and give priority to, Wetlands of International Importance designated under the Ramsar Convention.
- 261.OECD guidelines developed for the improved protection and sustainable use of tropical and subtropical wetlands refer specifically to Ramsar sites and serve to influence the activities of development aid organizations.
- 262.With a view to implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Federal German development policy has been increasingly committed to international nature conservation in recent years. Priority is given to measures aimed at the protection of tropical forests and combatting further desertification. Currently, no development projects of the German cooperation company GTZ are planned in designated Wetlands of International Importance, although a project in Murchison Falls National Park, Uganda, concerns an internationally important site.
- 263.Since 1990, the Federal Land of Nordrhein-Westfalen (together with GTZ and the Dutch authorities), has supported measures for the conservation of Djoudj National Park (Ramsar listed site) in Senegal. As part of this work, IUCN has produced a biotope management plan and economic development strategy for adjoining areas. Subsequently, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development initiated a three year development project for agriculture in the adjoining areas, adjusted to the ecological requirements of the wetland.
- 264.**Netherlands:** the Dutch Government supports bilateral and multilateral co-operation in the field of wetland conservation. The Directorate General for International Cooperation of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs has supported wetland-related projects in the African, Asian and Neotropical regions to a total value in excess of 12 million Swiss Francs. The Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries has supported projects in the African, Asian, European (primarily Eastern European), and Neotropical regions to a total value in excess of 1.8 million Swiss Francs.
- 265.**Norway:** formal, bilateral cooperation on environmental matters was initiated between Norway and Indonesia in 1990. Two projects with particular relevance to wetlands have been established: 'Development of a National Wetland Policy and Action Plan' and 'Integrated Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Management'.
- 266.Under bilateral environmental co-operation with a number of countries whose economies are in transition, funds have been made available for water and wetland-related projects, especially with regard to water pollution control, sewage treatment, plans for water use/monitoring, and management of national parks.
- 267.The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) provides substantial financial support in several fields. Efforts are being made to seek integration of environmental considerations into all projects and to increase the level of development assistance going directly to environmental projects. Water and wetland related projects have been supported in the African, Asian and Neotropical Ramsar regions.
- 268.**Sweden:** the Environmental Protection Agency has bilateral agreements with the Governments of Estonia and Latvia on funding and expertise in the field of wetland conservation.
- 269.**Switzerland:** the Federal Directorate for Development and Humanitary Aid Cooperation (DDA) is sensitive to the need for nature and landscape protection - especially where wetlands are concerned - in the framework of its assistance to developing countries. The DDA has provided substantial support for IUCN projects, but has not yet contributed to specific projects developed

by Ramsar Contracting Parties and submitted through the Convention. However, in 1993, the DDA allocated SFR 60,000 for the participation of developing country participants at the Kushiro Conference.

270. **United Kingdom:** the British aid programme, managed by the Overseas Development Administration (ODA), has supported major wetland-related projects in Anguilla, Bangladesh, Belize, Brazil, British Virgin Islands, India, Indonesia, Malawi, Maldives, and Mexico. Programmes for Ghana and South Africa are currently being appraised. Projects to develop sustainable systems for coastal aquaculture have fully incorporated the objective of conserving coastal wetlands. ODA will continue to support wetland conservation, responding to those requests which are given priority by developing country governments and which conform to aid programme and national strategies for sustainable development.

271. The multilateral development banks to which the UK contributes are showing increased concern for sustainable use of natural resources and promotion of environmentally sustainable economic development. ODA monitors the situation, takes specialist advice on sensitive projects, and follows up issues of concern through UK representatives at the relevant bank(s).

272. At the 1992 Rio Summit, the UK Prime Minister announced establishment of the 'Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species' with annual funding of £3 million for collaborative, catalytic projects between British scientific, educational and research institutions and their counterparts in recipient countries. Darwin Initiative funds have been made available for wetland projects (in cooperation with Wetlands International and the International Centre of Landscape Ecology) in Cambodia, Czech Republic and Estonia, and for wetland training in Central/Eastern Europe.

