10th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

"Healthy wetlands, healthy people"

Changwon, Republic of Korea,
28 October-4 November 2008

Ramsar COP10 DOC. 12

Regional overview of the implementation of the Convention and its Strategic Plan 2003 – 2008 in North America

National Reports upon which this overview is based can be consulted at http://www.ramsar.org/cop10/cop10_natlrpts_index.htm.

1. **Contracting Parties in North America:** Canada, Mexico and the United States of America (3)

2. **Contracting Parties whose National Reports are included in this analysis:** Canada, Mexico and the United States of America (3)

Summary of main achievements since COP9 and priorities for 2009-2011

National implementation progress and challenges

New steps undertaken to implement the Convention (A)

3. In the North American region, the Contracting Parties mentioned as the most significant activities undertaken: In Canada a survey of Ramsar site managers conducted in 2007 that re-established links with site managers and gathered perpectives on the benefits and challenges associated with Ramsar site designation; the development phase of the Canadian Wetland Inventory that was concluded in March 2007; promotion of awareness of ecological goods and services provided by wetlands; and new initiatives to conserve wetlands across Canada.

4. Mexico has undertaken actions to identify potential wetlands to be designated as Ramsar sites and has designated 52 Ramsar sites during the triennium – also mentioned were management plan preparations, creation of an inter-institutional group for wetland inventory; and mangrove inventory. Other activities are modification of the legal framework related to mangrove ecosystems in 2007, conduct of a national public consultation for wetland conservation, and a management wetland training course with the Arizona Game and Fish Department of the United States.

5. Since COP9, the United States has served on five Ramsar Committees, including as Chair of the Subgroup on Finance, and continues to be actively involved in Standing Committee

meetings. Through the State Department, the US has provided financial assistance for the Wetlands for the Future Fund. The US recently designated its 23rd and 24rd Ramsar sites and is working on several more new designations. The US has made great progress in updating the Ramsar Information Sheets (RIS) for most of its Ramsar sites.

6. The US National Ramsar Committee (USNRC) is more active and energized than it has ever been, and it held a meeting of Ramsar site managers hosted by the Caddo Lake Institute. Caddo Lake has also contributed to Ramsar activities by designing and printing Ramsar and USNRC banners to be distributed among Ramsar sites. The USNRC also conducted a survey of all US Ramsar sites to assess the benefits of Ramsar designation. Small grants totaling nearly $100,000 were awarded in 2008 to support CEPA activities in work towards new Ramsar site designations. There continues to be a potpouri of activities across the nation on World Wetlands Day, with increasing demand for Ramsar-produced materials.

The most successful aspects of implementation of the Convention (B)

7. The most successful aspect for Canada has been the designation of wetlands for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance and Canada's Survey of Ramsar Site Managers in 2007.

8. In the United States, in terms of wetlands conservation specifically, in 2004 President Bush announced a goal for expanding wetland acreage through both creating new wetlands and improving the quality of existing wetlands, while protecting existing, high-quality wetlands. The stated goal is to achieve at least one million acres (405,000 hectares) in each of these separate categories between Earth Day 2004 and 2009. After three years of progress toward the President's five-year goal, the team of six Federal departments working with multiple states, communities, tribes and private landowners is on track to meet or exceed this goal. Since the goal was set, 2,769,000 acres (1,120,579 hectares) of wetlands have been restored or created, improved or protected.

9. For Mexico some of the most relevant actions are: Designation of under-represented Ramsar sites and the reinforcement of financial support, cooperation and participation actions as a result of the designations; inclusion of wetland issues in national policies and strengthening of intitutions in this regard; the opening of eight CEPA centres in the country; and progress toward a CEPA national strategy and World Wetland Day celebrations.

Greatest difficulties in implementing the Convention (C)

10. All three Parties reported that the greatest difficulties related to the lack of financial and manpower resources devoted to implementing the Convention. Canada's Survey of Ramsar Site Managers 2007 identified that the top three challenges specifically related to managing Ramsar sites are 1) effects of surrounding land uses and activities, 2) invasive species, and 3) visitor impacts.

11. In Mexico, the different perceptions about weland uses, values and purpose are a great difficulty as well as the lack of knowledge about the Convention's goals, a national wetland strategy/programme, and a database of wetland information

Priority proposals for future implementation (D)

Canada

12. Implementation of the Canadian Wetland Inventory, focused initially on protected areas, is planned for the next triennium, in addition to making existing CWI maps available online through GeoBase.

13. Improved national coordination on wetlands is proposed to facilitate communications on Ramsar objectives, strategies and resources among Canadians involved in wetland conservation.

14. Further support is envisaged for the WetKit: Tools for Working with Wetlands in Canada Web site, as it is the major national source of information on Ramsar and wetland conservation.

Mexico

15. Mexico focuses upon the following priorities:

- preparation of a legal framework taking into account the results of the National Wetland Public Consultation that is in progress;
- increase in the dissemination of information regarding wetlands' importance and Ramsar sites at the national and local level;
- increase in the human and financial resources to fulfill the Ramsar commitments;
- development of a Wetlands National Strategy/Programme; and
- compilation of wetland information and creation of a database to facilitate wetlands identification and delimitation.

16. Mexico also participates in the Regional Initiative for the Conservation and Wise Use of Mangrove Ecosystems as well as the Regional Initiative for Caribbean Wetlands that were announced by the Contracting Parties at the Ramsar Pan American Meeting in 2007.

United States

17. Several sites are being proposed for future designation as Wetlands of International Importance. A plan is under development that will lead to a national assessment of the ecosystem services that US wetlands are providing.

Proposals for assistance from the Ramsar Secretariat (E)

18. The Parties consider positive the official visits that the Secretariat staff has undertaken to promote and strengthen the implementation of the Convention as well as to encourage the work of the personnel that are involved. They also highlighted the work carried out by the technical bodies of the Covention.

Proposals for assistance from IOPs (F)

19. There can be some benefits from the resources that they provide for the Convention like experts directories and databases.

How to link Ramsar implementation with other MEAs (G)

20. The results of studies carried out for the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Ramsar Convention on their roles, secretariats and technical bodies can be useful for the Contracting Parties as a framework for actions and can be applied for other MEAs.

How to link Ramsar with the implementation of water policies and other strategies at national level (H)

21. In most parts of Canada, the Ramsar principles and approach are reflected in policies and strategies at all levels related to water, sustainable development and extractive industries. However, explicit promotion of the Ramsar Convention as a legal international treaty for which all sectors of Canadian society are responsible may improve success in implementing these strategies in the face of the major resource development pressures expected in the next 10-15 years.

22. Mexico considers that there should be an articulation of the task of the National/Ramsar Committees with the task of other committees or councils that have been created to favor the implementation of actions.

Other comments on the implementation of the Convention (I)

23. The Ramsar Secretariat has made available some excellent, practical guidance on the wise use of wetlands. More resources need to be invested in ensuring that this guidance is communicated to decision-makers in all sectors across Canada, and that Ramsar site managers have the financial and manpower resources to proactively manage sites and meet Ramsar Convention requirements.

24. Adhesion to the Ramsar Convention has definitely contributed to an important development of wetland matters in Mexico. Its flexibility as well as the technical tools represent an important mechanism that can be used by all interested stakeholders and communities. It is expected that the Ramsar Convention will continue with these tasks and develop effective and efficient programmes according to its roles and promote alliances to approach matters that play a key role in wetland conservation.

Main achievements since COP9

25. As of July 31, 2008, the region has designated 173 Ramsar sites that cover an area of more than 22.2 million hectares, representing approximately 14% by area of Wetlands of International Importance in the world and 9.8% of the world's Wetlands of International Importance.

26. Since COP9, 56 new sites covering a surface area of 2,780 million hectares have been designated in the North American region. Two Ramsar sites have been extended, Mer Bleue Conservation Area (Canada) and Playa Tortuguera Chenkán (México). The new designations maintain an increase in the designation of sites (56) from COP8 to COP10 in the region.

27. Contracting Parties that have made new designations in the triennium are Mexico (54) and United States (2).

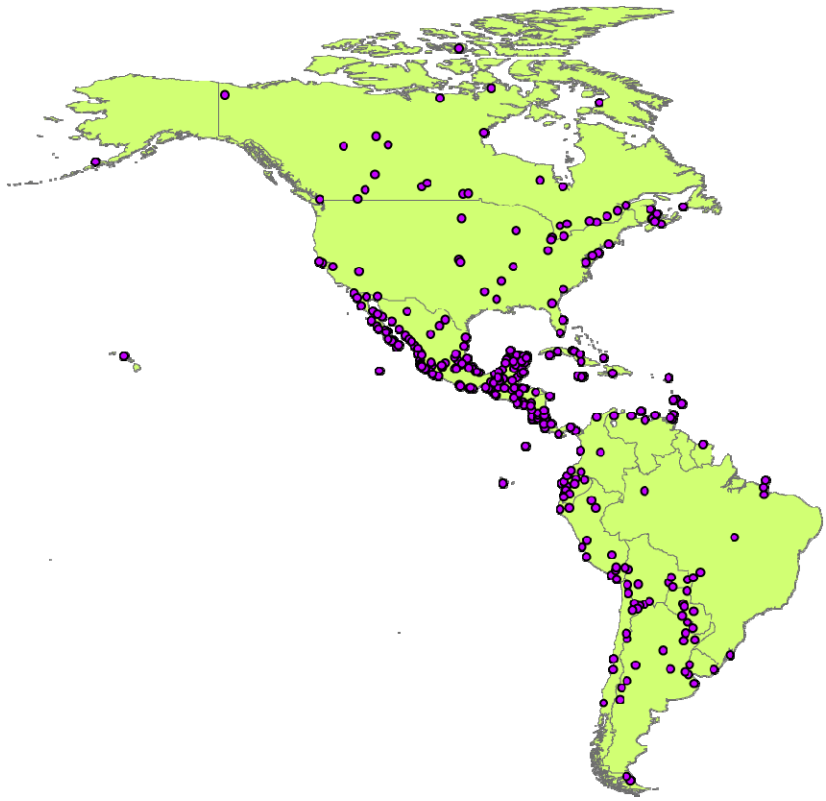

Figure 1. Ramsar sites in the Neotropics and North America

28. One of the main achievements of the North American region is the implementation of two surveys in Canada and the United States (conducted by the US National Ramsar Committee) to determine the benefits of Ramsar site designation.

