



CONVENTION ON WETLANDS  
CONVENTION SUR LES ZONES HUMIDES  
CONVENCIÓN SOBRE LOS HUMEDALES  
(Ramsar, Iran, 1971)



The Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative

# World Wetlands Day 2005

**5, 19 February 2005,  
Auditorium of the French  
Institute, Athens, Greece**

## **Report**

A series of events aimed to raise awareness on the nature and benefits of wetlands were organized throughout February in Athens by MedWet together with the French Embassy in Athens for World Wetlands Day 2005.

### **Roundtable discussion, Saturday 5 February 2005**

Events kicked off with a roundtable discussion with the participation of the Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention, Mr Bridgewater, Head of Legal Affairs & Governance section of the Directorate General for the Environment of the European Commission, Mr Kremlis as well as a high rank representative of the Greek Ministry of the Environment, local authority representatives from the French region of Hérault and of course the MedWet Coordinator. Former Euro MP and distinguished journalist Mr Roubatis was very successful in his role as a moderator of the discussion.

The roundtable discussion aimed to present the audience with an overview of international policy framework for the protection of water and wetlands. Among those attending were the Coordinator of the United Nations Environment Programme Mediterranean Action Plan, Mr Paul Mifsud, former deputy Minister for the Environment of Greece, Ms Rodoula Zisi, honorary member of the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee and director of Med-INA, Mr Thymios Papayannis and Executive Secretary of Global Water Partnership Mediterranean, Mr Vangelis Constantianos.

Topics presented by the speakers included an overview of the nature of wetland ecosystems and their multiple ecological, social and economic values as well as the role of the Ramsar Convention and of the EU Water Framework Directive in promoting sustainable use of water resources and protection of wetlands.

*For more information visit <http://www.medwet.org/news1/wwd1.html>*

### **Special screening of films on Water and Wetlands, Saturday 19 February 2005**

A series of films on water and wetlands were shown on 19 February, in a special 'Tribute to World Wetlands Day' as part of the Festival 'Cinema et Realite' organized by the French Institute.

Four directors from India, the Netherlands, Finland and the UK, scouted the issues, mysteries and charms of water in the man and animal world. Together they offered a remarkable look over the meaning of water and wetlands in different cultures.

All of the films were first screened in Greece at the [Ecocinema](#) Festivals and two, Sharma's ***The Turtle People*** and van Fucht's ***Life in Ebb and Flow*** came out as winners of the 2004 and 2002 Festivals.

*For more visit* <http://www.medwet.org/news1/calendar.html>

## **Impact**

The events attracted significant attendance and attention of the media. Press releases sent out were received with significant interest and both the roundtable discussion and the Film Festival featured in news broadcasted on national TV and were advertised through press, radio and electronic wires.

The roundtable discussion succeeded in raising the profile of wetlands. Following the event a series of features on wetlands, Ramsar and MedWet appeared in main Greek as well as local English newspapers.

Moreover, the location of the venue right in the heart of the city, meant that the audience especially that of the film screening was composed of a wide variety of groups.

From Saturday afternoon shoppers who came into the screenings for a rest, to the regular crowd of the annual documentary Festival of the French Institute, the audience was a very mixed crowd. Among others for instance an artist showed up to watch the films on wetlands and water looking for inspiration for a future group show focusing on water.

World Wetlands Day, Ramsar and MedWet featured prominently in the information material of the five day festival 'Cinema et Realite'. Posters, a programme booklet and cards printed for the Festival all carried World Wetlands Day in a prominent place – in Greek – and were distributed widely.

Festival posters appeared in numerous downtown spots, in the heart of the Athens market district. About 800 booklets, carrying information on Ramsar, MedWet and World Wetlands day in a five page- section devoted to the screening on water and wetlands were distributed or sold. Small size post-cards also carrying a line on the Special Screening on World Wetlands Day, were also available freely around the space of the French Institute and were picked up by numerous students and passers by.

The main frame of the design appearing on these materials is attached to this message.

## **Trailer of the MedWet film on wetlands**

The two events also provided an opportunity to offer a first glimpse of the MedWet film on wetlands, which is in its early stage of research shooting. The five minute trailer which was shot early in January in the Albanian and Greek sides of the

international Ramsar site of Prespa was especially put together for this event in the week prior to World Wetlands Day.

### **Water in the spotlight**

Throughout the month of February the French Institute created a space devoted to a touring exhibition on water, created with the support of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Prominently placed in the main entrance hall were several giant posters on the value of water in the South. Some of the main topics of sustainable development are covered including climate, health, geo-political issues, obtaining water daily and hydrology.

*For more information visit*

*[http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/culture/expositions\\_scientifiques/03/index.html](http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/culture/expositions_scientifiques/03/index.html)*