



The Convention on Wetlands, signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971, is an intergovernmental treaty which provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the **conservation** and **wise use** of wetlands and their resources.

<http://www.ramsar.org/>



## STRP Newsletter

2010/1

The quarterly Newsletter of the Scientific & Technical Review Panel (STRP) of the Ramsar Convention

Dear STRP National Focal Points:

This newsletter has been created by the Ramsar Convention Secretariat in collaboration with STRP members and Observer Organizations with the purpose of keeping you informed on the progress of the Panel's work during this new triennium 2009-2012, and to provide you with useful information on wetland conservation for the implementation of the Convention in your own country, as well as to enhance our STRP network throughout the regions.

If you would like to contribute with new items for the next newsletter, please send them to [stp@ramsar.org](mailto:stp@ramsar.org)

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- List of STRP National Focal Points [Click here](#)
- List of Ramsar Administrative Authorities [Click here](#).
- List of CEPA National Focal Points [Click here](#)
- List of STRP Members [Click here](#)
- STRP Support Service [http://www.wetlands.org/\\_stp/](http://www.wetlands.org/_stp/)
- The Ramsar Site Information Service <http://ramsar.wetlands.org/>
- The Global Environmental Flows Network [www.eflownet.org](http://www.eflownet.org)

*Ramsar's International Organization Partners (IOPs):*

- BirdLife International [www.birdlife.org](http://www.birdlife.org)
- IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) [www.iucn.org](http://www.iucn.org)
- IWMI (International Water Management Institute) <http://www.iwmi.cgiar.org/>
- Wetlands International [www.wetlands.org](http://www.wetlands.org)
- WWF [www.panda.org](http://www.panda.org)

## General Matters

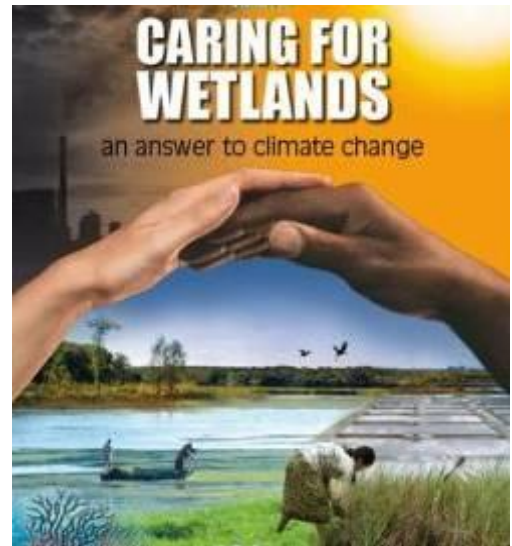
### WETLANDS & CLIMATE CHANGE, WHAT HAPPENS AFTER COPENHAGEN?

UNFCCC COP15 and its heightened media attention are over.

Our STRP Lead for Wetlands & Climate Change (TWA5), Max Finlayson is giving us an outline of the future STRP activities on Climate Change in response to what have occurred in Copenhagen.

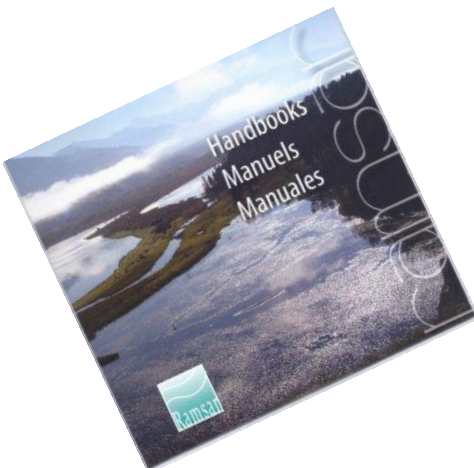
The proposed activities both address the TWA tasks already present in the STRP work Plan 2009-2012 and also identify a few further activities that could be usefully explored and brought to the attention of the Standing Committee and Contracting Parties.

Themes such vulnerability, mitigation, restoration, carbon trading, adaptation, collaboration with IPCC are dealt in his outline report [here](#).



### NEW EDITION OF THE RAMSAR HANDBOOKS

Guidance compiled by the STRP ends up in a variety of places and different published forms! One of them is the muscular "Toolkit" of Ramsar Handbooks for the Wise Use of Wetlands. A new edition of this popular series will be launched this year.