29. The United States has National Wetland Policies in place, while Mexico and Canada have established policies that partially fulfill this task.

30. Almost all the Parties in the North American region – Mexico and the United States – have established a National Wetland Committee. In Mexico the Committee supports Semarnat and other governmental authorities on wetland issues. The United States National Ramsar Committee (USNRC) supports Ramsar-related initiatives within the United States and internationally.

31. The American region currently has only one site in the Montreux Record, in the United States, and no sites have been added or removed from the Record since COP9.

32. The United States made important contributions for the organization of the V Pan American Meeting in 2007. During the three-year period, the US has provided USD 652,742 to fund 29 projects in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela through Wetlands for the Future in the Neotropics. The fund has proved to have a great impact on the support of training, awareness raising, conservation and management activities for wetlands in the region.

33. Also through Wetlands for the Future, funds (USD 95,000) were granted for the Regional Ramsar Centre for Training and Research on Wetlands in the Western Hemisphere (CREHO), and the US Fish and Wildlife Service also granted funds for CREHO for the period 2005-2008 of around USD 151,142.

34. The Ramsar Convention has participated as an active member in the Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative (WHMSI), International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI), and the White Waters to Blue Waters Initiative, as a member of the Council of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN), and on the activities of the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme and the Spaw Protocol.

Conclusions – and Ways Forward 2009-2012

35. There has been a significant progress in the North American region in the implementation of the Convention during the last triennium. In terms of the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2005-2008 (also see Annex Table 3), the main achievements are:

Goal 1. The wise use of wetlands

Key Performance Measures

36. In terms of inventories (indicator 1.1.1), since COP9 there has been significant progress in the region as the United States has completed this task at the national level and Canada and Mexico have made important advances in this regard.

37. Regarding the status and trends of the ecological character of wetlands (Ramsar sites and/or wetlands generally (indicator 1.1.3)), all three Parties in the region have made significant progress in completing (Mexico and the US) or partly completed (Canada) information on the status and trends on wetlands. In this regard it is important that the actions be oriented to the maintenance of the ecological character of wetlands.

38. For the two American regions, there is significant progress (33%) in this regard, as currently 50% of the Neotropical and North American Parties have information for some sites about the status and trends of wetlands in comparison to what was reported to COP9. However, there is only an advance of 5% in Parties that have complete information of status and trends since COP9.

39. For the North American region, all three Parties have wetland policies in place or similar instruments that fulfill this task.

40. Currently 38% of the Parties in the two Americas regions have wetland policies and 27% of them are working on this task. In this regard there has been some progress (5%) since COP9 and that is expected to increase for COP11.

41. Regarding wetland ecosystem benefits (indicator 1.3.1), all three Parties in North America have made important efforts in conducting studies to assess the ecosystem benefits provided by Ramsar sites, and therefore it is highly recommended that this task continue in the next triennium.

42. In the analysis of the two American regions, only 12% of the Parties have conducted such assessments, but it is important to note that most of the Parties (57%) have at least partial information about ecosystem benefits, and it is highly recommended that this should continue.

43. The three Contracting Parties (Canada, Mexico and the United States) in the region have been making significant progress in implementing wetland restoration programmes or projects (indicator 1.5.1) with the partial use of Ramsar guidelines (indicator 1.5.2).

44. Regarding restoration or rehabilitation, the two American regions show important actions as 58% of the Parties are implementing actions in this matter; however, it is recommended that these actions be component of specific programs in this matters.

Goal 2: Ramsar sites or Wetlands of International Importance

Key Performance measures

45. All three Parties in North America have documents that somehow address the priorities for designation of Ramsar sites (indicator 2.1.1) and the two American regions together show important progress in this regard, as 41% of the Parties that submitted National Reports have established some mechanisms for it and 12% have made partial progress.

46. As of July 31, 2008, North America has designated 173 Ramsar sites that cover an area of more than 22.2 million hectares, representing approximately 14% by area of Wetlands of International Importance in the world, and since COP9, 56 new sites covering a surface of 2.78 million hectares have been designated and two Ramsar sites have been extended.

47. For the two American regions, there has been an increase in 76 new Ramsar sites since COP9, but there has been a decrease in the total number of sites designated during just the last triennium.

48. Regarding the update of Ramsar sites (indicator 2.2.1), in the region 45 (26%) Ramsar sites out of 173 need to be updated according to the criteria established in Resolution VI.13 and reiterated in Resolutions VII.2, VII.3 and VIII.10. This must be a priority for the Parties in the next triennium.

49. All three North American Parties have taken partial measures for the maintenance of the ecological character of all Ramsar sites (indicator 2.3.1), but this issue must be continue to be a priority for the next triennium. For both the Neotropical and North American regions, only 12% of the Parties have defined and applied measures for the maintenance of the ecological character of Ramsar sites, and 61% have taken partial measures. Even though most of the countries are working partially in this regard, the whole situation from Mexico to the Neotropics is very alarming, as the development and expansion of urban development and tourism activities, mainly in marine and coastal wetlands, is taking place at a rapid rate, so it is urgent that the Contracting Parties implement actions regarding legal framework (policies and specific wetland regulations), protection measures, strategic planning and the use of EIA and SEA in the decision-making process.

50. All the three North American countries have management plans (indicator 2.3.2) or strategies to some extent in place for their Ramsar sites and plans for other sites are under development. As of July 31, 2008, 127 (73%) of the Ramsar sites (173) in North America have management plans, showing significant progress in this regard. It is highly recommended to continue taking steps on this issue for the next triennium as a tool for the maintenance of the ecological character of the Ramsar sites.

51. For both American regions, 35% of the Parties indicated that they have prepared managements plans for their Ramsar sites, and 50% mentioned having them for some sites. In this regard it is expected that the preparation of this tool for Ramsar sites will continue in the next triennium. Relative to the global level (25%), the two Americas regions show significant progress (35%) in Parties taking steps in this direction.

52. During the last triennium, the Secretariat has received around 18 reports from third parties, five (5) of them concerning Ramsar sites, on threats to the ecological character of wetlands (indicator 2.4.2). For the next triennium, it is strongly recommended that the Parties improve the mechanisms for being informed not only about changes or likely change in the ecological character of Ramsar sites but also for informing the Ramsar Secretariat about these changes on a regular basis.

53. Currently, the North American region has one site on the Montreux Record (indicator 2.4.3), but no sites have been added to the Record since COP9.

54. In general terms, it is important to highlight the support given by the North American countries to other regional initiatives in the region or other Ramsar regions, not only through financial support but also by technical advice and sharing of experience.

Goal 3: International cooperation

Key Performance measures

55. All Contracting Parties in North America have continued undertaking some activities with regard to networks, including twinning arrangements for knowledge sharing and training for wetlands that share common features (indicator 3.2.1).

Goal 4: Implementation capacity

Key Performance measures

56. The region shows significant progress in encouraging wise use among the private sector, mainly in Canada and the United States, and it is important to continue efforts in this matter.

57. All three North American Parties show significant progress regarding the promotion of incentives for conservation (indicator 4.3.1), but nevertheless it is highly recommended that they continue making efforts for the removal of perverse incentive measures (indicator 4.3.2).

58. In terms of CEPA-related activities, all three Parties in the region are very active in this regard, but there are still opportunities to increase them for the next triennium. Mexico is preparing a CEPA national plan and the United States is working on the creation of a national CEPA Task Force and CEPA Action Plan. In Canada, Communication, Education and Public Awareness objectives are incorporated in federal and provincial wetland policies, stewardship initiatives, and habitat conservation programmes

59. The whole region is very active in the implementation of campaigns, workshops and Ramsar site designations for World Wetlands Day celebrations.

60. Canada and the United States have development assistance bodies (indicator 4.5) and both have provided funding for conserving and managing wetlands in other countries.

61. The United States made important contributions for the organization of the V Pan American Meeting in 2007 and has provided USD 652,742 to fund 29 projects in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela through Wetlands for the Future in the Neotropics. The fund has proved to have a great impact in the support of training, awareness raising, conservation and management activities for wetlands in the region.

62. Also through Wetlands for the Future, funds (USD 95,000) were granted for the Regional Ramsar Centre for Training and Research on Wetlands in the Western Hemisphere (CREHO), and the US Fish and Wildlife Service also granted funds for CREHO for the period 2005-2008 of around USD 151,142.

63. Currently in the region Mexico and the United States have a National Ramsar Committee.

Key messages and main challenges for the Contracting Parties in the American regions

64. In the case of North America, the main challenge would be to actively promote the Convention's goals at the national, regional and local level, as well as the benefits of Ramsar site designations, and to increase those designations. It is important to increase and maintain the political commitment in wetland conservation and financial support for environmental projects in or associated with Ramsar sites, as well as to continue efforts in addressing effects of land uses, monitoring of ecological character, and invasive species.

65. Around 25 Ramsar sites in the Neotropics are threatened by urban development and tourism activities (resorts and golf courses), mainly in marine and coastal wetlands from the coast of Mexico to South America, with an emphasis on Central America and the Caribbean. These activities, without regard to the ecological integrity (goods and services) of the Ramsar sites, represent a threat for the conservation of the sites, but in some cases they are already having a great negative impact on the ecological character of some of them.

66. Therefore, the main challenge for the Contracting Parties would be to raise awareness at all levels (national, regional and local) about wetland benefits and services, but it is also urgent to increase the political commitment for their conservation, as well as the maintenance of the ecological character of the sites through the use and implementation of legal frameworks (policies and specific wetland regulations), protection measures, strategic planning, and the use of EIA and SEA in the decision-making process.

Activities undertaken since COP9 to implement the Convention

67. The analysis is based on the document "A framework for the implementation of the Convention's Strategic Plan 2003-2008 in the 2006-2008 period" in Resolution IX.8 available on the Ramsar Web site (http://www.ramsar.org/res/key_res_ix_08_e.htm).

Goal 1: The wise use of wetlands

National wetland inventories and assessment *(Strategy 1.1)*

68. Among the three Contracting Parties in North America, the United States has completed a comprehensive wetland inventory with national coverage (indicator 1.1.1). The FWS strategically maps the nation's wetlands and deepwater habitats to gather information on their characteristics, extent, and status through the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI).

