

### 1. Introduction

At the end of 2009, the Asia-Oceania Team in the Secretariat produced their first Annual Report in order to better share information about the activities that have taken place to implement the Ramsar Convention in the region. Feedback from the Contracting Parties and our partners showed that the report was useful and so an Annual Report for 2010 has now been produced, with input from a number of the Contracting Parties.

Overall, 2010 was another exciting year for the Asia-Oceania Region of the Ramsar Convention, with the accession of Lao PDR who became the 160th Contracting Party to the Ramsar Convention, and seven new wetlands having been placed onto the List of Wetlands of International Importance.

The Asia-Oceania Team at the Secretariat also continued with their aim to meet with, or to be able to work with each of the Asia-Oceania Contracting Parties through the organization of, and attendance at sub-regional meetings, carrying out missions to particular countries and wetland sites, or through daily correspondence. As this report will explain, this was largely achieved but still, it was not possible to be in contact with all our Contracting Parties and Focal Points. For those with whom we have not been able to be in touch with, we plan to do so in 2011.



Black-necked Crane Information Centre – Royal Society for the Protection of Nature, Phobjikha (Bhutan)

### 2. 2010 Report

#### 2.1 Contracting Parties

The Asia Region was pleased to welcome Lao PDR as a new Contracting Party in 2010, with the Convention coming into force in the country in September 2010. As a result, the Asia region presently has 32 Contracting Parties. These are Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, and Yemen.

The Kingdom of Bhutan is the remaining Himalayan country yet to join the Convention and in October 2010, the Secretariat and WWF provided support for a delegation from the government to undertake a study tour to Thailand to gain a firsthand account of the benefits from accession. Thanks to the generous and kind support from the government of Thailand, the delegation had a successful tour and they have prepared their official report to parliament for possible approval to join the Convention later in 2011.

In the Oceania region, the number of Contracting Parties remained at seven. These are Australia, Fiji, Marshall Islands, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Palau and Samoa. There were no new accessions in 2010. However, Mr. Vainuupo Jungblut, the Ramsar Programme Officer – Oceania based with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) in Samoa, undertook an in-country assistance visit to Niue in May 2010 to progress accession for Niue. The content of the visit included an introductory presentation on the Ramsar Convention and its costs/benefits, support from SPREP for domestic Ramsar implementation, visiting and identifying potential sites for Ramsar Site nomination, identification of a daily contact point within the Environment Department to carry on the momentum of preparations of a cabinet paper on Ramsar accession and first drafts of accession documentation.

## 2.2 Wetlands of International Importance

From January to December 2010, seven Asian wetlands were placed onto the List of Wetlands of International Importance. These were the:

- Gochang and Buan Tidal Flats (RO Korea)
- Seocheon Tidal Flats (RO Korea)
- Son-Kol Lake (Kyrgyz Republic)
- Kumana Wetland Cluster (Sri Lanka)
- Vankalai Sanctuary (Sri Lanka)
- Kut Ting Marshland (Thailand)
- Wadi Waruyah National Park (UAE)

In addition, there were site boundary extensions for two existing Ramsar Sites. The first was the Tubbataha Reef (Philippines) where the area was increased from 33,200ha to 96,828ha and the name was changed to the Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park Ramsar Site. The second site was in Australia, where the government merged the two Ramsar Sites within the Kakadu National Park to become a single site and extended the boundary of the site by approximately 600,000 hectares. The new site is now called the Kakadu National Park Ramsar Site.

This brings the total number of Ramsar Sites in the Asia-Oceania region to 317, with 240 in Asia and 77 in Oceania.

Table 1 (below), summarizes the Ramsar Sites that were listed in 2010 as well as the Ramsar Information Sheets which the Asia-Oceania team is currently reviewing in cooperation with relevant national authorities and which are in the pipeline to be listed very soon.

**Table 1:** Ramsar Site Designations for 2010<sup>1</sup> and RIS under review

Ramsar Site	Designation Date	Total Area (ha)	Ramsar Criteria	Wetland Category	Comments
<b>Oceania</b>					
<b>Marshall Islands</b>					
Namdrik Atoll	Unofficial	1,190	1 2 3 4 7 8 9	Marine-coastal Inland, Human-made	Pending <sup>2</sup>
<b>Asia</b>					
<b>Bangladesh</b>					
Nijhum Dweep	Unofficial				Pending
Char kukri Mukri	Unofficial				Pending
Shonar char	Unofficial				Pending
<b>India</b>					
Nalsarovar	20-11-2008	12,000	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Inland	Pending
<b>Indonesia</b>					
Sembilang National Park	12-10-2009	202,896	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Marine-coastal Inland	Pending
Rawa Aopa National Park	12-10-2009	105,194	1 2 3 4 6 8	Marine-coastal Inland	Pending
Pulau Rambut Wildlife Reserve	12-10-2009	90	1 2 3 4 6 8	Inland	Pending

