NATIONAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RAMSAR CONVENTION ON WETLANDS

National Reports to be submitted to the 11th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, Romania, June 2012

Please submit the completed National Report, in electronic (Microsoft Word) format, and preferably by e-mail, to the Ramsar Secretariat by **15 September 2011**.

National Reports should be sent to: Alexia Dufour, Regional Affairs Officer, Ramsar Secretariat (dufour@ramsar.org)

Introduction & background

1. This National Report Format (NRF) has been approved by the Standing Committee in Decision SC41-24 for the Ramsar Convention's Contracting Parties to complete as their national reporting to the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties of the Convention (Bucharest, Romania, June 2012).

2. Following Standing Committee discussions at its 40th meeting in May 2009, and its Decision SC40-29, this COP11 National Report Format closely follows that used for the COP10 National Report Format, which in turn was a significantly revised and simplified format in comparison with the National Report Formats provided to previous recent COPs.

3. In addition to thus permitting continuity of reporting and implementation progress analyses by ensuring that indicator questions are as far as possible consistent with previous NRFs (and especially the COP10 NRF), this COP11 NRF is structured in terms of the Goals and Strategies of the 2009-2015 Ramsar Strategic Plan adopted at COP10 as Resolution X.1, and the indicators speak to relevant Key Result Areas (KRAs) for each Strategy in the Strategic Plan.

4. The COP11 NRF indicators include, with the agreement of the Standing Committee, certain indicators specifically requested to be included by the Convention's Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) in light of its work on assessing effectiveness indicators, and by the CEPA Oversight Panel, in order to facilitate their information gathering and reporting on key aspects of scientific, technical and CEPA implementation under the Convention. The format also includes indicator questions concerning the use of the "Changwon Declaration on human well-being and wetlands", as requested in Resolution X.3 (2008).

5. This COP11 NRF includes 82 indicator questions. In addition, for each Strategy the option is provided for a Contracting Party, if it so wishes, to supply additional information concerning its implementation under each indicator and, more generally, on implementation of other aspects of each Strategy.

6. The COP11 Format also now includes an additional, optional, section (section 4) to permit a Contracting Party to provide additional information, if it wishes to, on indicators relevant to individual Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites).

The purposes and uses of national reporting to the Conference of the Contracting Parties

7. National Reports from Contracting Parties are official documents of the Convention and are made publicly available through their posting on the Convention's website.

8. There are six main purposes for the Convention's National Reports. These are to:

   i) provide data and information on how the Convention is being implemented;
   ii) capture lessons and experience to help Parties develop future action;
   iii) identify emerging issues and implementation challenges faced by Parties that may require further attention from the Conference of the Parties;
   iv) provide a means for Parties to be accountable for their commitments under the Convention;

v) provide each Party with a tool to help it assess and monitor its progress in implementation, and to plan its future priorities; and
vi) provide an opportunity for Parties to draw attention to their achievements during the triennium.

9. The data and information provided by Parties in their National Reports have another valuable purpose as well, since a number of the indicators in the National Reports on Parties' implementation provide key sources of information for the analysis and assessment of the "ecological outcome-oriented indicators of effectiveness of the implementation of the Convention" currently being further developed by the Scientific and Technical Review Panel for Standing Committee and COP11 consideration.

10. To facilitate the analysis and subsequent use of the data and information provided by Contracting Parties in their National Reports, once received and verified by the Ramsar Secretariat all information is entered and held by the Secretariat in a database, which then facilitates extraction and analysis of the information for a number of purposes.

11. The Convention's National Reports are used in a number of ways. These include:

i) providing the basis for reporting by the Secretariat to each meeting of the Conference of the Parties on the global and regional implementation, and the progress in implementation, of the Convention. This is provided to Parties at the COP as a series of Information Papers, including:

- the Report of the Secretary General on the implementation of the Convention at the global level (see, e.g., COP10 DOC. 6);
- the Report of the Secretary General pursuant to Article 8.2 (b), (c), and (d) concerning the List of Wetlands of International Importance (see, e.g., COP10 DOC. 7); and
- the reports providing regional overviews of the implementation of the Convention and its Strategic Plan in each Ramsar region (see, e.g., COP10 DOCs 8-13);

ii) providing information on specific implementation issues in support of the provision of advice and decisions by Parties at the COP. Examples at CO9 and COP10 included:

- Resolution IX.15 and X.13, *The status of sites in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance*, and
- Information Papers on *Issues and scenarios concerning Ramsar Sites or parts of sites which cease to meet or never met the Ramsar Criteria* (COP9 DOC. 15), *Implementation of the Convention's CEPA Programme for the period 2003-2005* (COP9 DOC. 25), *Overview of the implementation of the Concention's CEPA Programme for the period 2006-2008* (COP10 DOC. 16, and *Background and rationale to the Framework for processes of detecting, reporting and responding to change in wetland ecological character* (COP10 DOC. 27);

iii) providing the source data for time-series assessments of progress on specific aspects in the implementation of the Convention included in other Convention products. An example is the summary of progress since COP3 (Regina, 1997) in the development

of National Wetland Policies, included as Table 1 in Ramsar Wise Use Handbook 2 (4th edition, 2010); and

iv) providing information for reporting to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) on the national-level implementation of the CBD/Ramsar Joint Work Plan and the Ramsar Convention's lead implementation role on wetlands for the CBD. In particular, the COP10 NRF indicators have been used extensively in 2009 in the preparation by the Ramsar Secretariat and STRP of contributions to the in-depth review of the CBD programme of work on the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems that was being considered by CBD SBSTTA14 and COP10 during 2010 (see UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/14/3).

The structure of the COP11 National Report Format

12. The COP11 National Report Format is in four sections.

Section 1 provides the Institutional Information about the Administrative Authority and National Focal Points for the national implementation of the Convention.

Section 2 is a "free-text" section in which the Party is invited to provide a summary of various aspects of national implementation progress and recommendations for the future.

Section 3 provides the 82 implementation indicator questions, grouped under each Convention implementation strategy in the Strategic Plan 2009-2015, and with an optional "free-text" section under each indicator question in which the Contracting Party may, if it wishes, add further information on national implementation of that activity; and a further "free-text" section for adding further information on other aspects of implementation of that Strategy.

Section 4 (www.ramsar.org/doc/cop11/cop11_nrform_e_sec4.doc) is an optional Annex to the National Report Format to allow any Contracting Party that wishes to do so to provide additional information separately for any or all of its Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites). This has been included at the request of a number of Parties.