Each Handbook brings together, subject by subject, the various relevant guidances adopted by Parties, supplemented by additional material from COP information papers, case studies and other relevant publications.

Since its launch after COP7 in 1999, the whole series has been revised after each Ramsar COP. Work is in hand now to prepare a 4th edition, to incorporate material adopted at COP10 in Korea in 2008. The STRP's Dave Pritchard has accepted the challenge of editing the new edition: if he appears tired at STRP meetings, this will be the reason!

The Handbooks offer an exciting opportunity to present technical guidance to practitioners in the most logically-organised, attractively-presented and user-friendly way. The work undertaken through the STRP in the last triennium on "Ramsar guidance: an evaluation of use & utility" has been very helpful in refining the approach.

The 20 titles in the 4th edition will be published (on the web and in CD form, in English, French, and Spanish) as each becomes finalised, during the first half of 2010. Then, our job is to make everyone aware of them, and to use them every day!

### FOLLOW UP ON URBAN WETLANDS

[Resolution X.27](#) of the Conference of Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands invites the Secretariat to explore ways and means of establishing collaborative links with UN-HABITAT concerning the promotion of social and environmental sustainability of towns and cities in relation to wetlands and water. To further this collaboration an Expert Workshop on Urban Development, Biodiversity and Wetland Management was hosted by the Kenyan Wildlife Service at their Training Institute in Naivasha, Kenya, on 16 and 17<sup>th</sup> November 2009.



The Workshop was a joint initiative between the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, UN-HABITAT, and the Ramsar Convention. The organising parties ensured that the Workshop adopted a broad approach that took into account not only urban and peri-urban wetlands, but also the significant interactive system between cities/towns and wetlands/watersheds that provide water and other ecosystem services to urban people.

Conducted over two days and including presentations, plenary discussion sessions and smaller break-out groups, the Workshop brought together a mix of urban planners and managers with wetland experts from Africa, Asia, South America and Europe. A draft report has been produced which summarizes the main issues and sets out a framework for taking this initiative forward. The report is available [here](#) and on the STRP Support Service.



From the left : Ritesh Kumar (WI), Rob McInnes (STRP task lead) and Karin Buhren (UN-Habitat)

Approaches to developing guidance were considered at the Workshop. The agreed objective is to establish the overarching principles which set the philosophical framework for further guidance. Below the overarching principles two parallel workstreams are proposed to develop specific guidance from the perspectives of urban development and wetland management.

A timetable to take the work forward to 2011 has been proposed including the continued dialogue between UN HABITAT and the Scientific and Technical Review Panel of Ramsar and the production of technical guidance. The next stage in the process is an invited Expert Workshop to be held on the

19/20<sup>th</sup> February 2010 at the Ramsar Secretariat in advance of the STRP mid-term workshops. The workshop will aim produce overarching principles and confirm the approach to developing future guidance.

For information please contact Rob McInnes [robmcinnes@bioscanuk.com](mailto:robmcinnes@bioscanuk.com)

### **STRP & STETSON UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF LAW - COLLABORATION ON TRANSBOUNDARY RAMSAR SITES**

U.S.-based law students will be assisting the STRP by preparing case studies examining transboundary wetland sites as part of an International Environmental Law course at Stetson University College of Law. The effort is modeled after a project conducted by Stetson students last triennium, when they submitted case studies on environmental flows and water rights.

STRP Task 8.9 calls for an assessment of case studies to summarize the existing range of flexible options regarding the designation and management of Transboundary Ramsar Sites (TRS). A site is considered a TRS when an ecologically coherent wetland extends across national borders and the Ramsar site authorities on both or all sides of the border have formally agreed to collaborate in its management and they have notified the Ramsar Secretariat of this intent. This is a cooperative management arrangement (not a distinct legal status), and currently there are a dozen formally recognized TRS.