Ramsar Site	Designation Date	Total Area (ha)	Ramsar Criteria	Wetland Category	Comments
Berbak National Park	08-04-92	162,700	1 2 3 6 8	Marine-coastal Inland, Human-made	Pending RIS updates
Denau Sentarum National Park	30-08-94	132,000	1 2 4 7	Inland, Human-made	Pending RIS updates
Wasur National Park	16-03-06	413,810	1 2 3 4 5 7 8 9	Marine-coastal Inland	Pending RIS updates
<b>Islamic Republic of Iran</b>					
Choghakhor Wetlands	13-02-09	1,687	2 6 7 8	Inland	Listed
Zarivar Lake	29-03-09	3,292	1 2 3 6 7 8	Inland	Pending
<b>Lao PDR</b>					
Xechamphone Wetlands	25-05-10	12,400	1 2 4 8	Inland, Human-made	Accession RIS Pending
Beung Niat Ngong	25-05-10	2,360	1 4 8	Inland, Human-made	Accession RIS Pending
<b>Kazakhstan</b>					
Irgiz-Turgay Lakes	Unofficial	348,000	1 2 3 4 5 7	Inland	Pending
Lesser Aral Sea and Delta of the Syrdarya river	Unofficial	330,000	2 4 5 6	Inland	Pending
<b>Kyrgyz Republic</b>					
Son-Kol Lake	23-01-2011	36,869	2 3 4	Inland	Listed
<b>Nepal</b>					
Khaptad Tribeni Wetlands	14-12-2008	160	1 2 9	Inland	Pending
<b>Republic of Korea</b>					
Seocheon Tidal Flat	02-12-2009	1,530	2 4 6 8	Marine-coastal	Listed
Gochang and Buan Tidal Flats	-	4,550	2 3 4 6 8	Marine-coastal	Listed
<b>Sri Lanka</b>					
Kumana Wetland Cluster	29-10-2010	19,011	1 2 3 4 6 8	Marine-coastal Inland, Human-made	Listed
Vankalai Sanctuary	03-08-2010	13,361	1 2 3 4 5 6 8	Marine-coastal Inland, Human-made	Listed
<b>Thailand</b>					
Kut Ting Marshland	-	2,200	1 2 3 7 8	Inland, Human-made	Listed
Khao Sam Roi Yot Wetlands	08-01-2008	6,892	1 2 3 5	Marine-coastal	Pending
Kra Islands	19-07-2010	6,892	2	Marine-coastal	Pending
<b>Turkmenistan</b>					
Turkmenbashi Bay	03/03/09	267,124	1 2 3 5 6 9	Marine-coastal	Accession RIS Pending
<b>Tajikistan</b>					
Karakul Lake	18-07-01	36,400			Accession RIS Pending
Kayrakum Reservoir	18-07-01	52,000			Accession RIS Pending
Lower part of Pyandj River	18-07-01	-			Accession RIS Pending
Shorkul and Rangkul lakes	18-07-01	2,400			Accession RIS Pending
Zorkul Lake	18-07-01	3,800			Accession RIS Pending
<b>United Arab Emirates</b>					
Ras Al Khor Wildlife Sanctuary	29-08-2007	620		Marine-coastal	Accession RIS Pending
Wadi Waruyah National Park	17-10-2009	12,700	1 2 3 4 7 8 9	Inland, Human-made	Listed
<b>Vietnam</b>					
Tram Chim National Park	Unofficial	7,210	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Inland	Pending
Ba Be National Park	15-09-210	10,048	1 2 3 6	Inland, Human-made	Pending
<b>Yemen</b>					
Detwah Lagoon					Accession RIS Pending

<sup>1</sup> Includes all sites for which activities were undertaken to finalise designations in 2010, e.g. data entry to Ramsar Sites Information Service, Ramsar certificates, designation letters.

<sup>2</sup> Pending sites have been designated by the Contracting Party, but have yet to be formally added to the List of Wetlands of International Importance (i.e. assigned a Ramsar site number). In most cases, pending status refers to the final changes required to the Ramsar Information Sheet before Listing.

### **2.3 Visits by Secretariat staff**

In 2010, the Asia-Oceania Regional Team continued to work to improve implementation of the Convention by working on a range of activities at the sub-regional level. This included the development of action plans, accession plans/preparations for interested non-parties, increasing the networking between Ramsar Site managers, and translating key Convention material into Arabic and Russian.