69. Canada and Mexico are making progress in this task: a methodology for the Canadian Wetland Inventory (CWI) has been developed in the last triennium and national wetland inventory mapping has been completed for approximately 10% of the country during the pilot projects. Detailed wetland mapping on Canadian Wildlife Service and possibly other federal protected areas is proposed for the next triennium. Mexico has made progress in developing a national wetland classification system and a standard format for wetland inventory as well as a national wetlands map, a strategic framework for wetlands inventory, and partial inventories in Chiapas, Sonora-Sinaloa, Quintana Roo and Tabasco.

70. Regarding the status and trends of the ecological character of wetlands (Ramsar sites and/or wetlands generally (indicator 1.1.3)), all three Parties in the region have made significant progress in compiling complete or partly complete information on the status and trends on wetlands, especially concerning adverse changes.

71. Environment Canada continues monitoring land use change on Creston Valley and Lac Saint Pierre wetlands. Canada's Survey of Ramsar Site Managers (2007) identifies changes to ecological character in 15 Ramsar sites – follow-up to these survey results is required to determine whether any reported changes in ecological character are significant and human-induced.

72. In Mexico the main drivers of changes are related to natural phenomena including climate change and man-made induced activities like over-exploitation of oases, karstics and peatlands as well as a consequence of improper past policies.

73. As part of the President's Wetlands Initiative, the FWS completed an updated national wetlands status and trends report in 2005. The study found that there are about 107.7 million acres of wetlands in the contiguous United States. There is additional work to be done to ensure that the nation's wetlands base is sustained and provides the necessary functions, diversity, and structure to improve the quality of the wetland resources. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is developing an implementation plan that will lead to a national assessment of the ecosystem services that US wetlands are providing. Regarding adverse change, in some cases, the need is greater, such as for example in terms of Louisiana Coastal Wetlands. Louisiana, home to 40 percent of all coastal wetlands in the

lower 48 states, is projected to lose almost 17 square miles of coastline each year for the next 50 years to storms, sea level rise, and land subsidence.

74. For the two American regions, there is a significant progress (33%) in this regard as currently 50% of the Parties have information for some sites about the status and trends of wetlands in comparison to what was reported to COP9. However, there is only and advance of 5% in Parties that have complete the information of status and trends since COP9.

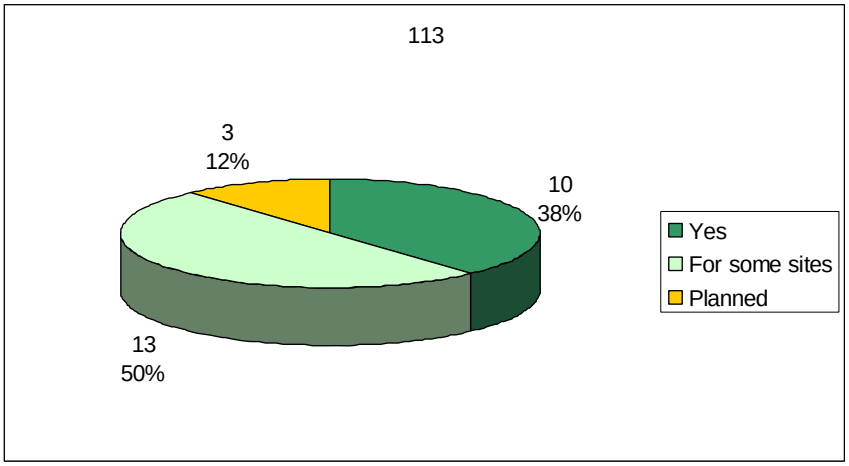

Figure 2. Status and trends for the two American regions – COP10

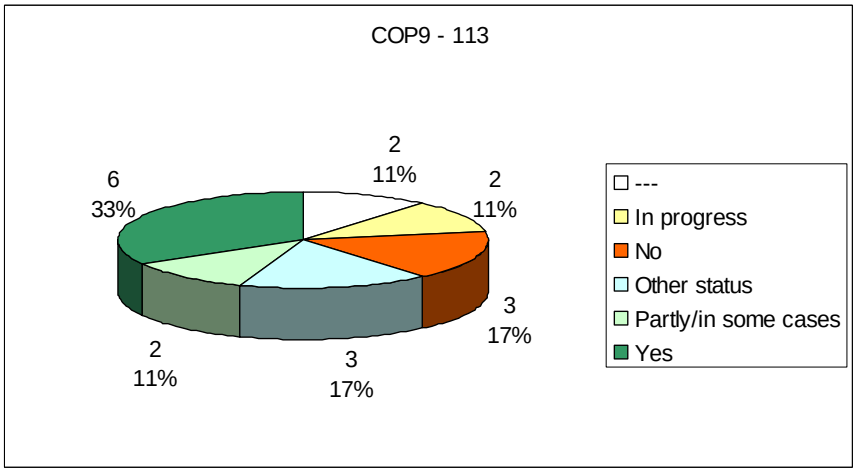

Figure 3. Status and trends for the two American regions – COP9

National Wetland Policies *(Strategy 1.2)*

75. The United States has National Wetland Policies in place, while Canada has a federal policy on wetlands conservation and Mexico has established policies that partially fulfill this task. In the case of Canada, it has a Federal Policy on Wetland Conservation (1991), and most provinces and territories and some municipal level governments have entrenched wise use of wetlands in public policy. Six provinces have wetland policies in place (Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, and New Brunswick). Mexico has esablished a base line of an environemental policy for sustainable use of oceans and coastal zones, the National Water Law, and has been working in an strategy for coastal wetlands as mangroves.

76. Regarding the application of Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA, Indicator 1.2.5), the United States has used them in the review of the policies, programmes and plans that can impact upon wetlands, and Canada and Mexico have partly used them. Currently 38% of the Parties in the two Americas regions have wetland policies and 27% of them are working on this task. In this regard there has been some progress (5%) since COP9 and it is expected to increase for COP11.

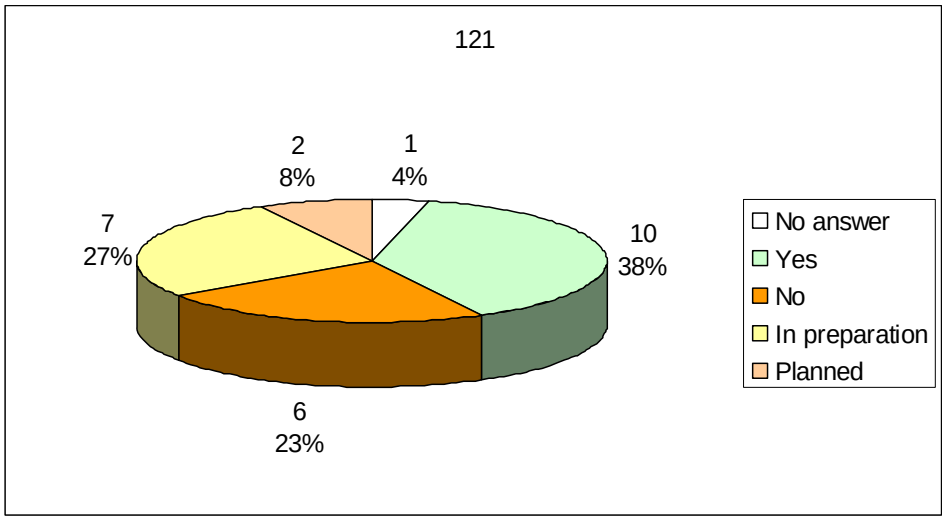

Figure 4. Status of policies in the two Americas regions

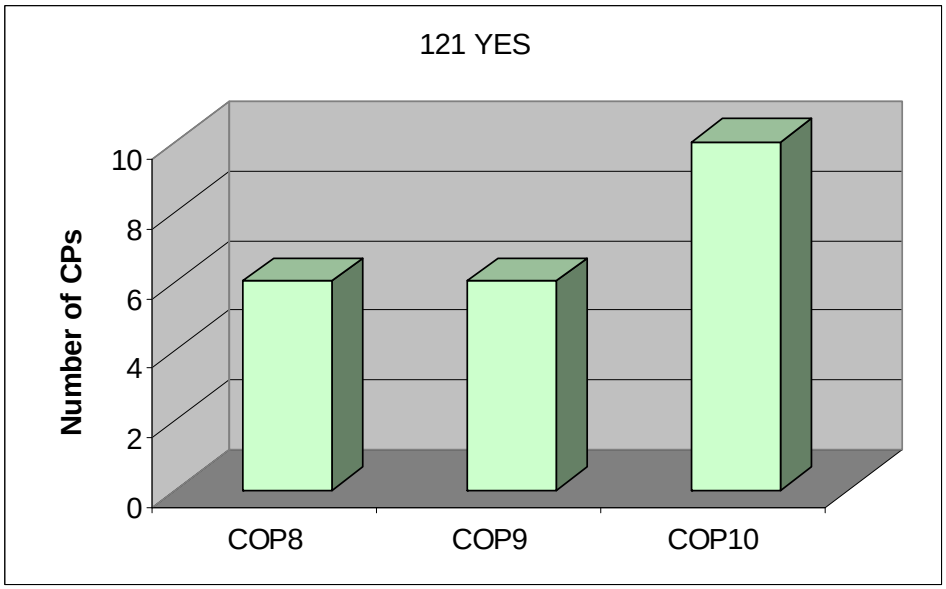

Figure 5. Evolution of policies in the Americas regions

Wetland ecosystem services *(Strategy 1.3)*

77. Mexico and the United States reported partial progress in conducting assessment of the ecosystem benefits and services provided by Ramsar sites (Indicator 1.3.1). Mexico implemented a project of economic evaluation of mangroves in the Ramsar site Marismas Nacionales but will continue implementing projects on wetlands's values. In the United

States, the EPA's Office of Research and Development is developing an implementation plan that would lead to a national assessment of the ecosystem services that US wetlands are providing. EPA's Office of Water is working with EPA's Office of Research and Development, States, and Tribes to implement a National Wetland Condition Assessment in 2011. In the case Canada, no comprehensive assessments have been conducted to measure ecosystem services provided by Ramsar sites, although all management plans make reference to the benefits and services of the designated sites.