273. Between 1992 and 1994, six wetland projects put forward by the UK Government on behalf of conservation NGOs have received a total of 9.4 million ECUs under the European Union's LIFE Regulation. Several of the projects will enhance management of existing Ramsar sites.

E. Wetland Reserves and Training

E.1 Application of Recommendation 4.4: Establishment of wetland reserves

274. **Austria:** 17 wetland reserves have been established since the Kushiro Conference. Several wetland nature monuments have also been established in the state of Kärnten (Carinthia).

275. **Belgium:** in recent years the Flemish Regional Government has increased the financial support available to private conservation organizations for the acquisition of nature reserves. There are currently 27 State Nature Reserves (3,543 ha) and 72 private reserves (1,770 ha), many of which include wetlands.

276. **Denmark:** in 1992, Danish environmental NGOs proposed extending the network of protected areas by the designation of 50 new wildlife and nature reserves within Ramsar site and EU Special Protection Area boundaries. An Action Plan has been developed by the National Forest and Nature Agency in order to implement these suggestions by 2000.

277. **France:** since the end of 1992, seven Natural Reserves (réserves naturelles) have been established, covering 7,400 ha.

278. **Germany:** to enhance implementation of obligations under the Convention, the Länder are making every effort to give highest priority to the maintenance and ecological enhancement of existing wetlands and the creation of new wetlands. (*Bureau note:* the National Report lists examples of the measures carried out by different Länder; details available on request).

279.**Iceland:** since 1992, four important wetland protected areas have been established (Grunnafjörður, Pollengi and Tungueyjar, Oddaflód, and Breidafjörður Bay).

280.**Netherlands:** the Dutch partner of BirdLife International has recently drawn up a list of 67 wetlands in the Netherlands which qualify under Ramsar sub-criterion 3c (1% or more of the population of a species of waterfowl). Approximately 40% of the total area is protected under the Nature Conservation Law, whilst 32% of the area is covered by Ramsar listed sites. See also section C.3.

281.**Norway:** in recent years, an average of about 50 new protected areas, primarily nature reserves, has been established annually within the framework of county conservation plans. In July 1995, the total number of protected areas stood at 1,300 - a significant number of these are of importance for wetland conservation.

282.A report on expanding the system of national parks and other large protected areas - including important wetlands - was approved by Parliament in 1993. Implementation of the report will increase coverage of protected areas to 12% of Norwegian territory.

283.Parliament has also approved a comprehensive new plan for the conservation of water courses, protecting some 400 water courses.

284.**Sweden:** a total of 40 wetland reserves, covering 14,000 ha outside listed sites, have been designated since July 1992.

285.**Switzerland:** on the basis of Federal legal measures (see also sections B.2 & C.1 above), many marshes and alluvial sites have become protected areas, which the Cantons are obliged to manage appropriately. Amongst the measures to be taken is the establishment of adequate buffer zones.

286.**Turkey:** wetland reserves will be established according to the results of ongoing research.

287.**United Kingdom:** wetland reserves are established through both statutory and non-statutory mechanisms. Of particular note is the programme of notification of riverine Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

E.2 Implementation of Recommendation 5.3: zonation of wetland reserves, and Recommendation 5.8 measures to promote public awareness of wetland values in wetland reserves

288.**Austria:** a National Park visitor centre is under construction at Neusiedlersee, Seewinkel and Hanság listed site. Efforts are under way to secure a buffer zone for Pürgschachen Moor listed site. Information booklets have been prepared for Sablatnigmoor and Rotmoos in Fuschertal listed sites. A touring exhibition on wetlands (for school children, age 14 upwards) has been established in the state of Niederösterreich (Lower Austria). An educational nature trail has been established at Untere Lobau listed site, whilst an information centre is planned for the Rheindelta Bodensee listed site. The state of Kärnten has produced a poster and booklet on wetland birds, for use in schools.