For example, a workshop was held in Nouméa, New Caledonia from 2 – 6 August for representatives from Pacific Island Countries (PICs) and regional organizations and academics. This event was able to develop an updated edition of the Regional Wetland Action Plan for the Pacific Islands (RWAP) that included a range of focused activities to improve, and provide coordination to the implementation of the Ramsar Convention and wetlands conservation in the PICs. The event was also an opportunity to provide information to the representatives from the non-CPs in the PICs, about the benefits of accession to the Convention and to answer any questions that they may have. Current PIC CP's were also further advised on Ramsar implementation issues and processes (national reporting, RIS completion etc.).



Matapa chasm (Niue)



Kabukuri-numa Ramsar Site (Japan)

Our cooperation with the Secretariat of the League of Arab States (LAS) continued to strengthen in 2011. From 7 – 9 June, a workshop was held in Muscat, Oman principally for the countries in the Arabian Peninsula to discuss steps to improve the implementation of the Convention in the sub-region, as well as to encourage accession by non-CPs. The important outcome from the workshop was the 'Muscat Action Plan' to give direction and coordination to the cooperation between the Ramsar Secretariat and the countries in the LAS, particularly those in West Asia.

On 19 December, the SRA for Asia-Oceania was invited to the 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for Environment (CAMRE) where he gave a presentation on the work of the Convention. At the same meeting, the 'Muscat Action Plan' was endorsed, as well as a proposal from Prof. Reda Fishar (Egypt) to conduct a study on the economic value of Arab wetlands which would be assisted by the Secretariat.

Lao PDR acceded to the Convention in 2010 which came into force for them on 28 September. This meant that all four countries in the lower region of the Mekong River were now members of the Convention. IUCN and the Ramsar Secretariat are now planning a workshop in 2011 for the AA of these four countries so that they can exchange experiences and best practices on the implementation of the Convention. Regional organizations, such as the Mekong River Commission would also be invited so as to build a core group of people and organization who can work together to conserve wetlands in the sub-region. In the future, it is hoped that this cooperation can be extended to the ASEAN region. As a first step, a Memorandum of Cooperation has been prepared with the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity and it is planned will be signed in 2011.



A lot of support for the above activities in the Asia sub-regions was provided by the Ramsar Regional Centres (RRC) based in Iran (RRC – Central and West Asia) and R.O. Korea (RRC-East Asia). Examples include the RRC-EA organizing a workshop for Ramsar Site managers from South, South-east and East Asia which was held from 13 – 17 September. The RRC-EA also supported the 2nd Changwon Declaration Network meeting from 23 – 25 November, to monitor the roll-out and up-take of the Declaration since its adoption at COP10.

To further improve the implementation of the Convention in particular sub-regions, work was completed on translating some of the key Convention documents, e.g. Ramsar Convention Manual and a number of the Ramsar Handbooks, into Arabic and Russian. These translations have now been placed on the Ramsar website [http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-pubs-handbooks/main/ramsar/1-30-33\\_4000\\_0](http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-pubs-handbooks/main/ramsar/1-30-33_4000_0) for easy download and work on translating further documents into Arabic is now in progress. These translations were made possible with financial support from the RRC-CWA and Danone-Evian.

Accession plans/preparations were carried out for two Pacific Island non-parties during 2010. In May 2010, preparations were initiated for the Republic of Niue to join the Convention. These preparations consisted of a country assistance visit to raise awareness of, and clarify the benefits and costs of joining Ramsar, potential site identification and visits and assistance with the preparation of a Cabinet briefing paper on Ramsar accession to be considered by the Niue Government. In December 2010, face to face discussions were held with the Director of the Vanuatu Environment Department who has expressed interest in Vanuatu joining Ramsar. The result of these discussions is an in-country assistance visit planned for late March 2011 to initiate accession activities.



Dignitaries at the 'Workshop on Wetlands and the Ramsar Convention in the Arabian Peninsula' (Muscat, June 2010)



Participants at the 'Workshop to Review Implementation of the 'Regional Wetlands Action Plan for Pacific Islands'' (Nouméa, August 2010)

At the site level, a joint team of experts from the Secretariat, ICF, IUCN, IWMI and WWF visited Poyang Lake, P.R. China from 12 – 17 April to provide recommendations for the perceived problem facing the lake, in that the normal decline in winter water levels was now occurring much earlier and the period of decline lasting longer than previously. This was followed from 15 – 20 October, by a visit to Geneva and the office of the Secretariat by a delegation from the Jiangxi Provincial government who are responsible for the management of Poyang Lake, to study the management of the level and water quality in Lake Geneva.