[http://www.ramsar.org/cda/ramsar/display/main/main.jsp?zn=ramsar&cp=1-31-119^21073\\_4000\\_0](http://www.ramsar.org/cda/ramsar/display/main/main.jsp?zn=ramsar&cp=1-31-119^21073_4000_0)

Because lessons may be drawn from a site that is not formally designated as a TRS, students will be considering a variety of sites, including:

- 1) formally designated TRS;
- 2) transboundary wetlands where each state has designated its portion as a Ramsar site, but the area is not formally designated as a TRS;
- 3) transboundary wetlands where only one state has designated its portion as a Ramsar site;
- 4) transboundary wetlands where neither state has designated its portion as a Ramsar site; and
- 5) Ramsar sites that cross domestic political boundaries within a single state (e.g., a transprovincial site).

The case studies will discuss the legal, policy and institutional framework for designating and managing transboundary areas and the development of day-to-day operations. In particular the students will consider the following areas identified by the STRP task force members:

- A. Supranational/national provisions
- B. Site-specific provisions
- C. Development of day-to-day operations

The students will be working under the direction of STRP Invited Expert [Royal C. Gardner](#). It is anticipated that the students will submit draft case studies for the mid-term workshop and that a videoconference will be held during the workshop on 23 February in which the students will present their initial findings from sunny Florida.



This collaborative project will offer the students a rare opportunity to be introduced (and perhaps in a small way contribute) to the inner workings of a multilateral environmental agreement. The student work product should complement the data and experiences gathered at the TRS meeting scheduled in France on 29-30 January 2010, providing the basis for an information paper.



**LESS THAN SEVEN DAYS TO THE WORLD WETLANDS DAY**

The Ramsar Secretariat has already received many emails about exciting plans from around the world to celebrate this special date – from a national forum bringing together stakeholders from many government sectors to explore the theme *Wetlands and Your Life* organized by the Centre for African Wetlands in Ghana, to a marathon traditional dance event organized by the local government of Moorea-Maiao in French Polynesia, to the Candaba Wetlands Center Design Competition organized by the Society for the Conservation of Philippine Wetlands in collaboration with an Architectural Students Association of the Philippines-Diliman; have a look at Proteger's excellent web page on WWD here <http://www.proteger.org.ar/doc894.html>.

....and surely worth to mention is the World Wetlands Week in Seychelles: between the 31st January and the 5th February 2010, Seychelles will host a diverse array of educational, cultural, ecological and social activities designed to raise international awareness of the need for conservation, protection and sustainable use of wetlands under the theme 'Wetlands connects life & culture'.

## Topic of the Quarter

### STRP MID-TERM WORKSHOPS APPROACHING SOON

A year has gone by since STRP15, which was the first working meeting of the full Panel shortly after COP10. At STRP15, we refined and finalized the STRP work plan for the 2009-2012 period, and we are now almost a year into implementation of those high priority tasks to which resources have been allocated. As you may recall, the work plan was developed around ten main Thematic Work Areas (TWAs). Each Thematic Area has a number of tasks for which terms of reference have been drawn up.

However, not all tasks can be advanced due to insufficient financial resources. We hope that the New Year will be more generous with voluntary contributions coming in to support more of our work ! The full STRP Work Plan is available on: [http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/strp/strp\\_workplan\\_2009.pdf](http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/strp/strp_workplan_2009.pdf)

Next month, from the 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup> of February 2010, the Ramsar Secretariat will host the so-called “STRP mid-term workshops” where our STRP members, Observer Organization representatives and other experts will gather together to review and progress the Panel’s work on priority tasks under the STRP 2009-2012 Work Plan, as instructed by COP10 Resolution X.10.

The workshops are different to our formal Panel meetings, since we usually spend more of our time working intensively in small groups on a range of priority tasks with less time spend in formal plenary sessions, as we take advantage of so many STRP members and experts being in town. Despite the challenging exercise to accommodate all the requests for special sessions, a suitably full programme has been finalized for a week that promises to be quite intense. However, the good working relationships amongst Panel members, IOPs, observers and invited experts, as well as the great support from the Secretariat, usually ensure that these meetings are also enjoyable and stimulating!

The parallel workshops will focus on advancing individual tasks that have been initiated since STRP15, including: task 2.3 on wetlands and extractive industries; task 2.6 on Wetlands and Poverty eradication, tasks 4.8 and 4.9 of Ramsar Indicators of effectiveness. There will also be three special evening sessions on Urban Wetlands; transboundary Ramsar Sites, and development of a Global Wetland Observing System (G-WOS).