289.**Denmark:** an aim of the Action Plan referred to above in section E.1 is to define suitable hunting-free core zones for protected areas, surrounded by management zones. The Wadden Sea is divided into four zones: zone 1 where hunting is prohibited and public access strictly regulated; zone 2 where public access is prohibited; zone 3 where hunting is prohibited, public access restricted and certain activities regulated; zone 4 where hunting is regulated but other activities not harmful to the environment are allowed.

290. The National Forest and Nature Agency is involved in a wide range of public awareness activities, including creation of nature trails; establishment of nature education schools, visitor centres and site interpretation; construction of bird observation facilities; dissemination of information on reserves; arrangement of guided tours; arrangement of meetings and workshops on environmental and ecological issues.
291. **France:** the national wetland action plan (described in section C.1 above) includes provisions for incorporating important wetlands into over all land-use strategies. Part of the plan is also devoted to public awareness.
292. In the framework of the European Union's LIFE programme, France has established a project for training, information and public awareness at French Ramsar sites, including the development of Ramsar signage and an information brochure.
293. A handbook on Caribbean wetlands is currently being prepared in the three official languages of the Convention.
294. **Germany:** Federal and Länder conservation legislation offer the possibility of designating core zones as nature reserves (Naturschutzgebiete), and buffer zones as landscape reserves (Landschaftschutzgebiete). Such zones have been classified in several large National Parks, but their delimitation has not been geared primarily to the objectives of the Ramsar Convention.
295. Uniform, broad-based and coordinated national awareness-raising has not been developed as yet. The Ramsar Convention appears to be inadequately known by the general public, and awareness raising is needed with regard to Ramsar sites, in order to improve effective management and implementation of wise use. The focus of existing programmes tends to be on national or regional aspects, rather than on the international dimension. Most listed sites have at least one information centre or nature protection station. (*Bureau note:* the National Report includes a table showing the presence of information facilities and wardening at all listed sites).
296. **Iceland:** a visitor centre was opened at Mývatn-Laxá listed site in June 1995.
297. **Malta:** Ghadira Nature Reserve (listed site) receives regular visits from school children. The site is run by a warden and assistant warden and is open to the public, under controlled conditions, at weekends.
298. **Netherlands:** zonation has become an important tool in the management of wetlands, especially those with public access. The establishment of ecological corridors (see section C.1) is closely related to the concept of zonation.
299. Visitors are welcomed in most Dutch listed sites, and information facilities are provided in many cases, particularly by NGOs. Two ambitious NGO initiatives are those being carried out at Blaue Kamer (pilot nature development project) and Gelderse Poort (cross-border nature development project along the river Rhine, involving establishment of visitor centres).
300. **Sweden:** information centres have been established at four listed sites: Hammarsjön, Getterön, Östen, and Hornborgasjön.
301. **Turkey:** NGOs, especially the Turkish Society for the Protection of Nature (DHKD), play an important role in raising public awareness about the importance of wetlands. DHKD has constructed a visitor centre at the Göksu delta listed site. Visitor centres have also been established at the Sultan marshes and Ku_ Lake listed sites.

302.**United Kingdom:** the need for zonation related to wetland reserves is addressed through a suite of integrated management policies, and through the development of guidance manuals. The key element is the notion of working partnerships, with open and early access to information.

303.The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) - an NGO - and the commercial mining company British Coal Opencast, launched a 'Wetlands and Industry' manual at a special conference in 1994.

304.WWT has improved interpretation for visitors at all of its wetland centres and has developed plans for a new centre close to London, where interpretation of wetlands will be provided to an anticipated 350,000 visitors annually.

E.3 Implementation of Recommendation 4.5: Education and training

305.**Austria:** the Federal Ministry for the Environment has published and distributed a brochure on wetland conservation.

306.**France:** see sections C.1, E.2 etc.

307.The Ministry of Environment has recently produced a practical guide on the management of coral reefs, together with a booklet aimed at decision makers and managers.