78. In the analysis for both Americas regions, only 12% of the Parties have conducted the assessments but it is important to highlight that most of the Parties (57%) have at least partial information about ecosystems benefits, and it is strongly recommended that these actions be continued for the next triennium.

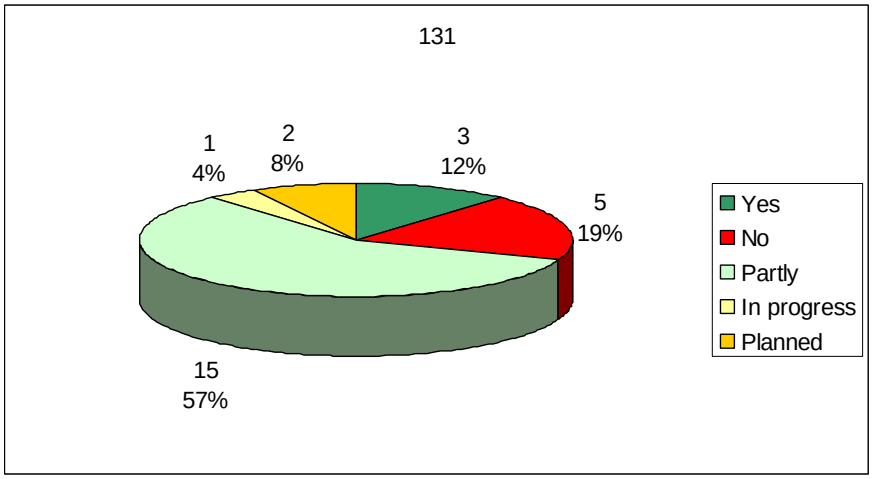

Figure 6. Assessment of ecosystems benefits in the American regions

Ramsar's water-related guidance *(Strategy 1.4)*

79. According to the National Reports Canada and Mexico have partly used or applied the Convention's water-related guidance (Resolution IX.1, Annex C) in decision-making related to water resource planning and management (Indicator 1.4.1). Mexico has made the dissemination of this guidance amongst relevant dependencies of the government related to water resources.

80. On the other hand, regarding the assessment of implications for wetlands conservation and wise use of national implementation of the Kyoto Protocol (Indicator 1.4.4), in Canada this issues has been recognized but not assessed. Further study is needed on the role of wetlands in carbon sequestration and greenhouse gas cycling and the natural abilities of these systems to mitigate climate change. Mexico is currently developing a project to identify coastal wetlands in the Gulf of Mexico that are vulnerable to climate change.

Wetland restoration and rehabilitation *(Strategy 1.5)*

81. The three Parties in the region have been making significant progress in implementing wetland restoration programmes or projects (indicator 1.5.1) with the partial use of Ramsar guidelines (indicator 1.5.2). Five public-private joint venture partnerships of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) have spent over $9 million over the

past three years enhancing more than 36,000 hectares of wetland habitat in Canada. Other restoration/rehabilitation projects have been completed by, for example, provincial governments as local stewardship initiatives carried out in cooperation with landowners. Also, Canada's priority wetlands for restoration include estuaries on the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts, wetlands of the shorelines and watersheds of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River, prairie pothole regions of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, and commercial peatlands.

82. In Mexico, CONANP and CONAFOR have promoted and implemented restoration activities for mangrove and riparian wetlands. Some of these actions are restoration of mangroves in Celestun with the cooperation of JICA (Japanese International Cooperation Agency), restoration of the Laguna Madre watershed, environmental assessment of the mangrove ecosystem Nichupté Bojórquez, Cancún, Quintana Roo and Alvarado wetlands in the south of Veracruz.

83. For the United States, the primary programmes making contributions to restoration are the Wetlands Reserve Program (USDA/NRCS), National Wildlife Refuge System (DOI/FWS), North American Wetlands Conservation Act (DOI/FWS), Conservation Reserve Program (USDA/FSA), and Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program (DOI/FWS).

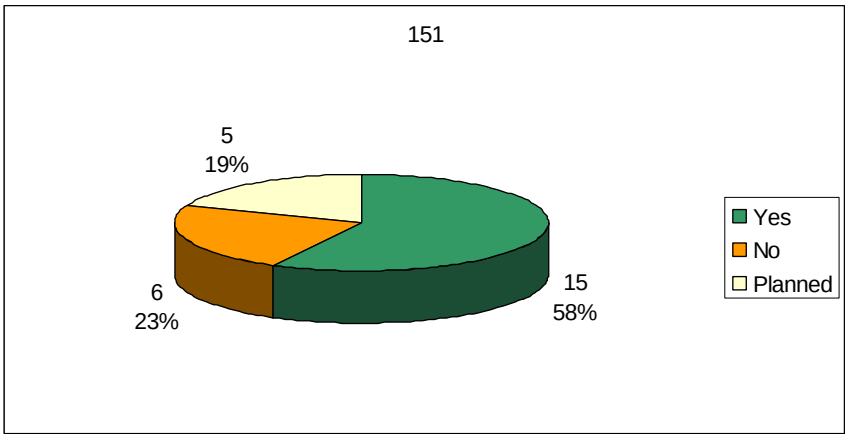

Figure 7: Implementation of restoration or rehabilitation programmes or projects

84. The two Americas regions show important efforts as 58% of the Parties are implementing actions in this matter – however, it is recommended that these actions be components of specific programmes in the future.

Invasive alien species *(Strategy 1.6)*

85. In relation to the development and implementation of national policies, strategies and management responses to threats from invasive species, particularly in wetlands (indicator 1.6.1), Canada reported that in the past triennium the government reaffirmed its commitment to conserve and protect aquatic resources, and its recognition that aquatic invasive species constitute a serious threat to those resources, through a number of measures, including implementation of the National Plan on Invasive Alien Species.

86. México has implemented a control program for invasive aquatic weeds (water lily) and control measures for exotic fishes in the Río Balsas and Usumacinta watershed as well as in

Baja Californa Sur. They are also working on a National Invasive Species Strategy in the framework of the Biodiversity Convention and the North America Cooperation Commission and have developed an Invasive Species Information System. Mexico has joined some strategies and international guidelines like the International Agreement for Plants Protection, the WHO, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Global Invasive Species Programme, and the guidelines for the prevention of diversity lost by invasive species of the IUCN.

87. The United States has instituted numerous programmes aimed at the prevention and control of invasive species. In all, this framework comprises 27 federal laws, over 300 programmes, and around 320 groups and organizations that play some role in the invasive species problem in the United States. The United States' invasive species policies and strategies have been carried out in cooperation with international conventions and organizations.

88. In general terms invasive species are a major matter for all three Parties in the North American region, and all of them have taken important steps in this regard.

Goal 2: Ramsar sites or Wetlands of International Importance

A Strategic Framework for Ramsar site designation *(Strategy 2.1)*

89. Regarding the establishment of a strategy or priorities for Ramsar site designations (indicator 2.1.1), in the case of Canada the priorities are in the report entitled *Strategic Overview of the Canadian Ramsar Program* that was published in 1995 but has not been acted upon. Even though Mexico does not have a strategy for designations of sites, they have identified more than 200 wetlands of special interest in terms of values and international importance. In the United States, a number of planned and/or potential new site designations are under various stages of submission, planning or discussion. There is currently no strategic or prioritized plan for designation of Ramsar sites but while the US does not currently have a strategic prioritization for further designation of Ramsar sites, the Wisconsin Wetlands Association, supported in part by the USNRC Small Grants Program, is developing a statewide prioritized plan for Ramsar designation, which may serve as a model for other states.

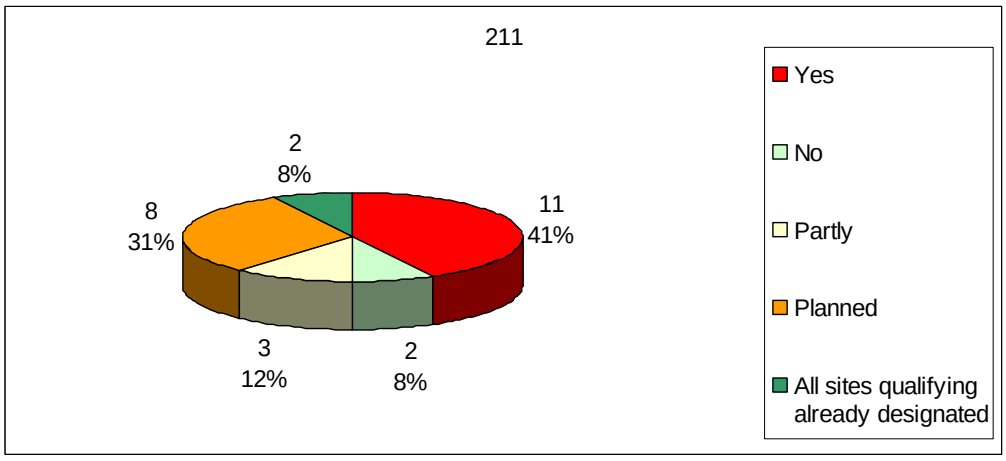

Figure 8. Strategy and priorities for Ramsar sites designation

90. Regarding the establishment of a strategy or priorities for Ramsar site designations, the two American regions show important actions in this regard, as 41% of the Parties that submitted National Reports have established some mechanisms for it and 12% have made partial progress on it.

91. As was mentioned previously in the summary, as of July 31, 2008, the region has designated 173 Ramsar sites that cover an area of more than 22.2 million hectares ,representing approximately 14% by area of Wetlands of International Importance in the world and 9.8% of the world's Wetlands of International Importance. Since COP9, 56 new sites covering a surface of 2.78 million hectares have been designated in the North American region. Two Ramsar sites have been extended – Mer Bleue Conservation Area (Canada) and Playa Tortuguera Chenkán (México). The designations represent an increase in 56 sites since COP9, but there is no progress in the number of designations of sites between COP8 and COP10.

92. For the two American regions, there has been an increase in 76 new Ramsar sites since COP9, but a decrease in the relative number of sites designated in this triennium.

93. In terms of types of wetlands, most of the Ramsar sites designed during the last triennium comprise Coastal brackish/saline lagoons, brackish to saline lagoons with at least one relatively narrow connection to the sea.