The Ramsar Convention was one of the collaborating institutions for the 'First World Conference on Terraced Landscapes' which was held in Mengzi City, Honghe Prefecture, Yunnan Province, P.R. China from 11-15 November 2010. The meeting discussed the conservation of terraced landscapes worldwide, but with a particular focus on the Yuanyang Hani Rice Terraces that lie within Honghe Prefecture. The conference provided an opportunity to promote Resolution X.31 'Enhancing biodiversity in rice paddies as wetland systems', and to learn more about the issues facing rice terraces farming.

The Secretariat's CEPA Programme Officer, Sandra Hails, continued to be active in the region, holding a 'Ramsar CEPA National Focal Point Workshop' in Bangkok, Thailand (April 2010) for CEPA NFPs in East and South-east Asia. A similar workshop for CEPA NFPs in the Pacific is being planned in 2011 in cooperation with SPREP and Wetlands Link International .

## 2.4 Small Grant Fund (SGF)

In 2010, 31 project applications were received from Asia-Oceania for possible funding from the SGF. Of these, 7 were considered to be of high technical quality and priority for funding. One project has so far been funded with support from the Government of Norway. Table 2 below, lists the status of the ongoing SGF projects in Asia and Oceania.

Table 2: Ongoing SGF projects in Asia and Oceania

Country	Project Title	Status
<b>Oceania</b>		
Marshall Islands	<i>The designation and improved management of Marshall Islands' second wetland of international importance, Namdrik Atoll</i>	One final activity. Management plan is being prepared.
<b>Asia</b>		
Bangladesh	<i>People acting through social mobilization for the conservation and wise use of the wetlands in the southwest coast of Bangladesh.</i>	Early activities completed. Ramsar Secretariat visit in January 2010. Progress Report received Jan 2011.
China	<i>National communication, education and public awareness plan for wetland protection in China.</i>	Final Report due
Fiji	<i>Upper Navua Conservation Area (UNCA) - Improving the management of Fiji's first Ramsar site</i>	There have been delays with the implementation of this project, mainly to do with the demarcation of the site boundary.
India	<i>Integrated management planning for Conservation and Wise Use of Chilka Lake</i>	Management plan is being approved by the State Governor. Final Report under preparation.
Jordan	<i>Water enhancement of Azraq wetland reserve for restoration purposes.</i>	Waiting for final report to be endorsed by the Administrative Authority
Kazakhstan	<i>Preparing the basis for Kazakhstan to join the Ramsar Convention</i>	Preparation of the Russian-language Guide to the Implementation of the Ramsar Convention nearing completion.
Kyrgyz Republic	<i>Ecological assessment of Song-kul and Chatyr-Kul: Kyrgyz Republic to develop management guidelines and proposed listing as a Ramsar site.</i>	Ramsar Information Sheet for Son-Kul finalized.
Kyrgyz Republic	<i>Development of a National Wetland Conservation Strategy for the Kyrgyz Republic</i>	Draft Strategy currently available for community consultation.
Nepal	<i>Designation of lake-cluster of the Pokhara Valley of West Nepal in the Ramsar List.</i>	Progress report due
Vietnam	<i>Expanding Vietnam's network of Ramsar sites to help deliver on the country's commitments under the Ramsar Convention</i>	Project started June, 2010 Progress report due March 2011
Vietnam	<i>Capacity building for sustainable management of Ba Be Lake resources and biodiversity conservation, Ba Be National Park, Bac Kan Province, Vietnam</i>	Progress report received 23 November, 2010.
Uzbekistan	<i>Tudakul and Kuyumazar water reservoirs, Western South part of Kyzylkum desert, Uzbekistan: Designation of a new Ramsar site</i>	Project started August, 2010. Ramsar Secretariat visit in November 2010. Progress report due April 2011.

## 2.5 Regional Initiatives

### 2.5.1 Ramsar Regional Centre – Central and West Asia (RRC-CWA)

The RRC-CWA continued to be active this year, being involved in the organization and support for a number of activities in 2011. These included the funding of a number of workshops, such as the 'Workshop on Wetlands and the Ramsar Convention in the Arabian Peninsula' in Muscat, Oman (June, 2010), and a 'Training of Trainers Workshop on the Flyway Approach to the Conservation and Wise Use of Waterbirds

and Wetlands’, held in Astana, Kazakhstan (October 2010). The centre also continued to provide financial support for translating additional number of Ramsar Handbooks into Arabic.

### 2.5.2 Ramsar Regional Centre – East Asia (RRC-EA)

The RRC-EA was also very active in organizing and supporting a number of national and regional activities. They organized regional workshops such as the ‘RRC-East Asia Information Sharing Workshop and Training on Wetland Management’, Changwon, R.O. Korea (September 2010), as well as the ‘2nd Changwon Declaration Network Meeting’, Changwon, R.O. Korea (November 2010) to review the dissemination and implementation of the Changwon Declaration (Res. X.3).