Guidance for filling in and submitting the COP11 National Report Format

IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ THIS SECTION OF GUIDANCE BEFORE STARTING TO FILL IN THE NATIONAL REPORT FORMAT

13. All of the first three Sections of the COP11 National Report Format should be completed in one of the Convention's official languages (English, French, Spanish).

14. The deadline for submission of the completed NRF is **15 September 2011**. It will not be possible to include information from National Reports received after that date in the analysis and reporting on Convention implementation to COP11.

15. All fields with a pale yellow background must be filled in.

16. Fields with a pale green background are optional free-text fields in which to provide additional information, if the Contracting Party so wishes. Although providing information in these fields in the NRF is optional, Contracting Parties are encouraged to provide such additional information wherever possible and relevant, since experience

shows that such explanatory information is very valuable in ensuring a full understanding of implementation progress and activity, notably in informing the preparation of global and regional implementation reports to COP.

17. In order to assist Contracting Parties in providing such additional information, for a number of indicator questions some particularly helpful types of such information are suggested. However, of course, Parties are free to add any other relevant information they wish in any of the "Additional implementation information" fields.

18. The Format is created as a "Form" in Microsoft Word. You are only able to move to each of the yellow or green boxes to give your replies and information, as all other parts of the form are locked to ensure that the form and wording of indicators will remain uniform and comparable for all Parties. If you need to work with an unlocked version of the Format, please contact Alexia Dufour, Regional Affairs Officer (dufour@ramsar.org), who will advise on how that can be done.

19. To go to a yellow or green field you wish to fill in, move the cursor over the relevant part of the form and left-click the mouse. The cursor will automatically move to the next field available.

20. To move down the sequence of fields to fill in, you can also use the "Tab" key on the computer keyboard.

21. For a "free-text" field, you can type in whatever information you wish. If you wish to amend any of the text you have put in a green or yellow "free-text" box, it is recommended that you cut-and-paste the existing text into a separate file, make the amendments, and then cut-and-paste the revised text back into the green box – this is because within the Microsoft "Form" format there is limited facility to make editorial changes in the "free-text" box once text has been entered.

22. Certain keyboard characters interfere with the automatic data entry into our database for handling and analysing National Reports. For that reason, please do not use the characters " ", [ ] °°°° in the "free text" fields.

23. For each of the "Indicator questions" in Section 3, a drop-down menu of answer options is provided. These vary between indicators, depending on the question, but are generally of the form: "Yes", "No", "Partly", "In progress", etc. This is necessary so that statistical comparisons can be made of the replies.

24. For each indicator question you can choose only one answer. If you wish to provide further information or clarifications concerning your answer, you can do so in the green additional information box below the relevant indicator question.

25. To select an answer to an indicator question, use the Tab key, or move the cursor over the relevant yellow box and left-click the mouse. The drop-down menu of answer options will appear. Left-click the mouse on the answer option you choose, and this will appear in the centre of the yellow box.

26. The NRF is not intended normally to be filled in by one person alone – for many indicators it would seem best for the principal compiler to consult with colleagues in the same and other agencies within the government who might have fuller knowledge of the Party's overall implementation of the Convention. The principal compiler can save the

work at any point in the process and return to it subsequently to continue or to amend answers previously given. When filling in this form, it is also advised to refer back to the National Report submitted for COP10 for purposes of continuity and consistency.

27. After each session working on the NRF, remember to save the file! A recommended filename structure is: COP11NRF [Country] [date].

28. After the NRF has been completed, please send the completed National Report to the Ramsar Secretariat, preferably by e-mail, to Alexia Dufour, Regional Affairs Officer, Ramsar Convention Secretariat, e-mail: dufour@ramsar.org. The Secretariat must receive your completed National Report in this electronic (Microsoft Word) format.

29. When the completed National Report is submitted by the Party, **it must be accompanied by a letter or e-mail message in the name of the Administrative Authority, confirming that this is that Contracting Party's official submission of its COP11 National Report**.

30. If you have any questions or problems concerning filling in the COP11 NRF, please contact the Ramsar Secretariat for advice (e-mail as above).

SECTION 1: INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION

NAME OF CONTRACTING PARTY: UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DESIGNATED RAMSAR ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY	
Name of Administrative Authority:	**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Interior** **[In consultation with]** **Bureau Oceans, International Environmental & Scientific Affairs, U.S. Department of State [OES/DOS]**
Head of Administrative Authority - name and title:	Mr. Daniel M. (Dan) Ashe Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1849 C Street, NW, 312 MIB Washington D.C. 20240 dan_ashe@fws.gov
Mailing address:	Dr. Kerri-Ann Jones Assistant Secretary for Oceans, Environment and Science OES Room 7831 Department of State 2201 C St. NW Washington DC 20520
Telephone/Fax:	703-358-1767; 703-358-2115
Email:	Please use Focal Point adress below
DESIGNATED NATIONAL FOCAL POINT FOR RAMSAR CONVENTION MATTERS	
Name and title:	Herbert Raffaele, Chief Division of International Conservation
Mailing address:	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 4401 N. Fairfax Dr. Arlington, VA 22203
Telephone/Fax:	703-358-1767; 703-2115
Email:	herb_rafaele@fws.gov
DESIGNATED NATIONAL FOCAL POINT FOR MATTERS RELATING TO STRP (SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL REVIEW PANEL)	
Name and title of focal point:	Gil Cintron, Project Officer
Name of organisation:	U.S.Fish and Wildlife Service
Mailing address:	4401 N. Fairfax Dr. Arlington, VA 22203
Telephone/Fax:	703-358-1765; 703-358-2115
Email:	gil_cintron@fws.gov
DESIGNATED GOVERNMENT NATIONAL FOCAL POINT FOR MATTERS RELATING TO THE CEPA PROGRAMME ON COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION, PARTICIPATION AND AWARENESS	
Name and title of focal point:	Krishna K. Roy, Branch Chief

Name of organisation:	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Mailing address:	4401 N. Faifax Dr. Arlington, VA 22203
Telephone/Fax:	703-358-2645; 703-358-2115
Email:	Krishna_Roy@fws.gov

DESIGNATED NON-GOVERNMENT NATIONAL FOCAL POINT FOR MATTERS RELATING TO THE CEPA PROGRAMME ON COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION, PARTICIPATION AND AWARENESS	
Name and title:	Kim Diana Connolly, Professor of Law & Director of Clinical Legal Education Coordinator, Environmental Law Concentration
Name of organisation:	University at Buffalo Law School, The State University of New York
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SECTION 2: GENERAL SUMMARY OF NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES

In your country, in the past triennium (i.e., since COP10 reporting):

A. What new steps have been taken to implement the Convention?

2008 Adoption of a watershed/ landscape approach to wetland mitigation.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued, in April 2008 final regulations governing compensatory mitigation for activities authorized by the Department of the Army. The regulations establish performance standards and criteria for the use in compensatory mitigation to improve the quality and success of compensatory mitigation projects for activities authorized by Department of the Army permits. This rule improves the planning, implementation and management of compensatory mitigation projects by emphasizing a watershed approach in selecting compensatory mitigation project locations, requiring measurable, enforceable ecological performance standards and regular monitoring for all types of compensation and specifying the components of a complete compensatory mitigation plan,

The new rules require a 'watershed-based' approach in which the wetland needs of an entire watershed are taken into account, rather than only the site of the development. For example, if a developer destroys 10 acres of wetlands, he can no longer just plant 10 acres of trees nearby. Instead, the corps must advise the developer if other, more potentially valuable areas in the watershed need replenishing, even if the acreage does not match precisely what would be lost.

2009 Pacific Coral Reefs designated as National Monuments

Through an Executive Order issued on January 6, 2009, under the Antiquities Act of 1906, (the same legislation used by President Theodore Roosevelt to set aside such national treasures as the Petrified Forest and the Grand Canyon), three coral reef complexes were designated National Monuments; the Marianas Marine National Monument, the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument, and Rose Atoll Marine National Monument. These include some of the most pristine tropical islands and coral reef ecosystems in the world. The Rose Atoll and Pacific Remote Islands monuments overlay existing U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wildlife Refuges. The Secretary of the Interior has management responsibility for the monuments in consultation with the Secretary of Commerce, through NOAA. NOAA has primary management responsibility over fishery related activities in these monuments outside refuge boundaries, and was directed to begin the process of adding the non-refuge marine areas of the Rose Atoll Monument to the existing Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary in American Samoa. Each of these
places has a slightly different management regime, and the Department of Interior in Washington, through Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service in Honolulu are working with NOAA to ensure that there is close coordination and cooperation in these management activities.

2010 – 2012 Everglades Restoration Commitment Alive and Well

The Everglades National Park is one of America's greatest treasures. In addition to being a one-of-a-kind subtropical destination for tourists, this Ramsar and World Heritage Site is a tremendous economic generator for Florida. The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) is an ongoing 30-year plan for large-scale restoration.

Restoration efforts continue being implemented in accordance with The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), approved in 2000, with an initial budget of US $8 billion. A total of 232,505 acres, or 60 percent, of estimated lands needed for CERP have been acquired as of September 2010. In Fiscal Year 2010, 130 shoreline acres were acquired to help restore freshwater flows to Biscayne Bay and Biscayne National Park .These strategically located lands will be used for the construction of water quality improvement projects that will bring meaningful environmental benefits to the ecosystem. Lake Okeechobee's ecological health is the best in years. Clear water and flourishing aquatic plants are providing a nursery for fish and other animals, while submerged aquatic vegetation coverage surpassed the lake's target goal. These conditions also enhance recreational opportunities such as fishing that support the regional economy. North of the lake, five hybrid wetland treatment technology sites are being operated and managed for phosphorus load reductions. Also in the Northern Everglades watershed, dispersed water storage on private, public, and tribal lands has been expanded to almost 130,000 acre-feet. A 2010 study by Mather Economics revealed that investment in Everglades's restoration provides hard evidence that restoration is economically viable as well as ecologically desirable; Mather Economics study demonstrates a four-to-one economic benefit for ever dollar invested in restoration projects. Over the last three years, Everglades's restoration projects have generated 10,500 jobs, 22,000 short- to mid-term jobs on the restoration itself, and more than 442,000 jobs are expected to be created over the next several decades in tourism, real estate and commercial and recreational fishing industries. The proposed 2011 federal budget included significant funding for Everglades restoration projects that supports continued efforts to restore the habitats that this unique wetland system once supported. The federal government's $263 million request for Everglades funding in Fiscal Year 2011, represents an increase over the appropriations received in FY 2010, demonstrating the administration's continued support for, and commitment to Everglades's restoration. Obama's 2012 proposal calls for $271.5 million in federal Everglades expenditures, up $20 million from 2011. Environmentalists have hailed the president's commitment to funding Everglades restoration even though he is proposing a five-year overall freeze on domestic discretionary spending. Whereas in the past agencies acted alone, today there are multiple coalitions of interested organizations as well as conferences such as GEER 2008; Greater Everglades Restoration -- 2050 for scientists and interagency restoration practitioners to share results of studies and ideas for the recovery of the Everglades.

2010 Wetlands and Oil Spills; A setback, the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

The explosion of the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig in the Gulf of Mexico on April 20, 2010, and the resulting oil spill (the worst oil spill in American history) began a cascade of effects on the coastal areas of the Gulf and on the wealth of species that inhabit those areas. Most of the oil appears to have remained offshore, but reports of oil reaching the coast have been geographically extensive, ranging from Florida to Louisiana. The potential geographic extent of the spill may have resulted in the exposure of many types of coastal wetlands to oil, ranging from mangroves in Florida and Texas to tidal freshwater wetlands along the Gulf Coast. Aside from its unprecedented size, the spill was the first to release a massive amount of oil 1.5 kilometers down on the sea floor and the first involving widespread use of oil dispersants below water. The coastal areas hit hardest, the Louisiana wetlands, are already under acute stress from subsidence, erosion and the damage caused by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Scientists worried that the spill would devastate Louisiana's vast wetlands, which cover some 12,000 square kilometers. Favorable winds and currents and aggressive oil skimming and trapping at the surface, and the likelihood that a substantial portion of oil drifted in underwater plumes may have reduced impacts to wetlands as well as the distance to the coast 80 kilometers (50 miles).

Uncontrolled leaking from the well site continued after the explosion. In mid-July, the flow of oil from the well was stopped with a temporary cap, but oiling of the Gulf's shorelines continued even after oil was no longer flowing from the well. On September 17, more than 35% of Gulf Coast shoreline miles were oiled to some degree, but less than 7% was oiled to a moderate or heavy extent, according to the federal government. On September 19, the government reported that the ruptured well was effectively dead and posed no continuing threat to the Gulf. The risk posed by the wellhead has ended, as has the emergency phase of response. But the oil spill response is ongoing, and day-to-day cleanup operations continue; cleaning shoreline, sampling Gulf waters, and responding to any recoverable oil that is found. The extent of oiled vegetation on shore, resulting damages, and how quickly plants will regenerate are largely unknown. BP has pledged US$500 million for research in the Gulf, although only a small fraction of that has yet been handed out, and many researchers are working under rapid-response grants from the National Science Foundation. The long-term outlook is difficult to predict, because the full extent of the impact has yet to be realized.