In addition to the parallel group workshops during the week, a number of pre-session STRP task force workshops will take place from Friday 19 February to Sunday 21 February 2010 at the same venue. See the outline agenda [here](#).



One of the omnipresent big challenges in STRP work is to make sure that final products are targeted for the correct audience, making them a valuable tool to Contracting parties. STRP National Focal Points could play a critical role in this, particularly in advising on national and regional needs; STRP uses the [Support Service](#) to carry on its inter-sessional work and STRP National Focal Points are strongly encouraged to use it to contribute and stay up-to-date!

The outcomes of the meeting will be shared with all of you in early March.

## Meetings

### Recent meetings

- “Eight world general assembly of the international network of basin organizations (INBO)” - Dakar, Senegal 20-23 January 2010
- UNESCO International Year of Biodiversity high-level event - Paris, France 21-22 January 2010

### Upcoming meetings

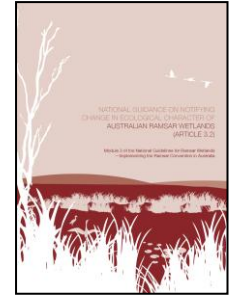
- *“Trondheim Conferences on Biodiversity” Getting the biodiversity target right - working for sustainable development - Trondheim, Norway 1-5 February 2010*
- *STRP Mid-Term Workshops - Gland, Switzerland 22-26 February 2010*

## Announcements

### AUSTRALIAN RAMSAR WETLANDS: NOTIFYING CHANGE IN ECOLOGICAL CHARACTER

Article 3.2 of the Convention on Wetlands commits Contracting Parties to monitor their Ramsar sites and inform the Secretariat whenever the ecological character of a site has changed, is changing, or is likely to change as a result of human interference. To help interpreting that obligation, Australia's Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts has published "National Guidance on Notifying Change in Ecological Character of Australian Ramsar Wetlands (Article 3.2)", as module 3 in its National Guidelines for Ramsar Wetlands series.

<http://www.environment.gov.au/water/publications/environmental/wetlands/module-3-change.html>



### MESCAL Project FOR MANGROVES IN OCEANIA



In early December 2009, IUCN has signed a 3.4 million US\$ project with the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU), titled "Mangrove Ecosystems for Climate Change and Livelihood" (MESCAL). The project will involve five countries: Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu and is due to complete at the end of 2013.

The primary goal of MESCAL will be to help reverse recent trends in the loss of mangroves, increase resilience of the people of the Pacific to climate change and provide natural insurance against the effects of climate change and extreme events.

## Publications

The WWF, Ramsar, IUCN guide for site managers "Wetland Management Planning" at [http://assets.panda.org/downloads/wetlands\\_management\\_guide\\_2008.pdf](http://assets.panda.org/downloads/wetlands_management_guide_2008.pdf).

Fitoka E & Keramitsoglou I 2008 (Editors).

[\*Inventory, assessment and monitoring of Mediterranean Wetlands: Mapping wetlands using Earth Observation techniques\*](#). EKBV & NOA. MedWet publication. (Scientific reviewer Nick J Riddiford).

Holt, C., Austin, G., Calbrade, N., Mellan, H., Thewlis, R., Hall, C., Stroud, D.A., Wotton, S. & Musgrove, A. (2009). *Waterbirds in the UK 2007/08. The Wetland Bird Survey*. BTO, WWT, RSPB, JNCC. 211 pp. soon available at [http://www.bto.org/webs/news/AR06\\_07/index.htm](http://www.bto.org/webs/news/AR06_07/index.htm)

Royal Gardner and Theresa J. Pulley Radwan, 2009

*Corporate Shell Games: LLPs, LLCs, and Responsibility for Mitigation Sites*

[http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=1498780](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1498780)

The article examines the extent to which certain business entities are legally responsible (or not) for wetland mitigation. Although the focus is US law, the general principles discussed may be analogous in other countries.

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The previous editions of the STRP Newsletter are posted on the main Ramsar Website. You can view them [here](#)

Photos on the front page: left: *Berbac Park* Ramsar site in Indonesia; right: *Lake Uluabat* Ramsar site in Turkey