The RRC-EA also provided financial support to the ‘Ramsar CEPA National Focal Point Workshop’ in Bangkok, Thailand (see above), and to the ‘Rice Paddy Workshop’ in Takashima, Japan (August 2010). This was in addition to their continuing ‘RRC-EA Wetland Fund’ program where they supported three wetland related projects in China, Mongolia and Vietnam.

### 2.5.3 East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) Network

Four new Partners joined the EAAFP in 2010. These were the governments of Bangladesh and Thailand, as well as the Miranda Naturalists’ Trust (New Zealand) and the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (UK). In addition, two new wetlands joined the EAAF Site Network, Kejo-numa, and Furen-ko and Shunkuni-tai. The 5th Meeting of Partners was successfully held in Siem Reap, Cambodia (November 2010).



Siphandon Falls (Lao PDR)

## 2.6 Translation of key Convention documents

Together with the Africa and European Teams within the Secretariat, the Asia/Oceania Team has been able to arrange for the translation of a number of the key Convention documents into Arabic and Russian in order to improve understanding of the Convention in the Arabic and Russian speaking countries (see table below). The documents are now available on the Ramsar website for download.

Document	Translated in 2010	
	Russian	Arabic
Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009-2012	✓	✓
Ramsar Convention Manual	✓	✓
Handbook 1: Wise Use of Wetlands	✓	✓
Handbook 2: National Wetlands Policies	✓	✓
Handbook 14: Designating Ramsar Sites	✓	✓
Handbook 16: Managing Wetlands	✓	✓
Handbook 7: River basin management	✓	
Handbook 12: Wetland Inventory	✓	
Handbook 15: Addressing change in ecological character	✓	
World Wetlands Day 2010 Leaflet		✓

With financial support from the RRC-CWA, work is now in progress to translate additional Ramsar documents into Arabic and hopefully, these will be available for download from the Ramsar website in the early part of 2011. The documents are:

- Handbook 5: Participatory Skills- Establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands
- Handbook 10: Wetlands and CEPA
- Handbook 12: Wetland Inventory
- Handbook 13: Impact assessment
- Handbook 15: Handbook 15: Addressing change in ecological character
- 40th Anniversary Booklet
- Ramsar Small Grants Fund: Operational Guidelines
- Factsheets on Wetland ecosystem services

## 2.7 Country Updates

Our Asia-Oceania Contracting Parties have themselves been very active during 2010 and in response to our call for short summaries of the activities that they have carried out over the past year, the ones that the Secretariat has received are outlined below. Some of the Contracting Parties also included accounts of their priorities during 2010.

### 2.7.1 Australia

Activities in 2010

- Implementation of Australia's *National Guidance on Notifying Change in Ecological Character of Australian Ramsar Wetlands* (Article 3.2) as endorsed by Australia's Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council on 5 November 2009.
- Supporting delegations from China and Russia that visited Australia to learn and share knowledge about implementation of the Ramsar Convention.
- Continued work to have ecological character descriptions (ECDs) in place for all 64 Australian Ramsar sites by 30 June 2011.
- The Coorong and Lakes Alexandrina and Albert Ramsar site continues to be a focus for national action.
- Released *Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010 – 2030*.



Beung Kiat Ngong Ramsar Site (Lao PDR)



Seocheon Tidal Flats Ramsar Site (RO Korea)

### 2.7.2 China

Activities in 2010 included:

- Implementing the sustainable development strategy of wetland conservation in accordance with the millennium development goals of UN, and carried out many actions based on the strategy and work plans of the Ramsar Convention. This included the improvement of inter-department coordination mechanisms in China, and the improvement of management of the Ramsar Sites.



- Participating in meetings organized by the Ramsar Convention and other relevant conferences and had made significant progresses in cooperation of projects with the governments of Australia, US, Germany, as well as with WWF, WI and UNDP.
- Devoting efforts on wetland education and initiated a second nationwide wetland inventory.
- Initiated a national legislation on wetland conservation and funds were invested to implement plans for the National Wetland Conservation Program.

### 2.7.3 Indonesia

Activities in 2010 included:

- To further enhance the management of each of the three existing Ramsar Sites (Berbak National Park, Danau Sentarum NP, Wasur NP) and the three newly designated Ramsar Sites (Sembilang NP, Pulau Rambut Wildlife Reserve, and Rawa Aopa Watumohai NP, management plans are being devised to implement all programs designated by the Central Government with tweaks allowed to adapt for each local condition.
- For Danau Sentarum NP in particular, this conservation area has been designated as one of the target of Presidential Instruction No. 3/2010, which command an increase of 2% of management implementation score and a solid and continual cooperation with local governments and other local institutions through Action Plan and local Forum agreed by all. These developments, currently in progress, must be achieved at the end of December 2010.