94. One of the main achievements of the North American region is the implementation of two surveys in Canada and the United States (conducted by the US National Ramsar Committee) to determine the benefits of Ramsar site designation. According to the results, in the case of the US, designations provide important benefits like increased funding opportunities, support for protection of the site and its surrounds, and increased science and tourism opportunities.

95. In the case of Canada, the results of the Ramsar site managers' 2007 surveys show that two-thirds (67.6%) of Ramsar site managers think that the designation helps to maintain the ecological character of the site.

96. For Mexico, the designation of underrepresented wetlands to the List has been a success, as has the increase in the cooperation and community participation after the designations, and in many cases the designations have also reinforced wetlands protection.

97. In this regard, as was pointed out for the Neotropics regional report, the setting of priority designations of new Ramsar sites as well as actual new designations is strongly encouraged by the Secretariat for the next triennium, especially for countries that have not made new designations of Ramsar sites in spite of the benefits of Ramsar site designation.

Updating information on Ramsar sites *(Strategy 2.2)*

98. Regarding the updating of Ramsar sites information (indicator 2.2.1), in the overall region the data on 45 (26%) Ramsar sites out of 173 need to be updated according to the criteria established in Resolution VI.13 and reiterated in Resolutions VII.2, VII.3 and VIII.10. The Americas Secretariat team has requested updates on several occasions for either RISs older

than six years, incomplete RIS files, and/or sites with deficient maps. Table 2 in the Annex provides further details.

99. Updated RISs are pending from Canada (37), Mexico (1) and the United States (8). Canada's Survey of Ramsar Site Managers 2007 has identified which Ramsar site Information Sheets require updates, and follow-up is planned in the near future.

Maintaining the ecological character of the Ramsar sites *(Strategy 2.3)*

100. According to Canada's National Report, measures required to maintain the ecological character (indicator 2.3.1) of each Ramsar site are identified in management plans. Mexico has undertaken partial actions in some sites (La Mancha-El Llano, Chamela-Cuitzmala and Delta del Río Colorado) as well as protection actions in other sites (Sistema Interdunario de Veracruz, Ría Lagartos, La Encrucijada, and Cuatro Ciénegas).

101. With respect to meeting its wise use commitments, the United States relies on several federal, state, and local regulatory regimes, as well as various non-regulatory wetland restoration programs. While many federal agencies cooperate on Ramsar issues in the United States, the USFWS takes the lead with respect to technical and scientific issues. In addition, the US National Ramsar Committee has recently created a Task Force that will focus on threats to the ecological character of Ramsar sites.

102. For the North American region, Mexico is the country where the most Ramsar sites are at risk from tourism activities, especially by the building of infrastructure for golf and hotel resorts in coastal wetlands.

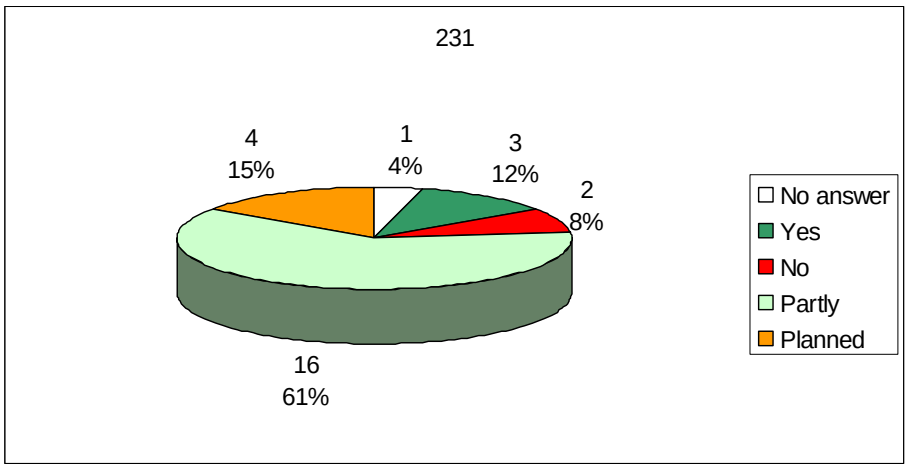

Figure 9. Measures for the maintenance of the ecological character

103. In both of the American regions, only 12% of the Parties have defined and applied measures for the maintenance of the ecological character of Ramsar sites, and 61% have taken partial measures. Even though most of the countries are progressing at least partly in this regard, the whole situation from Mexico to the Neotropics is very alarming, as the development and expansion of urban development and tourism activities, mainly in marine and coastal wetlands, is taking place at a fast rate. Thus it is urgent that the Contracting Parties implement actions regarding legal framework (policies and specific wetland regulations) and protection measures.

104. All the three North American countries have management plans (indicator 2.3.2) or strategies in place for at least some of their Ramsar sites and plans for other sites are under development.

105. Management plans have been completed and implemented for 16 of Canada's 37 Ramsar sites. As of March 2007, three additional management plans were in preparation and five were under revision. Also, in the case of cross-sectoral site management committees (indicator 2.3.3), many Ramsar sites in Canada have active site management due to their protected areas status as National Wildlife Areas, Migratory Bird Sanctuaries, provincial Wildlife Management Areas, etc. Regarding Ramsar site management effectiveness (indicator 2.3.4), Canada has not yet conducted this kind of assessment.

106. Currently, 28 (25%) out of 112 Ramsar sites in México have a management plan or a management and conservation programme, and it is foreseen that in the next three years all of the Ramsar sites will have a management plan. The states of Veracruz on the Gulf of Mexico and Jalisco in the Pacific coast have cross-sectoral wetland management committees. They have created SIMEC (System for the information, monitoring and assessment for conservation) as a tool to assess the effectiveness and impact of the public policies' implementation in the priority areas for conservation.

107. All Ramsar sites in the US have management plans and there are many well-known cross-sectoral management groups in existence that have an impact on the management of US Ramsar sites. Examples include the multitude of groups focused on jointly managing and conserving the Everglades, Chesapeake Bay, and Delaware Bay.

108. As of July 31, 2008, 127 (73%) of the Ramsar sites (173) in North America have management plans, showing a significant progress in this regard, and it is to be strongly recommended that this progress should continue.

109. For the two American regions together, 35% of the Parties indicated that they have prepared managements plans for their Ramsar sites and 50% mentioned having them for some sites. At the global level (25%) the whole region shows significant progress (35%).

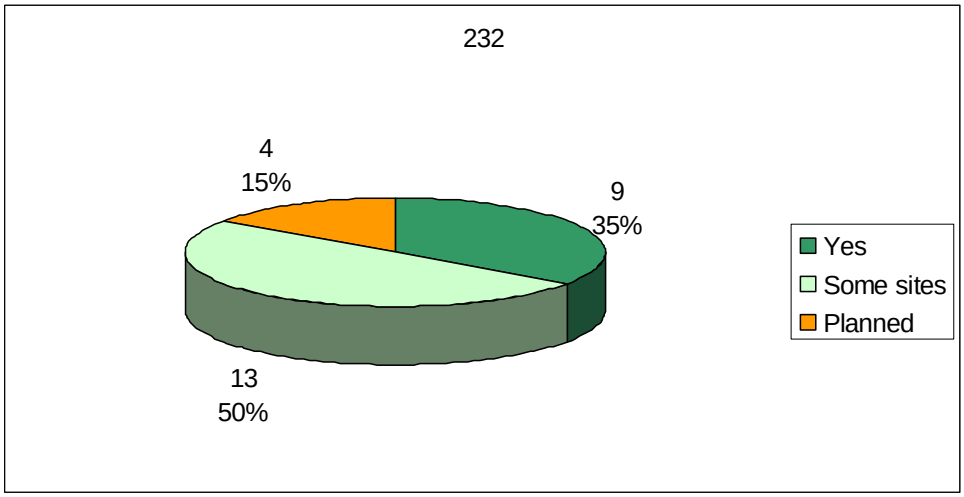

Figure 10. Preparation of management plans

Monitoring the conditions of Ramsar Sites (*Strategy 2.4*)

110. Regarding arrangements in place for the Administrative Authority to be informed of changes or likely changes in the ecological character of Ramsar sites, pursuant to Article 3.2 (indicator 2.4.1), Canada reported that communication links with all Ramsar site managers have been re-established and a national survey of site managers was conducted in March 2007.

111. In the cases of Mexico and the United States, there is no specific legal framework in this regard, but Mexico has laws and other legislation to regulate aquatic ecosystems' use.

112. On the other hand, none of the three countries have made reports to the Secretariat about change or likely change in the ecological character of Ramsar sites pursuant to Article 3.2 (indicator 2.4.2). As in the Neotropics region, usually the Secretariat receives third parties reports.

113. Since COP9, 18 reports from third parties were received for the North American region, and five (5) of them concerned Ramsar sites (Table 1.)

Table 1. North American Ramsar sites where ecological change is occurring or likely to occur (Article 3.2) since COP9 (third-party reports)

Country	Sites	Actions
Mexico	Reserva de la Biosfera Chamela-Cuixmala	Waiting for report from AA
Mexico	Reserva de Biosfera Ría Lagartos	Report by AA received
USA	Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve	Communication sent to AA, waiting for report from AA

114. On the other hand, the North American region still has one site on the Montreux Record: the Everglades National Park, designated on 4 June 1987 and placed by the US on the Montreux Record on 16 June 1993.

115. The United States provided details of the situation in the Everglades in its National Report, indicating that the primary and overarching purpose of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) is to restore the South Florida ecosystem, which includes the Everglades. The plan provides the framework and guidance to restore, protect and preserve the water resources of the greater Everglades ecosystem. CERP has been described as the world's largest ecosystem restoration effort and includes providing more natural flows of water, improved water quality, and more natural hydro-periods within the remaining natural areas. The plan is intended to help restore the ecosystem while ensuring clean and reliable water supplies, and to provide flood protection in urban areas.

116. For the next triennium, it is strongly recommended that the Parties improve the mechanims to be informed not only about changes or likely change in the ecological character of Ramsar sites but also to inform the Secretariat about these changes on a regular basis.