As part of the federal government's response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, the U.S. EPA received a $2 million Congressional appropriation for a grant or grants for a study on the potential human and environmental risks and impacts of the release of crude oil and the application of dispersants, surface washing agents, bioremediation agents, and other mitigation measures listed in the National Contingency Plan Product List...
To implement this appropriation through its Science to Achieve Results (STAR) grant program, EPA is seeking applications proposing to develop a research program, including an effective community outreach program component, to mitigate the impact of oil spills.

2011 Palmyra Atoll National Wildlife Refuge designated as a Ramsar site.

The Palmyra Atoll National Wildlife Refuge is the first ever Ramsar site designation by the United States to include coral reefs and other marine areas. The coral reefs of Palmyra Atoll have long been prized by scientists as a relatively untouched ecosystem. It is located at the northern end of the Line Islands in the equatorial Pacific, approximately 960 nautical miles south of Honolulu, Hawaii, and has 617 acres of uplands and over 15,000 acres of submerged coral reefs and tropical lagoons. It is described as one of the few remaining coral reef ecosystems with intact food chains and large predator assemblages. The Atoll is also rich in biodiversity, supporting one of the last Pisonia grandis forests in the Pacific and more than a million seabirds nest there and use the surrounding waters as forage areas. The Atoll is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The site includes coral reefs, permanent shallow marine waters, and intertidal forested wetlands out to 12 nautical miles from it. A National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) since 2001, the site supports a variety of species with different conservation status under the National Endangered Species Act and IUCN Red List, such as the Hawaiian monk seal (Monachus schauinslandi), Hawksbill turtle (Eretmochelys imbricata), and Green Sea Turtle (Chelonia mydas). It is also an important feeding and nesting ground for seabirds like the Red-footed Booby (Sula sula), with the third largest colony in the world, and it sustains approximately 5% of the total population of the Bristle-thighed Curlew (Numenius tahitiensis). As a National Wildlife Refuge, the site is closed to public use without a permit issued by the manager, but scientific research and CEPA activities are coordinated between the US Fish and Wildlife Service and The Nature Conservancy along with the Palmyra Atoll Research Consortium. Threats include the presence of invasive species like the scale (Pulvinaria urbicola), which is responsible for the recent decline in the Pisonia grandis forest coverage. A conservation plan is under development and expected to be completed in 2012. The designation contributes to one of the goals contained in the Ramsar Convention's Strategic Plan for 2009-2015, which is to reach a protected area of 250 million hectares by 2015.

2011 The Nation works on a National Fish, Wildlife, and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy.

From the Arctic to the Everglades, impacts like rising sea levels, warmer temperatures, loss of sea ice, and changing precipitation patterns are already affecting species and habitats and ecological services the nation values. The purpose of the NFWPCA Strategy is to inspire natural resource professionals and other decision makers to take timely action to safeguard fish, wildlife and plant resources and the human uses, values and benefits they provide in a changing climate. The Strategy seeks to build a national framework/blueprint for collective action that engages the public and promotes communication and collaboration across government and nongovernment entities to provide a coordinated climate response that insures that climate adaptation and mitigation efforts are not carried out in isolation. A landscape/seascape-based approach integrates science and adaptive management.

In an unprecedented collaborative effort, federal, state, and tribal partners with input from many other diverse groups from across the nation are working together to develop a unified approach that reflects shared principles and science-based practices for reducing the negative impacts of climate change on fish, wildlife, plants, and the natural systems upon which they depend. On the marine environment the Strategy recognizes the importance of further developing and enhancing marine managed areas (MMAs) and MMA networks as tools for understanding, adapting to, and mitigating climate change effects on fish, wildlife, plants working within the context of Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) or seascapes. The strategy considers the importance of international partnerships for developing adaptation strategies within and across Large Marine Ecosystems (LME's) as part of an ecosystem-seascape-based approach to management. The strategy recognizes that climate change is a global issue needing global solutions and that resource managers entrusted with the stewardship of ecologically important resources at all scales will be required to take key management steps in the face of overwhelming issues to build and strengthen local and regional resilience. Increasing the capacity of resource managers is an important component of the overall response to global climate change. According to the Strategy increasing the capacity of resource managers to build that resilience at all scales is more critical now. The Strategy is in its final stages of completion and is expected to be released in May/June 2012.

The 2012 Intecol 9 and the Greater Everglades Ecosystem Restoration Conference.

In 2012 The Society of Wetland Scientists and the Greater Everglades Ecosystem Restoration Conference will meet in conjunction with INTECOL 9, (the largest wetlands conference in the world) June 3 – 8 in Orlando Florida. The 9th INTECOL International Wetlands Conference will provide an opportunity to review and collaborate on advances in wetland science in ecological, physical, biogeochemical and social sciences pertinent to wetland management and policy. The conference will be a forum to discuss threats, challenges and integrated solutions for sustainable restoration and management of wetlands in our changing world.

2012 EcoSummit, to be hosted at Ramsar site.

The Ohio State EcoSummit will be hosted at Ramsar site in 2012. Jerry Tinianow, director of the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission has announced that the Planning Commission is organizing the international ecology conference, or EcoSummit, which will focus on restoring the environment. One of the conference's other organizers is William Mitsch, director of the Wilma H. Schiermeier Olentangy River Wetland Research Park