### 2.7.4 Iraq

Iraqi wetlands, marshes in particular, have and continue to suffer from scarcity of water and extreme dry conditions which led to adverse humanitarian and environmental concerns. With records of 90% aridity in the region, over 4000 km<sup>2</sup> of wetland dried up leaving behind only shallow water ponds and desert conditions. This resulted in loss of fisheries, livestock and forced the migration of hundreds of Iraqi families that inhabit the region. In response to this the National Wetlands Committee in Iraq organized a *Marshes Drought Catastrophe Emergency Meeting* to evaluate how best to tackle these issues.



Going to school by boat. Tonle Sap (Cambodia)



Meeting of the Council of Arab Minister Responsible for the Environment (Cairo, December 2010)

### 2.7.5 Japan

For implementing the rice paddy resolution, the MOE Japan held an international workshop with experts from about 10 countries at Takashima City, Shiga prefecture in August. Also, the MOE Japan held meetings with experts and made selections of 172 wetlands as Ramsar potential sites which met 9 international criteria before the end of September. On this occasion of COP 10 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Ramsar Secretariat and JAXA signed the MOU and also the MOE Japan co-hosted a side event with Ramsar Secretariat and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the Minister of the Environment, Matsumoto, served as the chair participated in the event.

### 2.7.6 Kazakhstan

One RIS ("Lesser Aral Sea and Delta of the Syrdarya River") was sent to the Ramsar Secretariat in November, 2010 for revision. With the support of GEF/UNDP Wetlands Project, a special computer information system was developed for information analysis for wetlands and this is currently used for the "Alakol-Sasykkol lake system", "Korgalzhyn Nature reserve" and "Ural river delta". By the decree of Government of 05/10/2010, the protected area (Alakol State Nature Reserve) for a Ramsar site "Alakol-

Sasykkol lake system” was increased from 45,505 ha to 65, 217.9 ha. There were amendments to Kazakhstan legislation, including a new definition of important wetlands, corresponding to Ramsar Convention. In addition, a definition of Important Bird Areas was prepared under a project; this project is now with Kazakhstan Parliament for approval. In October, ToT (Training of Trainers) was organized by ACBK in Astana in the frame of “Wings over Wetlands” as a GEF international project. The training modules prepared by the project are being used together with people from post-soviet countries and Iran. The modules are being translated into Russian.

### 2.7.7 Lao PDR

Activities in 2010 included:

- After a long process of preparation and institution arrangement to be a party to the Ramsar convention, Lao PDR officially acceded to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands on 28th September 2010. Beung Kiat Ngong Wetlands and Xe Champhone Wetlands were designated for the list of Wetlands of International Importance. In the meantime, WREA together with IUCN and local institutions are planning to celebrate the World Wetlands Day and the 40th Anniversary of the Ramsar Convention in Bueng Kiat Ngong. As a new member of the Convention, this will provide a great opportunity for Lao to launch its awareness campaign for wetlands through local media, and education materials for local communities.
- The National Committee on Wetland (chair by Deputy Prime Minister) and two Provincial Committees on Ramsar Sites (chair by Vice Provincial Governors) were established in September, 2010. The first National Committee Meeting will be held in mid-December and followed by visits to the Ramsar Sites. WREA and IUCN are preparing the Ramsar Site master plans that will be launched on WWD in February 2011.



Floating homes, Tonle Sap (Cambodia)



Hani Rice Terraces (PR China)



Fish market, Mekong River (Lao PDR)

### 2.7.8 Nepal

Since there are nine wetlands sites in Nepal that have been included on the Ramsar list, the government of Nepal has implemented various activities in the areas. World Wetland Day (February 2, 2010) was celebrated together with partner organizations. A national wetland committee has been designed in 2009 in order to mainstream wetland issues nationwide. The government has developed regular monitoring mechanism of wetland sites. Economic valuation tool, invasive alien species management guidelines, wetland inventory assessment and monitoring, wetland indigenous knowledge, documentation methodology, communication education, participation and awareness strategy are in the process of finalization. The management plan of Ghodaghodi Lake Area is in the final stage of approval. The government and with international support mainly from UNDP and WWF, have regularly implemented

wetland management activities at some selected sites. These activities intended for improving livelihood of wetland dependent communities and biodiversity conservation simultaneously. In the course of wetland activities implementation, the focus is given to capacity building of local communities.