Managing shared Ramsar sites and hydrological basins *(Strategy 2.5)*

117. All countries in North America reported their advances in transboundary wetlands identification (indicator 2.5.1). Canada reported that the main transboundary wetlands have been identified and as part of Phase II of the Great Lakes Coastal Wetlands Consortium programme, a binational team completed a comprehensive Great Lakes Coastal Wetlands Inventory.

118. Mexico has prepared maps (1:250.00) with the localization of all transboundary wetlands, and they have identified at the northern border some important shared wetlands like Meseta de Andrade wetlands.

119. In terms of effective cooperative management in place for shared wetlands (indicator 2.5.2), Canada indicated that water supply in shared watersheds is covered by agreements between Canada and the United States. Cooperative management in wetland systems include: Old Crow Flats (Yukon), Fraser River estuary coastal wetlands (Georgia Basin/Puget Sound Ecosystem), and the Columbia River in British Columbia, Washington State and Oregon. Cooperative wetland management is also facilitated through the Joint Ventures of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. In the case of the United States, examples include partnerships such as the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI); Partners in Flight; and Important Bird Areas.

120. Mexico has signed some agreements with Cuba for sharing species (Caribbean pink flamingo) with Canada and the United States, the Trilateral Committee for the Conservation of Wildlife, and a binational agreement for migratory species between Mexico and the United States. Other actions are related to the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor, the Mesoamerican Coral Reef System, and the Tacaná Project with Guatemala. These cooperative agreements benefit coastal and freshwater wetlands.

Regional Ramsar Initiatives in North America (*Strategy 2.6)*

121. Canada reported that Canadian, Italian and other partner agencies are assisting organizations in Iraq to implement the Key Biodiversity Areas and related wetland restoration programmes in the Mesopotamian marshes of southern Iraq. This may be expanded into a regional initiative in the Tigris-Euphrates Basin. A project to assist NGOs in North Africa is in the inception phase funded by CIDA in cooperation with Wetlands International. A peat swamp forest project in Indonesia with Wetlands International was concluded in 2006-07 funded, also supported by CIDA.

122. Mexico is planning to participate actively in the development of the regional initiatives for Caribbean wetlands and for Mangrove Ecosystems, and the United States has continued providing financial support for the regional capacity building centre CREHO.

123. In general terms, it is important to mention the support given by the North American countries to other regional initiatives in the region or other Ramsar regions not only through financial support but also by technical advice and sharing of experience.

Goal 3: International cooperation

Sharing of expertise and information (*Strategy 3.2*)

124. All Contracting Parties in North America have undertaken some activities with regard to networks, including twinning arrangements for knowledge sharing and training for wetlands that share common features (indicator 3.2.1). Canada indicated the continuity of Joint Ventures of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and another six networks. A network of managers of important shorebird wetlands in North America with links to central and South America has also been created. Mexico has given continuity to the agreement with Cuba for the twinning of its Ría Lagartos site with Ciénaga de Zapata and the activities of the Mesoamerican biological corridor and the Mesoamerican coral reefs system.

125. The United States reported that at least one US Ramsar site has established networks for knowledge sharing and training for wetlands that share common features. The Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve provides a fellowship programme to scientists worldwide.

126. Canada and the United States reported that they have made information public about the countries' wetlands and/or Ramsar sites and their status (indicator 3.2.2), and Mexico has undertake partial actions in this regard, with two publications about priority wetlands. For Canada, WetKit is Canada's premier Web site for sharing and promoting wetland expertise and information. In the case of the United States, some of the Ramsar sites have signs, brochures, and other documents and Web sites.

127. This kind of activities must be encouraged for the next triennium as a way to raise awareness about the Convention's goals and Ramsar sites' benefits.

Goal 4: Implementation capacity (*Strategy 4.1*)

128. Regarding promotion of public participation in decision-making, especially with local stakeholders' involvement in the selection of new Ramsar sites and Ramsar site management (indicator 4.1.3), all three countries have taken important steps in this regard. Canada reported that public participation can be achieved in general through the environmental assessment process or regional planning initiatives, and for Ramsar sites through Management Boards (e.g., Old Crow Flats, Creston Valley) or through periodic Management Plan Reviews (e.g., Alaksen National Wildlife Area). Education/ empowerment to encourage participation has been developed in the form of the Citizen's Guide to Protecting British Columbia's Wetlands. In Mexico, by law, the local and indigenous communities must be consulted about any issue related to the use or conservation of natural resources and biodiversity in their territories.

129. All Contracting Parties in North America have included social and cultural values in the management plans of some Ramsar sites or other wetlands (indicator 4.1.5).

Involvement of the private sector (*Strategy 4.2*)

130. Canada and the United States reported having carried out efforts to encourage wise use among the private sector (indicator 4.2.1). In Canada, the private sector is encouraged to

apply the wise use principle in activities concerning wetlands through the environmental assessment process. In some provinces, information has been provided to developers through workshops on planning requirements around wetlands.

131. Technical and financial assistance provided by the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the US Fish and Wildlife Service help private landowners apply needed conservation techniques on their land. Other cooperative conservation efforts include public-private partnerships, technical assistance, regulation and mitigation for water quality, farmland and transportation. Seventy-four percent of the land in the United States is privately owned.

132. The issue of establishing "Friends of wetlands" local forums for the private sector (indicator 4.2.2) has been developed mainly in Canada and the United States. In Canada they are popular in some regions, with dozens of citizens' groups supporting conservation of particular sites through fundraising, marketing, restoration, interpretation and other efforts. These community-based groups sometimes involve private sector partners; examples include General Motors of Canada, Rogers Communications Inc., Ducks Unlimited Canada, Sierra Club of Canada, Ontario Federation of Naturalists, West Coast Environmental Law Association, etc.

133. In the United States, authorized by the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Act, the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program is a voluntary programme begun in 1987, working with landowners to restore wetlands on private lands using cooperative agreements. The FWS has entered into more than 41,000 agreements with partners. The program has restored 323,750 hectares of wetlands, more than 647,500 hectares of uplands, and more than 6,000 miles of riparian and instream habitat.

134. The region shows a significant progress in encouraging wise use among the private sector, mainly in Canada and the United States, and it is important to continue efforts in this matter for the next triennium.

Promote measures that encourage the application of the wise use principle (*Strategy 4.3*)

135. All three North American countries reported some activities related to the use of incentives (indicator 4.3.1) and removal of perverse incentives (indicator 4.3.2). In Canada, a measure that can be considered an incentive for conservation and wise use of wetlands is the requirement to undertake compensation for the loss of wetland area and function which greatly exceeds the market value of the wetland (thus the removal of a perverse incentive). Some examples are: Wildlife Habitat Canada's Grant Program, the government of Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program, and the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. The Federal Policy on Wetland Conservation is designed to eliminate federal money for wetland destruction, and the Ontario government no longer provides grants for the construction or improvement of drainage systems that drain through or from Provincially Significant Wetlands.

136. In the case of Mexico, there is more attention now to wetland conservation in the national policy agenda, which has supported the re-direction of actions that had the potential to damage wetlands.

137. For the United States, one of the best known examples is the Wetland Conservation ('Swampbuster') provision established in the 1985 Farm Bill, and amended in the 1990

Farm Bill, which requires all agricultural producers to protect the wetlands on the farms they own or operate if they wish to be eligible for certain USDA farm program benefits. Other incentive programs include the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Farm and Ranchlands Protection Program, Grasslands Reserve Program, Wetlands Reserve Program, and Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program.

138. There is significant progress in North American countries regarding the promotion of incentives for conservation, but it is important to continue making efforts for the removal of perverse incentive measures.

Support, and assist in implementing at all levels, the Convention´s Communication, Education, and Public Awareness Programme-CEPA. (*Strategy 4.4*)

139. As of July 31, 2008, all three countries in the region have designated their government CEPA National Focal Points, but only Mexico and the United States have designated a non-governmental CEPA National Focal Point.

140. In relation to the establishment of a mechanism for planning and implementing wetland CEPA with the involvement of both CEPA government and NGO National Focal Points, (indicator 4.4.1) and the development of a CEPA National Action Plan (indicator 4.4.2), Mexico has prepared a work plan at the national level with the federal and state government as well as NGOs and academia involved and is preparing a CEPA national plan.

141. In the US in FY2007, USFWS' Wildlife Without Borders-Global Programs awarded a USD 99,400 grant to Environmental Concern (on behalf of US National Ramsar Committee) to run a small grants program for US organizations undertaking CEPA projects and supporting efforts to designate new Ramsar sites. The grant will also be used to create a national CEPA Task Force and CEPA Action Plan.

142. In the case of Canada, Communication, Education and Public Awareness objectives are incorporated in federal and provincial wetland policies, stewardship initiatives, and habitat conservation programs. Most CEPA activities in Canada are carried out by provincial government agencies, the private sector and NGOs, especially Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC), and at the local level in interpretation/education centres associated with wetland sites. Notable examples of national CEPA programmes in Canada include DUC's "Healthy wetlands, Healthy you -- A Clean Water Project".

143. Mexico and Canada have made efforts to share information cross-sectorally on wetland issues among relevant bodies (indicator 4.4.3), like workshops related to mangroves in Mexico and developing a wetlands extension project directed at municipal planning authorities by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

144. Regarding carrying out national campaigns, programmes and projects to raise community awareness of the ecosystem benefits provided by wetlands (indicator 4.4.4) and the celebration of World Wetlands Day (indicator 4.4.5), all three countries have taken important steps in this regard. In Canada through National Survey of Ecological Goods and Services, Farmers and Ranchers (2006), symposium on ecological goods and services in Winnipeg (2006).

145. Mexico has nine CEPA regional centers for conservation and management of wetlands and has also prepared brochures. For World Wetlands Day they carried out workshops and announced new Ramsar sites designations (52) during the triennium.

146. In the United States the EPA celebrates American Wetlands Month in May with federal, state, tribal, local, non-profit, and private sector organization partners. This annual celebration is a time to recognize and highlight the ways in which wetlands enrich the environment and human society. Another example of such campaigns is focused on marine debris and its effect on the marine ecosystem. Developed by NOAA, the Web site is designed to help identify, reduce, and prevent debris in the marine environment. Also for World Wetlands Day, there are many activities that take place in the Ramsar sites. Highlights from WWD 2008 include: 1) Olentangy River Wetland Research Park at The Ohio State University and 2) Wisconsin Wetlands Association and its 13th annual conference as a WWD event: Wetlands in the 21st Century: Altered Landscapes & Changing Climates.