and an environmental resources professor at OSU. Dr. William Mitsch was one of the ecology journal editors who organized the first International EcoSummit in 1996.The group organized the conference series to promote the use of the natural and social sciences in policy-making. The upcoming conference will be the fourth in the series. At the previous conference in Beijing in 2007, nearly 1,400 environmental scientists from 70 countries met. But this fourth conference will take the series in a new direction. We're going to have a fix the planet theme as opposed to a study the planet' theme, Mitsch said.Li Zhang, the Wetland Research Park's assistant director, echoed Mitsch's remarks. The environment has become a big issue," Zhang said. We hope to combine engineering and ecology to fix problems. The summit will include a week of presentations in addition to environmental displays such as stormwater gardens, solar energy displays and stream and river restorations. Trips to areas of ecological restoration, such as the Florida Everglades, are arranged for before and after the conference. EcoSummit 2012 will bring together the world's most respected minds in ecological science to discuss restoring the planet's ecosystems. Eco Summit 2012 will bring together Nobel Prize laureate Elinor Ostrom Pulitzer Prize winners E.O. Wilson and Jared Diamond, Kyoto Prize winner Simon Levin, Stockholm Water Prize laureates Sven Jørgensen and Bill Mitsch, and many others in the first conference ever linking the Ecological Society of America (ESA), The International Association for Ecology (INTECOL) and the Society for Ecological Restoration International (SER). Dr Mitsch announced details of the conference, which will take place 30 September- 5 October 2012 at the Wetland Research Park. Mitsch sees his work at the park as related to the theme of the conference. Wetlands are important because of their functions in cleaning and retaining water, preventing floods and providing a habitat and food source for a wide variety of species. The park studies how wetlands function so that creating and restoring these ecosystems becomes possible. The Wetland Research Park has been designated a Wetland of International Importance. Located in a state that has seen more than 90 percent of its historic wetland base drained, the site contains riverine marshes that were once typical but are now rare, said Dale Hall, former director of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The site is also important for its significant wetland ecotourism and outreach within an urban community where few wetlands remain.

B. What have been the most successful aspects of implementation of the Convention?

The most successful aspect has been the sustained public awareness and the increasing number of constituencies and entities engaged in wetland conservation at all levels.

C. What have been the greatest difficulties in implementing the Convention?

Although the U.S. invests more than 500 million dollars a year in wetland conservation maintaining public support for these programs is a complex task particularly as national budgets shrink. The coordination of efforts to align multiple constituencies is difficult in spite of shared visions and interests.

D. What are the priorities for future implementation of the Convention?

The greatest priority for future implementation continues to be the strengthening of the National Ramsar Committee to increase its outreach and its capacity to promote and support designation of new sites while broadening its funding base. The USFWS Wildlife Without Borders Global Program is now the only funding source.

E. Does the Contracting Party have any proposals concerning adjustments to the 2009-2015 Strategic Plan?

None at this time

F. Does the Contracting Party have any recommendations concerning implementation assistance from the Ramsar Secretariat?

No

G. Does the Contracting Party have any recommendations concerning implementation assistance from the Convention's International Organisation Partners (IOPs)?

No

H. How can national implementation of the Ramsar Convention be better linked with implementation of other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), especially those in the "Biodiversity cluster" (Ramsar, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), CITES, and World Heritage Convention), and UNCCD and UNFCCC?

The U.S. has explored the possibility of greater coordination among Multilateral Environmental Agreements and International Organizations through the creation of an international Forum; the Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative. This forum brings together government wildlife officials and representatives from non-governmental organizations and conventions with interests in international dialogue and cooperation on migratory species conservation. Four meetings have been held to date; Chile 2003; Costa Rica 2006; Paraguay 2008 and Miami 2010. The Ramsar Secretariat has been represented at all these meetings. The forums provide opportunities for coordination and alighnment of effort and for discussion of emerging issues. A thematic session of the 2008 Paraguay meeting was How to Adapt Habitats in the Face of Climate Change. These meetings have been supported jointly by the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Fish and Wilflife "Wldlife Without Borders Initiative. The Organization of Ameican States (OAS) co-hosted the last meeting in Miami (2010).

I. How can Ramsar Convention implementation be better linked with the implementation of water policy/strategy and other strategies in the country (e.g., sustainable development, energy, extractive industries, poverty reduction, sanitation, food security, biodiversity)?

This requires greater coordination and interagency dialogues at national level. It is suggested that national Ramsar Committees can play an important role in initiating and sustaining such dialogues; as well as integrating government and private sector efforts

J. Does the Contracting Party have any other general comments on the implementation of the Convention?

Global wetland stewardship requires a paradigmatic change in social and ecological ways of thinking because as Einstein observed We cannot fix a problem with the same kind of consciousness that caused it in the first place; We must re-invent and reengineer resource management and conservation. This requires new ways of thinking and new forms of leadership. We must explore and develop new and more appropriate pedagogies that facilitate the emergence of ecologically conscious and sustainable communities and societies; social-ecological systems capable of developing just and sustainable processes of change and adaptation in a world of increasing interdependence and change. Education at all levels must be reinvigorated. To that end the Convention must refocus its efforts on training to build environmental facilitation capacity for change and adaptation. There must be increased alignment between the STRP and CEPA and STRP efforts and products must be shaped to become increasingly more effective training/education tools.

SECTION 3: INDICATOR QUESTIONS & FURTHER IMPLEMENTATION INFORMATION

Guidance for filling in this section

1. For each "indicator question", please select one answer from the "drop-down" list in the yellow box.
2. If you wish to add any additional information on a specific indicator, please provide this information in the green "free-text" boxes below the indicator questions.
3. If you wish to amend any of the text you have put in a green "free-text" box, it is recommended that you cut-and-paste the existing text into a separate file, make the amendments, and then paste the revised text back into the green box.
4. Some characters used in the free text box prevent the automatic data entry into our database designed for handling and analysing National Reports. For that reason, please do not use the characters **" ", [ ], °°°°** in the free text box.
5. To assist Contracting Parties in referring to relevant information they provided in their National Report to COP10, for each indicator below (where appropriate) a cross-reference is provided to the equivalent indicator(s) in the COP10 NRF, shown thus: {x.x.x}
6. Where appropriate, a cross-reference is also provided to the relevant Key Result Area (KRA) relating to Contracting Parties in the Strategic Plan 2009-2015.
7. Only Strategic Plan 2009-2015 Strategies and KRAs for which there are significant implementation actions for Contracting Parties are included in this reporting format; those parts of the Strategic Plan that do not refer directly to Parties are omitted.

GOAL 1. THE WISE USE OF WETLANDS

STRATEGY 1.1 Wetland inventory and assessment. *Describe, assess and monitor the extent and condition of all types of wetlands as defined by the Ramsar Convention and wetland resources at relevant scales, in order to inform and underpin implementation of the Convention, in particular in the application of its provisions concerning the wise use of all wetlands.*

1.1.1 Does your country have a comprehensive National Wetland Inventory? {1.1.1} KRA 1.1.i	A - Yes

1.1.1 Additional information:
The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency that provides information to the public on the extent and status of the Nation's wetlands. The agency has developed a series of topical maps to show wetlands and deepwater habitats. This geospatial information is used by Federal, State, and local agencies, academic institutions, and private industry for management, research, policy development, education and planning activities. Digital data can be viewed and downloaded through several methods. A Congressional mandate also requires the Service to produce wetlands status and trends reports for the nation and to report to the Congress at periodic intervals.