### 2.7.9 New Zealand

Activities in 2010 included:

- A publication outlining New Zealand's response to the key resolutions from COP10 has been prepared and a factsheet summarising the report is available:  
<http://www.doc.govt.nz/publications/conservation/land-and-freshwater/wetlands/ramsar-convention-on-wetlands-10th-conference-of-parties-factsheet/>
- A framework to describe and report on the ecological character of New Zealand's Ramsar sites was developed in 2010, with a case study completed for the Awarua wetlands Ramsar Site. The approach is to describe and report on those natural features that comprise the most distinctive components of each Ramsar Site.
- The Freshwater Ecosystems of New Zealand database was released in 2010 that provides a set of spatial data layers describing the location, diversity, environmental pressures and condition of New Zealand's river, lake and inland wetland ecosystems.
- A research program to improve standard methods for monitoring the abundance of threatened swamp birds (crakes, bittern, fernbird), and the vulnerability of these species to predation by introduced mammals, is occurring at the Whangamarino wetland Ramsar Site.
- Participated in the Changwon Declaration network meeting in Changwon, Korea, during November 2010, and presented a paper on the *Implementation of the Changwon Declaration in New Zealand: promoting healthy wetlands and human well-being*.



Kumana Wetland Cluster Ramsar Site (Sri Lanka)



Turkmenbashi Bay Ramsar Site (Turkmenistan)

### 2.7.10 Philippines

Activities in 2010 included:

- The 1993 Philippine Wetlands Action Plan was updated in consultation with different sectors;
- 31 caves nationwide were classified (since 2009) following the DENR Guidelines on Cave Assessment and Classification;
- A "Training on Participatory Cave Management Planning" was conducted in June;
- Philippines hosted the ASEAN Peatland Forest Project Meeting on 4-5 November 2010;
- Guideline on the Species-Site matching for Mangrove restoration has been drafted;
- The Tubbataha Reef Natural Park RIS has been updated.

### 2.7.11 Republic of Korea

The Ministry of Land, Transport and Maritime Affairs (MLTM) and the Ministry of Environment cooperated together to finalize National CEPA Action Plan and established "wetland visitor center Network" to strengthen the capacity of wetland centers for providing services and information to public. In addition, MLTM and KOEM (Korea Marine Environment Management Corporation, the government



affiliate), jointly developed an educational textbook for tidal flat guides and launched demo-eco tours to make responsible coastal wetland tours benefiting locals.

#### 2.7.12 Sri Lanka

In 2010, the Department of Wildlife Conservation in collaboration with the Central Environmental Authority organized the following events for world wetland day: a landscaping wetland art competition for school children, a lecture on the topic of Wetland, Biodiversity and climatic change. Wetland day special programs were organized in four Ramsar Sites for both school children and communities. Sri Lanka designated 2 more Ramsar Sites in 2010.

#### 2.7.13 Turkmenistan

In November 2010 the Ministry for Nature Protection of Turkmenistan considered the report of the Government Commission for implementing of the Ramsar Convention: monitoring of Ramsar Site Turkmenbashy Bay and also approved the priorities for 2011. The Ministry also re-submitted the Accession Ramsar Information Sheet (Turkmenbashy Bay) for revision by the Ramsar Secretariat.

#### 2.7.14 Vietnam

Activities in 2010 included:

- Organized World Wetland Day celebration at Bach Thao Garden in Hanoi, Vietnam. The celebration attracted more than 200 participants from universities, environment and biodiversity conservation agencies/organizations;
- Developed new RIS's within the framework of two projects on expanding Ramsar Sites in Vietnam funded by the Ramsar Small Grant Fund (SGF) and RRC – EA. It is our priority to submit the RIS of these new Ramsar Sites to the Secretariat in 2011;
- Implementing the SGF project on capacity-building for the sustainable management of Ba Be Lake resources and biodiversity conservation. Ba Be National Park is located in Bac Kan Province, Vietnam;
- Attended two workshops held by RRC - EA about wetland management.



RRC-East Asia Information Sharing Workshop and Training on Wetland Management (RO Korea, September 2010)



Shurgol, Yadegarlu & Dorgeh Sangi Lakes Ramsar Site, (I.R. Iran)

### 3. 2011 Workplan

In 2011, a range of regional meetings are being planned which Asia-Oceania Contracting Parties may be interested in attending (Appendix 1). A number of these meetings will be to prepare for Ramsar COP11 which will be held in Bucharest (Romania) in June 2012. These meetings include the Pre-COP11 Asia Regional Meeting in Jakarta (Indonesia) in December 2011, which is being organized by the government of Indonesia and the Secretariat. A similar meeting for Oceania Contracting Parties is being planned for early 2012.