147. In terms of CEPA-related activities, all three Parties in the region are very active in this regard but there are still opportunities for increasing them for the next triennium.

Promote international assistance to support the conservation and wise use of wetlands (*Strategy 4.5*)

148. Canada and the United States have development assistance bodies (indicator 4.5) and both have provided funding to conserve and manage wetlands in other countries. The Canada-Iraq Marshlands Initiative (CIMI) assisted the Iraqi government in becoming a signatory to the Ramsar Convention in October 2007, among other achievements. In Indonesia, Canada's Climate Change, Forests and Peatlands in Indonesia (CCFPI) project (2001-2007) assisted with sustainable management and restoration of degraded peatland ecosystems in order to support local livelihoods, reduce peat swamp fires, and restore ecosystem services of the wetlands.

149. In the United States, an example includes the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA): this program supports voluntary public-private partnerships to conserve North American wetland ecosystems. It provides matching grants to public and private groups and agencies for wetlands restoration and protection in the U.S., Canada and Mexico. More than 9.7 million hectares of wetlands and associated uplands have been affected by protection, restoration or enhancement activities since 1991.

Provide the financial resources required for the Convention´s governance, mechanism and programs *(Strategy 4.6)*

150. Two of the Contracting Parties in North America reported being up to date with their contributions to the Convention's budget (indicator 4.6.1), and that is confirmed by the Secretariat's review of the state of contributions as of 31 July 2008.

151. In addition to contributions to the core budget (indicator 4.6.2), the United States made important contributions for the organization of the V Pan American Meeting in 2007. During the three-year period, the United States has also provided USD 652,742 to fund 29 projects in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela through Wetlands for the Future in the Neotropics. The fund

has proved to have a great impact in the support for training, awareness raising, conservation and management activities for wetlands in the region. Also through Wetlands for the Future, USD 95,000 were granted for CREHO (the Regional Ramsar Centre for Training and Research on Wetlands in the Western Hemisphere), and the US Fish and Wildlife Service also granted funds for CREHO for the period 2005-2008 of around USD 151,142.

Ensure that the Conference of the Contracting Parties, Standing Committee, Scientific and Technical Review Panel, and Ramsar Secretariat are operating at a high level of efficiency and effectiveness (*Strategy 4.7*)

152. Regarding the use of previous Ramsar National Reports in monitoring its implementation of the Convention (indicator 4.7.1), only one country does so, so is to be recommended for the next triennium that Parties will endeavor to use their previous NRs as a guideline to monitor progress in implementation of the Convention and as a reference in preparing the next report.

153. As of July 31, 2008, all the three countries in the region have designated their STRP focal points.

Develop the capacity within, and promote cooperation among, institutions in Contracting Parties to achieve conservation and wise use of wetlands (Strategy 4.8)

154. Regarding the review of national institutions responsible for the conservation and wise of wetlands (indicator 4.8.1), the North American region does not show much progress in this matter from what was reported to COP9.

155. Currently in the region Mexico and the United States have a National Ramsar Committee (indicator 4.8.2). In Mexico the National Wetland Committee main goal is to improve the communication between the governmental and non governmental organizations for an effective and collective management of wetlands.

156. The US National Ramsar Committee (USNRC) supports Ramsar-related initiatives within the United States and internationally. It is composed of voting members, organizations that have an interest in wetland conservation, and observers, federal agencies such as FWS, the Department of State, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Geologic Survey, the Forest Service, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Meetings are held several times per year, at various locations across the United States.

157. As a whole, the two American regions show significant progress in the creation of National/Ramsar Committees as currently there have been established 15 (51%) of them, 9 (31%) more are in progress, 2 (7%) are partially created and 2 (7%) are planned.

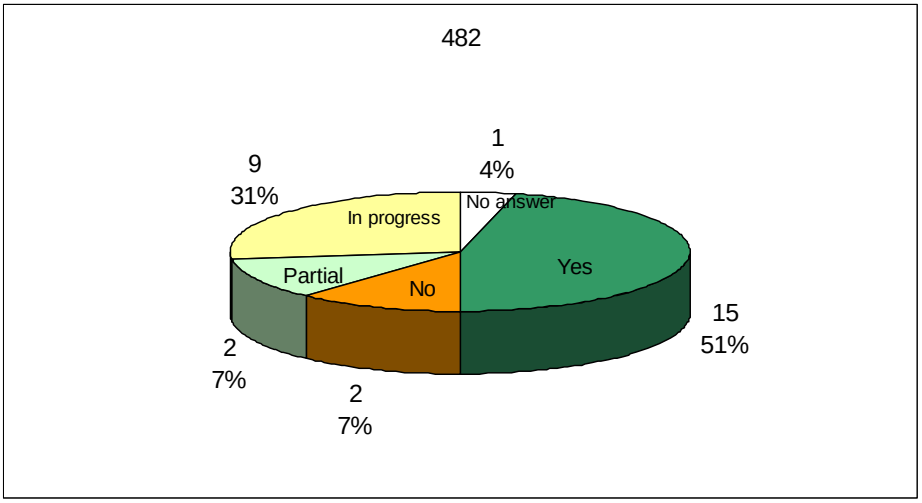

Figure 11. Status of National Ramsar Committees in the Neotropics and North America

Identify training needs of institutions and individuals *(Strategy 4.10)*

158. Canada assisted the Ramsar Regional Centre in Panama up to 2006 and provided instructors or funds or both to National Wetland Manager Courses in Mexico and Iraq. The United States has been an active supporter of the Ramsar Regional Training Center (CREHO) in Panama, providing financial and technical assistance as well as serving on its Board of Directors.

159. In the North American region, though none of the countries have carried out an analysis of national and local training needs regarding the Convention (indicator 4.10.2), all three countries have provided opportunities for training wetland site managers (indicator 4.10.3). Ontario's wetland evaluation system is a science-based approach to assessing relative wetland values for land use planning purposes in Canada. México has implemented many training courses in wetlands, most of them coordinated by the Arizona Game and Fish Department and intended for Ramsar site managers.

Annex

Table 1. North American sites designated since COP9

	Country	Site name	Designa-tion date	Area (ha)	Dominant Wetland type
1	**Mexico**	Corredor Costero La Asamblea - San Francisquito	27.11.05	44,304	E
2	**Mexico**	Laguna de Tamiahua	27.11.05	88,000	J
3	**Mexico**	Estero de Punta Banda	02.02.06	2,393	J
4	**Mexico**	Isla Rasa	02.02.06	66	D, H
5	**Mexico**	Cascadas de Texolo y su entorno	02.02.06	500	M
6	**Mexico**	Laguna de Atotonilco	18.03.06	2,850	O, 6
7	**Mexico**	Laguna Huizache Caimanero	02.02.07	48,283	J
8	**Mexico**	Lagunas de Yalahau	02.02.07	5,683	P
9	**Mexico**	Manglares y humedales de Tuxpan	02.02.06	6,870	I (underrepresented)
10	**Mexico**	Arroyos y manantiales de Tanchachín	02.02.08	1,174	M
11	**Mexico**	Bahía de San Quintín	02.02.08	5,438	H
12	**Mexico**	Balandra	02.02.08	449	A (underrepresented)
13	**Mexico**	Ensenada de Pabellones	02.02.08	40,639	H
14	**Mexico**	Humedal Los Comondú	02.02.08	460,959	Y
15	**Mexico**	Humedales La Libertad	02.02.08	5,432	M
16	**Mexico**	La Tovara	02.02.08	5,733	I (underrepresented)
17	**Mexico**	Laguna de Babícora	02.02.08	26,045	P
18	**Mexico**	Laguna Xola-Paramán	02.02.08	775	H
19	**Mexico**	Manglares de Nichupté	02.02.08	4,257	K
20	**Mexico**	Otoch Ma'ax Yetel Kooh	02.02.08	5,367	O
21	**Mexico**	Parque Estatal "Cañón de Fernández"	02.02.08	17,002	Xf
22	**Mexico**	Parque Nacional Cabo Pulmo	02.02.08	7,100	C (underrepresented)
23	**Mexico**	Río Sabinas	02.02.08	603	M, 6
24	**Mexico**	Santuario Playa Boca de Apiza-El Cupadero-El Tecuanillo	02.02.08	40	E
25	**Mexico**	Sistema Estuarino Boca del Cielo	02.02.08	8,931	I (underrepresented)
26	**Mexico**	Zona Sujeta a Conservación Ecológica Cabildo-Amatal	02.02.08	2,832	I (underrepresented)
27	**Mexico**	Zona Sujeta a Conservación Ecológica El Gancho-Murillo	02.02.08	4,643	I (underrepresented)
28	**Mexico**	Zona Sujeta a Conservación Ecológica Sistema Lagunar Catazajá	02.02.08	41,059	O
29	**Mexico***	Sistema de Humedales Remanentes del Delta del Río Colorado	02.02.08	413,662	Zk(c) (underrepresented)
30	**Mexico***	Sistema Lagunar San Ignacio-Navachiste-Macapule	02.02.08	112,072	J
31	**Mexico***	Sistema Lagunar Agiabampo – Bacorehuis – Río Fuerte Antiguo.	02.02.08	54,867	A (underrepresented)
32	**Mexico***	Sistema Estuarino Lagunar Agua Dulce–El Ermitaño	02.02.08	140,517	J
33	**Mexico***	Parque Nacional Arrecife Alacranes	02.02.08	333,769	A (underrepresented)