1.1.2 Is wetland inventory data and information maintained and made accessible to all stakeholders? {1.1.2} KRA 1.1.ii	A - Yes

1.1.2 Additional information:

Digital data from the inventory is both viewable and downable using a variety of methods. In July 2009 the Secretary of the Interior announced the adoption of a Wetlands Mapping Standard that provides minimum requirements and guidelines for wetlands mapping efforts. The objective of the Federal Geographic Data Committee's (FGDC) Wetlands Mapping Standard is to support the accurate mapping and classification of wetlands while ensuring mechanisms for their revision and update. Use of the standard will help to paint a more complete and accurate picture of wetland resources in the United States. In developing this mapping standard, an effort was made to identify and accommodate technology and map-scale enhancements that will ensure its long-term usability and minimize the need for revisions and updates. The new standard accommodates the increasingly important need for consistency and for a wetlands mapping standard that everyone can use to map and share wetlands data in a digital format. It is highly desirable to be able to reprocess wetlands data from the Service's Wetland Database to support multiple mapping applications and digital products. It is also important for wetland data to be compatible/complementary with other water data, such as the features represented in the National Hydrography Dataset (NHD), so that wetlands can be considered in a more holistic environmental context, whether at the watershed, ecosystem, or regional level. The goal of the Federal Geographic Data Committees Standard is to improve the overall quality and consistency of new wetland data added to the FWS wetlands data layer. The FGDC Standard is designed to direct the current and future digital mapping of wetlands. The new standard will allow mapping and efficient input of data into the Service's National Wetlands Inventory geodatabase and facilitate mapping layers that can be used across geopolitical and watershed boundaries. The new standard will support future national wetlands assessment efforts.

1.1.3 Has the condition* of wetlands in your country, overall, changed since the previous triennium?{1.1.3 & 1.1.4} a) Ramsar Sites b) wetlands generally Please comment on the nature of the information on which your answer is based in the green free- text box below. If there is a difference between inland and coastal wetland situations, please describe. If you are able to, please comment on what are the principal driver(s) of the change(s). * "Condition" corresponds to ecological character, as defined by the Convention	P - Status improved P - Status improved
1.1.3 a) Additional information:	
1.1.3 b) Additional information: The national goal of no net loss of wetlands remains a daunting challenge but improvements in how they are conserved are in place and underway. Conservation of wetlands is a continuous, dynamic process. In February 2009, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration published Status and Trends of Wetlands, which noted an overall gain in freshwater wetlands from 1998 to 2004 however, at the same time reported an overall gain in fresh water wetland acreage the new report documents a loss of coastal wetlands in the eastern United States. The report, Status and Trends of Wetlands in the Coastal Watersheds of the Eastern United States, shows a loss of 59,000 acres each year in the coastal watersheds of the Great Lakes, Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico from 1998 to 2004. This report shows the nation's needs to continue expanding the effort to conserve and rebuild valuable coastal wetlands. One reason wetland loss is concentrated in coastal watersheds is the large numbers of people living there; more than half of the nation's population lives in coastal counties in densities five times greater than inland counties. The building of roads, homes and businesses have accelerated wetlands loss, particularly along the Gulf of Mexico. Wetland restoration is also more difficult in coastal areas where land values are high and factors such as storms and large expanses of soft muddy ground hamper restoration efforts.	

Additional information on any other aspects of Strategy 1.1 implementation: Roadmap for Restoring Ecosystem Resiliency and Sustainability [CEQ March 2010] Louisiana's wetlands includes nearly 3.4 million acres of swamp and marsh that stretch east of New Orleans to the Texas Border. This coastal tract also is home to thousands of animal and plant species, as well as human communities and vast industrial holdings. But these wetlands are disappearing at a high rate and are threatened by sea level rise, storm damage and subsidence. Wetland loss has resulted from alteration in hydrology leading to changes in salinity and flooding levels. These changes cause vegetation diebacks and lead to the collapse of the marsh substrate, turning coastal wetlands into open water. Substrate subsidence and sea-level rise compounds the impacts of natural forces, such as tropical storms and hurricanes. Storms erode the marsh and storm surges push salt water into fresh marshes, killing vegetation. Subsidence was historically counteracted with the accretion of sediments brought to the coastal marshes through annual flooding of the Mississippi River and organic accumulation through continued growth and deposition of vegetated material. Sediment starvation has resulted from flood protection and navigation activities that divert sediments and water. The U.S. Geological Survey estimates that if present trends continue, the state will have lost 2,400 square miles of land between 1932 and 2050. By 2050, without any further restoration action, scientists believe that one third of coastal Louisiana will have vanished into the Gulf of Mexico. Louisiana currently experiences about 90 percent of the total coastal wetlands loss in the continental United States. Bold and decisive action is needed to curtail the rate of wetland loss and barrier island erosion in the area and to restore some of these lost features and ecosystem services. In 2009 President Obama established the Louisiana-Mississippi Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Working Group to coordinate Federal actions among the various agencies, working groups and task forces working within the region, and to work with the States to develop a shared long-term Vision for the region. In March 2010 CEQ released a roadmap for restoring ecosystem resiliency and sustainability to Coastal Louisiana and Mississippi through a broader, more comprehensive approach that establishes joint Federal-State priorities and implements projects on the basis of both the best science available and the critical need of the region to develop multiple lines of defense against storms, floods, and land loss. The Roadmap is intended to guide the immediate near-term actions to be undertaken by the Working Group. In implementing the Roadmap, the Working Group will take action, in cooperation with Federal and State entities and affected stakeholders, to cut across and coordinate among the program- or issue-specific stovepipes common to the Federal Government, emphasizing agencies' enhanced commitment to collaborative and interdisciplinary solutions both among Federal agencies and with State and local authorities. The Roadmap is intended to complement existing efforts in the region and, operating within existing authorities, to develop an integrated vision and reformed governance structure to catalyze action on certain high priority issues and projects. The Roadmap seeks to stem the rapid rate of ecosystem loss in the region and the negative consequences for the marine and terrestrial environment, national commerce, the maritime industry, energy security, fisheries, and the rich cultural legacy of the Gulf Coast. It recasts river and coastal management priorities so that ecosystem restoration and sustainability are considered on a more equal footing with other priorities such as manmade navigation and structural approaches to flood protection and storm risk reduction. Coastal Louisiana and Mississippi face profound challenges. The degradation of coastal ecosystems (including wetlands and barrier islands) and the services they provide has direct and indirect impacts on the economy, communities, and environment of the region. Future impacts associated with storms, subsidence, and sea level rise will amplify the region's vulnerability. The Plan complements longer-term planning processes already underway.