308.**Germany:** educational activities related to wetlands are supported by the programmes offered by Federal and Länder authorities and private conservation organizations. However, very few events are systematically dedicated to the key issues of wetlands of international importance. Activities that are primarily aimed at improving the acceptance of Ramsar sites and their particular conservation needs are required urgently.

309.Full-time wardening has only been provided by the competent authorities at a few listed sites. However, the full-time, official wardening services in national parks and biosphere reserves that have been established in the new Länder since 1992 have been of particular benefit to the listed sites Ostseeboddengäwasser; Ostufer Mürit; and Unteres Odertal, Schwedt.

310.**Iceland:** the Nature Conservation Council provides training for its protected area wardens. University field courses are held at Mývatn Research Station. Advisory bodies provide advice and educational material to the farming community.

311.**Netherlands:** International Courses on Wetland Management were held at the Wetland Advice and Training Centre in 1993 and 1994, with participants from Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, CIS, Neotropical region and USA. The Ramsar guidelines for wetland management planning were an important element of the courses.

312.**Sweden:** about 140 school classes per year visit the information centre at Lake Hornborga.

313.**United Kingdom:** The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT) has been actively involved in developing the education and public awareness of the draft Ramsar Strategic Plan. In 1993, WWT launched a UK wetland awareness programme 'Waterlands'.

314.Environmental displays are to be placed in all 400 of Scotland's museums for a three year period.

F. General comments on the Convention and its implementation

F.1 Effectiveness of the Convention; problems encountered in implementation etc.

- 315.**Austria:** the Ramsar Convention serves as an effective means for securing the conservation of wetlands and provides additional arguments for use in public hearings concerning activities potentially damaging to wetlands. The Convention also provides a useful context for reviewing existing legislation concerning the protection of wetlands.
- 316.**Belgium:** as the official designation of Belgian Ramsar sites did not include specific legal measures on protection, land use etc., the effect of the Convention is rather limited. However, there are stronger regulations on preliminary Environmental Impact Assessments for listed sites in Flanders.
- 317.**Denmark:** it is the 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 strengthened the arguments for their conservation.
- 318.Efforts are currently under way to address possible conflicts between commercial fishing practices and the aims of the Ramsar Convention (especially with regard to the impact of particular fishing methods on the sea bed) in shallow coastal waters.
- 319.**Finland:** discussion is needed on the regulation of hunting within protected areas.
- 320.**France:** the main difficulty encountered by France has been the challenge of ensuring both the legal protection of wetlands, in itself a difficult task, but moreover, integrating the conservation of wetlands in management policies and developing the concept of wise use. This challenge is being addressed by the national action plan.
- 321.**Germany:** despite increased efforts and progress made in some respects, satisfactory implementation of effective and sustained protection of internationally important and otherwise valuable wetlands in the Federal Republic of Germany has not been achieved so far. Numerous socio-economic interests and concerns (e.g. local development and settlement policy, agriculture, fishery, hunting, recreation and tourism) may represent strongly competing interests that are highly incompatible with the conservation requirements of Ramsar sites and difficult to counter with the conservation instruments currently available. However, in a few cases, Ramsar designation has helped to avoid interventions incompatible with nature conservation. Efforts are being made by the Länder to promote a positive approach by all concerned with listed sites towards the obligations under the Convention.
- 322.**Norway:** it is hoped that discussions at the Brisbane Conference on 'change in ecological character' will take full account of issues related to activities outside the boundaries of listed sites.
- 323.**United Kingdom:** identifying potential Ramsar sites, except those important for water bird populations is made more difficult by the lack of refined criteria for other groups of aquatic fauna and flora. In this regard, it is hoped that a final version of the draft Fourth Ramsar Criterion on fish will be agreed by the Brisbane Conference.

F.2 Future activities under the Convention

- 324.**Austria:** designation of new listed sites; creation of ecological corridors along water courses; restoration of water courses and wetlands; encouragement of land owners to move towards extensive methods of wetland management; financial cooperation between federal and state governments for establishment, protection and management of listed sites.
- 325.**Finland:** wetlands will be included within the network of sites being developed within the European Union's Natura 2000 programme.