34	**Mexico***	Playa Barra de la Cruz	02.02.08	45	B (underrepresented)
35	**Mexico***	Laguna Barra de Navidad	02.02.08	794	J
36	**Mexico***	Playa de Colola	02.02.08	287	E
37	**Mexico***	Humedales Mogote-Ensenada de La Paz	02.02.08	9,184	A (underrepresented)
38	**Mexico***	Estero El Chorro	02.02.08	265	J
39	**Mexico***	Estero Majahuas	02.02.08	702	J
40	**Mexico***	Estero La Manzanilla	02.02.08	264	J
41	**Mexico***	Lagunas de Chacahua	02.02.08	14,923	D, L
42	**Mexico***	Laguna Chalacatepec	02.02.08	1,093	I (underrepresented)
43	**Mexico***	Complejo Lagunar Bahía Guásimas – Estero Lobos	02.02.08	135,197	H
44	**Mexico***	Playa de Maruata	02.02.08	80	E
45	**Mexico***	Sistema de Represas y Corredores biológicos de la Cuenca Hidrográfica del Río Necaxa	02.02.08	1,541	M
46	**Mexico***	Oasis de la Sierra El Pilar	02.02.08	180,789	N
47	**Mexico***	Humedales de Montaña La Kisst	02.02.08	36	Tp
48	**Mexico***	Oasis Sierra de La Giganta	02.02.08	41,181	Y
49	**Mexico***	Sistema Lagunar Ceuta	02.02.08	9,614	H
50	**Mexico***	Sistema Estuarino Puerto Arista	02.02.08	12,314	A (underrepresented)
51	**Mexico***	Agua Dulce	02.02.08	39	N
52	**Mexico***	Humedal la Sierra de Guadalupe (vertiente occidental)	02.02.08	348,084	Y
53	**Mexico***	Sistema Ripario de la Cuenca y Estero de San José del Cabo	02.02.08	124,111	N
54	**Mexico***	Ciénega de Tamasopo (Ciénega de Cabezas)	02.02.08	1,364	O
55	**United States**	Francis Beidler Forest	30.05.08	6,438	Xf
56	**United States**	Wilma H. Schiermeier Olentangy River Wetland Research Park	18.04.08	21	Xf
	TOTAL			**2,780,682**	

*Sites in final stage of designation

Key for under-represented wetland types:
Coastal and marine wetlands
A Permanent shallow marine waters, in most cases less than six meters deep at low tide; includes sea bays and straits.
B Marine sub-tidal aquatic beds; includes kelp beds, sea-grass beds, tropical marine meadows
C Coral reefs.
G Intertidal mud, sand or salt flats.
I Intertidal forested wetlands; includes mangrove swamps, nipah swamps and tidal freshwater swamp forests.
Zk(a) Karst and other subterranean hydrological systems, marine and coastal.

Inland Wetlands
Ts Seasonal/intermittent freshwater marshes/pools on inorganic soils; includes sloughs, potholes, seasonally flooded meadows, sedge marshes.
U Non-forested peatlands; includes shrub or open bogs, swamps, fens
Xp Forested peatlands; peatswamp forests.

Zk(b) Karst and other subterranean hydrological systems, inland.

Human-made wetlands

Zk(c) Karst and other subterranean hydrological systems, human-made.

Table 2. Update status of Ramsar Information Sheets (RIS) and maps

Country	Site name	Area (ha)	Last update	Comments
Canada	Alaksen	586	2001	RIS and map require update
Canada	Baie de l'Isle-Verte	2,215	2001	RIS and map require update
Canada	Beaverhill Lake	18,050	2001	RIS and map require update
Canada	Cap Tourmente	2,398	2001	RIS and map require update
Canada	Chignecto	1,020	2001	RIS and map require update
Canada	Creston Valley	6,970	2001	RIS and map require update
Canada	Delta Marsh	23,000	2001	RIS and map require update
Canada	Dewey Soper Migratory Bird Sanctuary	815,900	2001	RIS and map require update
Canada	Grand Codroy Estuary	925	2001	RIS and map require update
Canada	Hay-Zama Lakes	50,000	2001	RIS and map require update
Canada	Lac Saint-François	2,310	2001	RIS and map require update
Canada	Lac Saint-Pierre	11,952	2001	RIS and map require update
Canada	Last Mountain Lake	15,602	2001	RIS and map require update
Canada	Long Point	13,730	2001	RIS and map require update
Canada	Malpeque Bay	24,440	2001	RIS and map require update
Canada	Mary's Point	1,200	2001	RIS and map require update
Canada	Matchedash Bay Provincial Wildlife Area	1,840	2001	RIS and map require update
Canada	McConnell River	32,800	2001	RIS and map require update
Canada	Mer Bleue Conservation Area	3,447	2001	RIS and map require update
Canada	Minesing Swamp	6,000	2001	RIS and map require update
Canada	Musquodoboit Harbour	1,925	2001	RIS and map require update

Canada	Oak Hammock Marsh	3,600	2001	RIS and map require update
Canada	Old Crow Flats	617,000	2001	RIS and map require update
Canada	Peace-Athabasca Delta	321,300	2001	RIS and map require update
Canada	Point Pelee	1,564	2001	RIS and map require update
Canada	Polar Bear Pass	262,400	2001	RIS and map require update
Canada	Polar Bear Provincial Park	2,408,700	2001	RIS and map require update
Canada	Queen Maud Gulf	6,278,200	2001	RIS and map require update
Canada	Quill Lakes	63,500	2001	RIS and map require update
Canada	Rasmussen Lowlands	300,000	2001	RIS and map require update
Canada	Shepody Bay	12,200	2001	RIS and map require update
Canada	Southern Bight-Minas Basin	26,800	2001	RIS and map require update
Canada	Southern James Bay (Moose River & Hannah Bay)	25,290	2001	RIS and map require update
Canada	St. Clair	244	2001	RIS and map require update
Canada	Tabusintac Lagoon & River Estuary	4,997	2001	RIS and map require update
Canada	Whooping Crane Summer Range	1,689,500	2001	RIS and map require update
Canada	Peace-Athabasca Delta	321,300	2001	RIS and map require update
Mexico*	Dzilam (reserva estatal)	61,707	2000	RIS and map require update
Mexico*	Humedal de Importancia Especialmente para la Conservación de Aves Acuáticas Reserva Ría Lagartos	60,348	2001	RIS and map require update
Mexico	Humedales del Delta del Río Colorado	250,000	2001	RIS and map require update
Mexico*	Marismas Nacionales	200,000	2001	RIS and map require update
Mexico*	Reserva de la Biósfera Pantanos de Centla	302,706	2001	RIS and map require update
Mexico*	Reserva de la Biosfera La Encrucijada	144,868	2001	RIS and map require update
United States	Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge	9,509	1992	RIS and map require update
United States	Cache-Lower White Rivers	81,376	1993	RIS and map require update

United States	Chesapeake Bay Estuarine Complex	45,000	1992	RIS and map require update
United States	Connecticut River Estuary & Tidal Wetlands Complex	6,484	1995	RIS and map require update
United States	Horicon Marsh	12,912	1990	RIS and map require update
United States	Izembek Lagoon National Wildlife Refuge	168,433	1992	RIS and map require update
United States	Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge	1,908	1993	RIS and map require update
United States	Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge	8,700	1998	RIS and map require update

* RIS received, pending maps

Table 3. North American Summary overview of the evolution between COP8 and COP10

Where indicator questions were reasonably similar, the table compares information provided in the National Reports to COP8 and COP9 with those provided to COP10 in order to assess progress *("significant" "some", "no progress", "Regress")* during these two triennia, covering the period of Ramsar's Strategic Plan 2003-2008 adopted through Resolution VIII.25. The table also shows if particular actions reported for COP10 were more (or less) widely addressed throughout North America compared to the global average; based on the percentages of Contracting Parties having answered positively, however must be used only as a reference because of the number of parties (3) involved.

Strategy	**Indicator**	**Affirmative** CPs at **COP8**	**Affirmative** CPs at **COP 9**	**Affirmative** CPs at **COP10**	**Affirmative** at COP10 **globally**	**Progress** since COP9
1.1	CP has a comprehensive national wetland inventory (1.1.1)	0	1 (33%)	1 (33%)	1(33%)	No progress
	CP has information on wetland ecological status and trends (1.1.3)	n.a	1 (33%)	2 (67%)	34%	Significant
1.2	CP has a National Wetland Policy (or equivalent instrument) (1.2.1)	2	2 (67%)	1 (33%)	40%	
1.3	CP conducted Assessment of the ecosystem benefits provided by Ramsar sites (1.3.1)	n.a	1 (33%)	0 (0%)	13%	No progress
	CP has wise use wetland programmes/projects	n.a	0	0 (0%)	28%	No progress

	that contribute to poverty alleviation (1.3.2.)					
1.4	CP has used or applied Ramsar water-related guidance (1.4.1)	1	1 (33%)	0 (0%)	29%	No progress
1.5	CP implemented wetland restoration/rehabilitation programmes (1.5.1)	0	3 (100%)	3 (100%)	66%	Significant
1.6	CP developed and implemented responses to threats from invasive species	n.a	n.a	2 (67%)	34%	Significant
2.1	CP uses the Strategic Framework for Ramsar site designations (2.1.1)	2	0	1 (33%)	50%	Some progress
2.3	CP developed and implemented management plans at all Ramsar sites (2.3.2)	n.a	n.a	1 (33%)	25%	Some progress
2.4	CP have arrangements in place to be informed of changes or likely changes in the ecological character (2.4.1)	n.a	n.a	1 (33%)	53%	No progress
	CP has reported all changes or likely changes in the ecological character of Ramsar sites (2.4.2)	2	1 (33%)	0 (0%)	20%	No progress
2.5	CP have identified all transboundary/shared wetland (indicator 2.5.1)	n.a	n.a	2 (67%)	53%	Significant
3.2	CP has established networks, nationally or internationally for knowledge sharing and training for wetlands (3.2.1)	1	2 (67%)	2 (67%)	36%	Significant
4.1	CP promote public participation in decision making with local stakeholder (4.1.3)	n.a	n.a	2 (67%)	65%	Some progress

4.4	CP has an active national CEPA programme task force (4.4.1)	0	1 (33%)	2 (67%)	22%	Some progress
	CP developed a national (or local) CEPA action plan(4.4.2)	0	0	0 (0%)	14%	No progress
	CP carried out campaigns, programmes and projects to raise community awareness (4.4.4)	n.a	n.a	3 (100%)	53%	Significant
4.5	Funding support has been provided from development assistance agencies for wetland conservation and management (4.5.1)	2 (67%)	1 (33%)	2 (67%)	15%	Significant
4.6	CP has paid in full and in a timely manner the Ramsar contributions for the last triennium (4.6.1a)	n.a	3 (100%)	2 (67%)	60%	Regress
4.8	CP has an operational National Ramsar Committee (4.8.2)	1	3 (100%)	2 (67%)	45%	Regress