Beyond the multiple USACE initiatives in the region, Federal agencies also implement restoration and protection actions through a variety of other means. These include the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Gulf of Mexico Program and National Estuary Program, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's

STRATEGY 1.3 Policy, legislation and institutions. *Develop and implement policies, legislation, and practices, including growth and development of appropriate institutions, in all Contracting Parties, to ensure that the wise use provisions of the Convention are being effectively applied.*

1.3.1 Is a National Wetland Policy (or equivalent instrument) in place? {1.2.1} KRA 1.3.i (If "Yes", please give the title and date of the policy in the green text box)	A - Yes

1.3.1 Additional information:

The first legal protection of wetlands came from President Jimmy Carter in 1977. He signed Executive Order 11990 into law requiring Federal government agencies to take steps to avoid impacts to wetland when possible. Despite the passage of numerous laws and the issuance of two presidential executive orders no specific or consistent goal for the nation's wetlands-related efforts existed until 1989. No net loss" is currently the United States government's overall policy goal regarding wetland conservation. No net loss was first adopted as a national goal under George H. W. Bush's administration in 1989. It emphasized three elements: strengthening wetland conservation and acquisition measures, revising the delineation manual and improving and streamlining the wetlands regulatory program. The goal of the policy is to balance wetland loss due to economic development with wetland creation, mitigation, and restorations efforts, so that the total acreage of wetlands in the country does not decrease, but remains constant or increases. To achieve the objective of no net loss, the federal government utilizes several different tools which legally protect wetlands, provide rules and regulations for citizens and corporations interacting with wetlands, and incentives for the preservation and conservation of wetlands. In addition, a 1990 memorandum of agreement between the Department of the Army and EPA, addressing mitigation under the Clean Water Act, states that the Corps will strive to achieve a goal of no overall net loss of wetland functions and values. About 70% of the nation's wetlands are located on private lands, requiring cooperation and active partnerships between government agencies and landholders is an essential component of policy implementation approaches. Subsequently, the Clinton administration expanded the goal to achieve a net increase of 100,000 acres per year by 2005 and the administration of George W. Bush endorsed the no net loss goal in December 2002, when it released a National Wetlands Mitigation Action Plan.

Following the lead of the previous three presidential administrations, President Obama has also pledged his commitment to no net loss. The Obama administration increased funding of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act to ensure no net loss operation. The present administration is working with Congress to amend the Clean Water Act so that isolated wetlands will fall under the Act's protection.

1.3.2 Does the National Wetland Policy (or equivalent instrument) incorporate any 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) targets and actions? {1.2.2}	Z - Not applicable

1.3.2 Additional information: U.S. Wetland Policy and conservation efforts predate WSSD targets and actions. Although the United States developed most of the framework that sustains its wetland policy before WSSD targets were agreed on, United States wetlands policy is coherent with WSSD targets and actions pertaining to wetland protection on a national scale, including coastal areas, the incorporation of improved scientific understanding and enhancement of the efficiency of use through collaborative approaches, including indigenouos and community approaches. The United States uses four main instruments to protect the nation's wetlands. These are: regulatory programs, grant programs, incentive programs and focused planning and implementation.

1.3.3 Have wetland issues been incorporated into other national strategies and planning processes, including:	
a) Poverty eradication strategies	A - Yes
b) Water ressource management and water efficiency plans	A - Yes
c) Coastal and marine resource management plans	A - Yes
d) National forest programmes	A - Yes
e) National strategies for sustainable development	A - Yes
f) National policies or measures on agriculture	A - Yes
g) National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans {1.2.3} KRA 1.3.i	Z - Not applicable

1.3.3 Additional information: Wetland conservation in the United States takes place in the context of environmental quality which includes the social ecological system.The United States Congress established the Council on Environmental Quality within the Executive Office of the President as part of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). In enacting NEPA, Congress recognized that nearly all Federal activities affect the environment in some way and mandated that before Federal agencies make decisions, they must consider the effects of their actions on the quality of the human environment. Under NEPA, CEQ works to balance environmental, economic, and social objectives in pursuit of NEPA's goal of "productive harmony" between humans and the human environment.

1.3.4 Are Strategic Environmental Assessment practices applied when reviewing policies, programmes and plans that may impact upon wetlands? {1.2.5} KRA 1.3.ii	A - Yes

1.3.4 Additional information: National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). NEPA recognizes the critical importance of restoring and maintaining environmental quality to overall welfare, declaring that it is the continuing policy of the Federal Government, in cooperation with State and local governments, and other concerned public and private organizations, to use all practicable means and measures, including financial and technical assistance to foster and promote the general welfare, creating and maintaining conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony. NEPA acknowledges sustainability by recognizing that it is the responsibility of the Federal Government to use all practical means to improve and coordinate federal plans, functions, programs, and resources in order that the Nation may fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations; the social, economic, and requirements of present and future generations. NEPA, requires every federal agency to examine the environmental impacts of proposed major federal actions and to consider reasonable alternatives and cumulative impacts, sharing its analysis with the public for comment, before deciding on action. Because the substantive statute pursuant to which an agency is undertaking a particular action may provide broad discretionary power to agency decision making, NEPA's "procedural" requirements are often the principal, and in some cases the most powerful tool available to citizens for challenging agency action in the courts. NEPA establishes a national policy for the environment and provides for the establishment of a Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). The Chair of CEQ serves as the President's principal environmental policy advisor. CEQ oversees Federal agencies' implementation of NEPA through regulations implementing the procedural provisions of the act and through interpretation of statutory requirements.

1.3.5 For any project development (new buildings, new roads, extractive industry, etc.) that may affect wetlands, are Environmental Impact Assessments made?	A - Yes

1.3.5 Additional information: See above [1.3.4]Three of the most important environmental regulatory mechanisms in the country are not wetland specific, but play key roles in wetland conservation these are; the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (CWA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA), The Rivers and Harbors Act;Farm Bill; These laws have resulted in the (1) regulation of activities undertaken in areas designated as wetlands; (2) acquisition of wetlands through purchase or protective easements that prevent certain activities, such as draining and filling; (3) restoration of damaged wetlands or the creation of new wetlands; and (4) disincentives to altering wetlands or incentives to protect them in their natural states.

