



**COP14**  **2022**

## 14th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

“Wetlands Action for People and Nature”  
Wuhan, China, and Geneva, Switzerland 5-13 November 2022

### Resolution XIV.18

#### Waterbird population estimates to support new and existing Ramsar Site designations under Ramsar Criterion 6 – use of alternative estimates

1. RECALLING:
  - i. Resolution 5.9 on *Application of the Ramsar Criteria for Identifying Wetlands of International Importance*;
  - ii. Resolution VI.4 on *Adoption of population estimates for operation of the specific criteria based on waterfowl*;
  - iii. Resolution VIII.38 on *Waterbird population estimates and the identification and designation of Wetlands of International Importance*;
  - iv. Resolution X.22 on *Promoting international co-operation for the conservation of waterbird flyways*; and
  - v. Resolution XIII.20 on *Promoting the conservation and wise use of intertidal wetlands and ecologically-associated habitats*;
2. RECOGNIZING the critical importance of waterbirds to the biodiversity and ecological character of wetlands, and that Ramsar Criterion 6 facilitates the designation of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites) that are internationally important for waterbird conservation;
3. NOTING that:
  - i. the effectiveness of Criterion 6 in supporting waterbird conservation depends on availability of scientifically robust estimates of biogeographical population sizes of waterbirds; and
  - ii. the use of inaccurate or out-of-date population estimates, particularly for species in rapid decline, may undermine the intent of the 1% threshold embedded in Criterion 6;
4. RECOGNIZING that the current “Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971), – 2012 Revision” (adopted as Resolution XI.8, Annex 2, Rev. COP13) provides guidance on the application of Criterion 6;
5. RECOGNIZING that measures to enhance the effectiveness of waterbird conservation are relevant to meeting the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework targets under the Convention on Biological Diversity and other international biodiversity conservation agreements;

6. ACKNOWLEDGING the important role of Wetlands International in collating and publishing, at the request of the Conference of the Parties, previous periodic Waterbird Population Estimates, and WELCOMING the new Waterbird Populations Portal launched in 2021;
7. ACKNOWLEDGING critical work being undertaken through cooperative arrangements in the world's migratory bird flyways including Conservation Status Reviews undertaken in the African, Eurasian and East Asian-Australasian flyways and the Avian Conservation Assessment and Population Estimates Databases (ACAD), from the Partners in Flight programme and Bird Conservation, and RECOGNIZING that such work contributes to the ongoing update of the Waterbird Population Estimates;
8. DEEPLY CONCERNED about ongoing global decline of waterbird populations, notably of migratory waterbird species, and the underpinning loss and degradation of intertidal wetlands as well as other habitats on which waterbirds depend that are essential for supporting them throughout their lifecycles; and
9. ALSO CONCERNED that the Waterbird Population Estimates have not been updated since 2012 due to a lack of funding and that there is currently no mechanism in place to ensure that these essential updates are completed in a timely manner;

#### THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

10. REAFFIRMS the use of Waterbird Population Estimates to underpin application of Ramsar Criterion 6 as agreed and affirmed under Resolutions VI.4 and VIII.38 and as outlined in the Strategic Framework – 2012 Revision (adopted as Resolution XI.8, Annex 2 (Rev. COP13));
11. AGREES that until the Waterbird Population Estimates are updated with accurate population estimates, alternative data sources may be used by Contracting Parties for the purposes of determining the 1% threshold in the context of applying Ramsar Criterion 6, provided:
  - i. that the biogeographical population of the species concerned is clearly stated for the species as listed in Waterbird Population Estimates available through the Waterbird Populations Portal;
  - ii. that such thresholds should be derived from estimates that are published in the Waterbird Populations Portal, for migratory species, based on Conservation Status Reviews (CSRs) produced under the auspices of flyway instruments, or other peer-reviewed assessments for other migratory populations for which CSR-type assessments do not exist as well as for non-migratory and endemic populations;
  - iii. that the reasons why a new estimate is considered more appropriate are documented with a clear audit trail to original sources, thus allowing third parties to check any derivation of the estimate;
  - iv. that the standard methodology used for the Waterbird Populations Portal to convert from a biogeographic population estimate size to a 1% population threshold should be used; and
  - v. that any alternate thresholds used by Parties for Criterion 6 purposes, and their justification, be communicated both to the Secretariat (to maintain a log of such instances), and Wetlands International;
12. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to amend the Strategic Framework – 2012 Revision, (adopted as Resolution XI.8, Annex 2, Rev. COP13) to give effect to paragraph 11 of the present Resolution, as outlined in Annex 1;

13. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to work cooperatively with flyway agreements and partnerships to facilitate regular updates to Waterbird Population Estimates;
14. ALSO ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to use best available, scientifically robust data, through the process set out in paragraphs 10 and 11 of the present Resolution, for determining the 1% threshold for Site designations made on the basis of Criterion 6 and for future updates of the Ramsar Information Sheets;
15. REQUESTS the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) to include in its work plan for the next triennium the preparation of guidance to facilitate appropriate application of this Resolution by Contracting Parties in liaison with the technical and scientific subsidiary bodies of other relevant treaties, such as the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) and the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), as well as the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) and other flyway initiatives;
16. ALSO REQUESTS the STRP to develop a technical proposal to enable the resourcing and implementing of future timely and comprehensive Waterbird Population Estimates updates, in consultation with Contracting Parties, relevant flyway agreements and partnerships, Wetlands International and interested entities; and that this technical proposal, including, with advice from the Secretariat, an outline of funding implications, be presented to the 63rd meeting of the Standing Committee, ahead of a draft resolution for the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties, concerning the arrangements for future regular updates of the Waterbird Populations Portal; and
17. FURTHER REQUESTS the STRP to also develop guidance that provides technical support to Contracting Parties in closing identified gaps in waterbird population data, and outlines opportunities for capacity building, technical and scientific cooperation and exchange to support Contracting Parties, in particular developing country Contracting Parties, in their assessment of waterbird populations.

## Annex 1

### **Amendments to the “Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971), – 2012 Revision” (adopted as Resolution XI.8, Annex 2, Rev. COP13)**

Delete and replace paragraph 90 as follows:

For waterbirds, please use Wetlands International’s Waterbird Population Estimates as the definitive source of information on populations and species taxonomy (see also sections 6.1.5 and 6.1.6 below). (Note that there are only a few differences between the nomenclatures adopted by Waterbird Population Estimates and CITES). The most recent reference source is Waterbird Population Estimates, 5th edition, available in the Waterbird Populations Portal.

Amend paragraph 197 by inserting the new text in italics, as follows:

197. Current estimates of the sizes of all waterbird species’ populations and 1% thresholds for those populations for which there is a reliable population size estimate are also available in Wetland International’s periodic publication Waterbird Population Estimates, available in the Waterbird Populations Portal. If this Criterion is being applied to a waterbird species or population which is not covered in Waterbird Population Estimates, or for which that publication does not provide a 1% threshold *or the threshold provided is considered to be out of date, an alternative source of the population size estimate may be used and details of the source must be provided*, both to the Secretariat and to Wetlands International (to maintain a log of such instances). In doing so, details of the methodology for the estimate, which should be well-founded, are to be provided.

After paragraph 207 insert a sub-paragraph as follows:

207(a). An alternative source may also be used where population estimates published in the current Waterbird Population Estimates are considered to be out of date.

Remove the existing hyperlinks and amend paragraph 210 as follows:

International Waterbird Census: Wetlands International, <https://www.wetlands.org/IWC> and the publication *Waterbird Population Estimates* available through the Waterbird Populations Portal <https://wpp.wetlands.org/>.