- 326.**France:** the follow-up to the Kushiro Statement and the future strategic priorities of the Convention, the role of the Convention in financing wetland conservation activities, and the relation between Ramsar and other Conventions are considered as the most important matters.
- 327.**Germany:** the Federal Environment Ministry and the Länder of Brandenburg and Nordrhein-Westfalen have supported a research project on wetland protection through monitoring of waterfowl and territorial monitoring, especially of listed sites. The final report, submitted in 1994, includes proposals for monitoring the ecological features of wetlands and for the integrated monitoring of waterbird populations.
- 328.A series of awareness activities are being planned by the Federal and Länder authorities in order to mark the 25th Anniversary of the Convention. These include translation of the Ramsar Manual, production of a poster and video, and designation of further listed sites.
- 329.The Federal Environment Ministry calls for close cooperation, consultation and coordination of Ramsar activities with the Convention on Biological Diversity. The programmes, projects and measures promoted by the GEF should also give priority to Ramsar listed sites.
- 330.Within the framework of the 1992 Helsinki Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area, a system of marine and coastal protected areas is being established. The Länder of Schleswig Holstein and Mecklenburg Vorpommern have each proposed four areas, most of which qualify under the Ramsar criteria, and one of which overlaps with an existing listed site. Two of the sites are to be classified as candidates for Ramsar designation.
- 331.Cooperation with the Bonn Convention on Migratory Species should be intensified, and common activities should be developed.
- 332.In the long term, all wetlands of international importance should be included within the 'Natura 2000' network of protected sites being established by European Union Member States under Directives on the 'Conservation of Wild Birds' and on the 'Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna'. More than 50% of German Ramsar sites have already been included in the network.
- 333.A more clear-cut allocation of conservation tasks to the various conventions would strengthen the position of nature protection at national and international levels.
- 334.**Iceland:** the Convention has served to guide the effort to conserve Icelandic wetlands. Work continues to ensure that reserves are declared on all sites considered of international importance.
- 335.**Netherlands:** the Forward Plan of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries, published in 1995, mentions the importance of integrating Dutch international conservation responsibilities with other sectors and calls for improved cooperation with and between other governmental departments, ministries, the private sector, NGOs and research organizations.
- 336.As a result of the report 'Wetlands and Migratory Birds in West Africa' produced by the Dutch Institute for Forestry and Nature Research, the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries intends to extend support for wise use projects in the region.
- 337.In 1994 and 1995, the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries devoted special attention to the impact of Dutch commercial and state-supported activities on wetlands in other countries. A study showed the strength of Dutch economic interests in activities affecting wetlands, especially: dredging, the water industry, and wetland-related consultancy. Dutch

expertise in these areas also represents a significant reservoir of know-how and experience. The Government has started a process of inter-ministerial briefings and exchange of knowledge in order to promote and strengthen wetland conservation and wise use in Dutch activities abroad.

338.**Norway:** discussions at the Brisbane Conference on how the Convention can contribute to improved conservation and wise use of mires and peatlands are welcomed.

339.**Sweden:** there are many conventions dealing with nature conservation; to a certain extent they overlap. The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency believes that cooperation with other conventions - especially the Convention on Biological Diversity - is a very important task for the Ramsar Convention. When the Agreement on African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds enters into force, there will also be a need for enhanced cooperation with the Bonn Convention.

340.**United Kingdom:** the UK has played an active role in the Standing Committee sub-group responsible for formulating the draft Ramsar Strategic Plan.

341.The UK fully supports the funding of wetland conservation projects, whether directly under Ramsar auspices, or bilaterally.

342.The UK attaches great importance to the relationship between the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and other global and regional conventions. The CBD needs to operate in partnership with other conventions, and effective liaison mechanisms are therefore required. It is important that existing conventions be able to build upon existing achievements under the CBD umbrella, whilst defining their respective roles and identities as clearly as possible.