Ramsar organization and NGO partners are also working with Contracting Parties to organize meetings in 2011 to discuss various wetland issues and then making recommendations for forwarding to the Pre-COP11 decision making process. These include the Asian Wetland Symposium in Sabah (Malaysia; July 2011) and in Wuxi (P.R. China; October 2011).



### 3.1 Accessions

In Asia, Secretariat staff will continue to provide information to the governments of Bhutan and North Korea for their discussions on possible accession to the Convention. Similarly, the Secretariat will work with the Secretariat of the League of Arab States and UNEP – Regional Office West Asia to provide information to the government of Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Somalia about the benefits of accession.

For Oceania, Mr. Vainuupo Jungblut, the Ramsar Program Officer – Oceania is planning to visit Vanuatu and Nauru to support their possible accession and for their attendance at the Oceania Pre-COP11 meeting. A possible visit to Palau in 2011 is also planned in order to discuss and firm up arrangements with the Palau NAA for the 5<sup>th</sup> Oceania Regional Meeting for Ramsar COP 11, planned for March 2012.

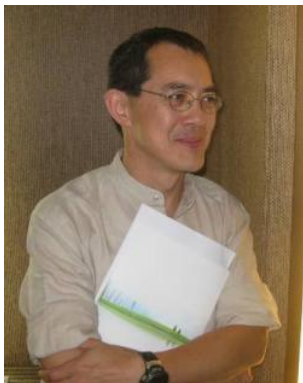
### 3.2 Working with regional organizations

The Secretariat's Asia-Oceania Team has developed good working relationships with a number of regional organizations to help implement the Convention. These include the Secretariat of the League of Arab States, the UNEP Regional Offices for West Asia, and for Asia and the Pacific, the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) in Nepal, as well as the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity with whom the Secretariat is planning to sign a Memorandum of Cooperation with in 2011. The Ramsar Regional Centres in Central and West Asia, and that in East Asia will also continue to be vital partners.

Through cooperation with these regional organizations, the Secretariat hopes to be able to improve support to the Convention's Contracting Parties by improving information exchange and networking, as well as in providing financial support for activities.

2011 promises to be another exciting year and the Ramsar Asia/Oceania Team looks forward to working with you all in making it a successful one as well!

#### From the Ramsar Asia/Oceania Team (2010/2011)



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## Appendix 1: Ramsar related regional meetings and events in Asia-Oceania, 2011

Month 2011	Activity
January	<b>23 – 24:</b> Collaborative Management Board meeting, Ramsar Regional Centre – Central and West Asia (Tehran, Iran)
February	<b>2:</b> World Wetland Day events (worldwide) <b>1-3:</b> International Conference on Biodiversity & Climate Change (Manila, Philippines) <b>14 – 18:</b> 17 <sup>th</sup> STRP meeting (Gland, Switzerland)
March	<b>3 – 5:</b> Rice, Pesticides and Wetland Biodiversity workshop (Singapore) <b>5 – 6:</b> Ramsar 40 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations (Tehran, Iran) <b>21 – 25:</b> Workshop on Ramsar implementation for the Lower Mekong Countries (Vientiane, Lao PDR)
April	<b>30:</b> Deadline for submissions of draft Ramsar Small Grant Fund (SGF) proposals for the SGF advisory service.
May	<b>2 – 5:</b> IUCN Regional Conference (Kuwait) <b>11 – 14:</b> Workshop for Ramsar Site managers (Astana, Kazakhstan) <b>16 – 20:</b> 42 <sup>nd</sup> Ramsar Standing Committee meeting (Gland, Switzerland) <b>23 - 26:</b> Workshop for Ramsar Site managers (UAE)
June	<b>30:</b> Deadline for Ramsar Small Grant Fund (SGF) Application
July	<b>18 – 20:</b> Asian Wetland Symposium (Sabah, Malaysia)
August	<b>Date to be confirmed:</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Changwon Declaration meeting (Changwon, R.O. Korea)
September	<b>Date to be confirmed:</b> SPREP Annual Meeting (Apia, Samoa)
October	<b>11 – 14:</b> Asian Wetland Symposium (Wuxi, P.R. China) <b>31 Oct – 4 Nov:</b> 43 <sup>rd</sup> Ramsar Standing Committee meeting (Gland, Switzerland)
November	<b>14 – 18:</b> Pre-COP11 Asian Regional Meeting (Jakarta, Indonesia)
December	
Month 2012	Activity
January	<b>Date to be confirmed:</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Asia-Pacific Water Summit (Bangkok, Thailand)
February	
March	<b>Date to be confirmed:</b> Pre-COP Oceania Regional Meeting (Palau)
April	
May	
June	<b>19 – 16:</b> Ramsar COP11, (Bucharest, Romania)