1.3.6 Have any amendments to existing legislation been made to reflect Ramsar commitments?	B - No

1.3.6 Additional information: Over 25 federal statutes have been enacted relating to wetlands, although three of the most important regulatory mechanisms are not wetland specific, but play key roles in wetland conservation these are; the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (CWA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Among the most important laws are 1) Migratory Bird Conservation Act; ; 2) The Rivers and Harbors Act; 3) North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA); 4) Farm Bill; 5) Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act; and 6) The Clean Water Act. These laws have resulted in the (1) regulation of activities undertaken in areas designated as wetlands; (2) acquisition of wetlands through purchase or protective easements that prevent certain activities, such as draining and filling; (3) restoration of damaged wetlands or the creation of new wetlands; and (4) disincentives to altering wetlands or incentives to protect them in their natural states. In addition, Presidential Executive Orders (EOs) have played central roles in wetland conservation. EOs are legally binding orders that direct federal agencies in their execution of congressionally established laws and policies. More than $700 million each year is associated with the efforts of federal agencies to protect and restore wetlands. Legislation is updated during the reauthorization process. Most laws that create programs and services must be reviewed and reauthorized by legislative bodies periodically. The process extends a law that covers a specified time period. This process is designed to provide some assurance that programs and services continue to address needs for which they were initially created. The reauthorization process provides opportunities to correct problems with legislatively mandated services and programs that may not have been anticipated when the legislation was passed initiallyas well as emerging needs.

Additional information on any other aspects of Strategy 1.3 implementation: In addition to the regulatory and funding programs the United States has developed several plans focused on special areas of wetland protection. Independent assessments by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) and the General Accounting Office (GAO) provided a critical evaluation of the effectiveness of wetlands compensatory mitigation for authorized losses of wetlands and other waters under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. These analyses and other commentaries highlighted a number of shortfalls and developed a variety of technical, programmatic, and policy recommendations for the Federal agencies, States, and other involved parties. The National Mitigation Action Plan endorses the no net loss goal while outlining specific action items that address the concerns of the NAS, GAO, and other independent evaluations. Seventeen actions with various agency leads address areas of concern including data collection and availability, clarifying performance standards, improving accountability, and integrating mitigation into the watershed approach are identified. The plan addresses the shortcomings of the traditional case by case approach; recognizes the importance of the landscape context and the ecological needs of the watershed as well as cumulative effects. The primary purpose of this Action Plan is to build upon the achievement of the goal of no net loss by undertaking a series of actions to improve the ecological performance and results of wetlands compensatory mitigation under the Clean Water Act and related programs. These actions are expected to ensure effective restoration and protection of the functions and values of the Nation's wetlands consistent with the goals of the nation's legal framework.

STRATEGY 1.4: Cross-sectoral recognition of wetland services. *Increase recognition of and attention in decision-making to the significance of wetlands for reasons of biodiversity conservation,*

water supply, coastal protection, integrated coastal zone management, flood defence, climate change mitigation and/or adaptation, food security, poverty eradication, tourism, cultural heritage, and scientific research, by developing and disseminating methodologies to achieve wise use of wetlands.

1.4.1 Has an assessment been conducted of the ecosystem benefits/services provided by Ramsar Sites? {1.3.1} KRA 1.4.ii	A - Yes
1.4.1 Additional information:	

1.4.2 Have wetland programmes and/or projects that contribute to poverty alleviation objectives and/or food and water security plans been implemented? {1.3.2} KRA 1.4.i	A - Yes
1.4.2 Additional information: The Everglades restoration is a case in point: A 2010 study by Mather Economics revealed that investment in Everglades's restoration documents that restoration is economically viable as well as ecologically desirable. The study demonstrates a four-to-one economic benefit for ever dollar invested in restoration projects. Over the last three years, Everglades's restoration projects have generated 10,500 jobs, 22,000 short- to mid-term jobs on the restoration itself, and more than 442,000 jobs are expected to be created over the next several decades in tourism, real estate and commercial and recreational fishing industries.	

1.4.3 Has national action been taken to apply the guiding principles on cultural values of wetlands (Resolutions VIII.19 and IX.21)? {1.3.4} KRA 1.4.iii	A - Yes
1.4.3 Additional information: Wetland conservation in the United States takes place in the context of environmental quality so cultural values are key criteria for the conservation of many wetlands and in other cases conservation arises from local efforts that reflect local values and concerns for the conservation of social and cultural landmarks.	

1.4.4 Have socio-economic and cultural values of wetlands been included in the management planning for Ramsar Sites and other wetlands? {4.1.5} KRA 1.4.iii	A - Yes
1.4.4 Additional information (if "Yes" or "Partly", please indicate, if known, how many Ramsar Sites and their names): The Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 provides planning guidance to develop comprehensive conservation plans that include the cultural values of the managed unit. Furthermore, the National Wildlife Refuge System Volunteer and Community Partnerships Act of 1998 authorizes partnerships with organizations that promote the conservation of cultural and historical resources of a refuge and encourages the use of refuges for outdoor classroom opportunities that include curricula on understanding and protecting cultural and historical resources. More than 12,000 cultural resources have been identified on Service lands.	

Additional information on any other aspects of Strategy 1.4 implementation:

STRATEGY 1.5 Recognition of the role of the Convention. *Raise the profile of the Convention by highlighting its capacity as a unique mechanism for wetland ecosystem management at all levels;*

promote the usefulness of the Convention as a possible implementation mechanism to meet the goals and targets of other global conventions and processes

1.5.1 Have you taken steps to ensure that your national focal points for other environmental conventions are contributing to the application of Ramsar Convention implementation mechanisms? KRA 1.5.i	A - Yes
1.5.1 Additional information: Ramsar issues in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are administered by the Division of International Conservation which is responsible for implementation of the Western Hemisphere Convention and the Cartagena Convention and SPAW Protocol. The Division currently chairs the Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative (WHMSI) which is a regional coordination tool as well as the Canada, Mexico, United States Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Management.	

1.5.2 Have you brought the "Changwon Declaration" (Resolution X.3) to the attention of your: a. head of state b. parliament c. private sector d. civil society	B - No B - No B - No B - No
1.5.2 Additional information:	

1.5.3 Has the "Changwon Declaration" been used to inform the positions of your national delegations to other external processes (such as the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, UN agencies, multilateral environmental agreements, and the World Water Forum)?	B - No
1.5.3 Additional information:	

1.5.4 Have you translated and disseminated the "Changwon Declaration" into local languages relevant for your country?	Z - Not applicable
1.5.4 Additional information:	

Additional information on any other aspects of Strategy 1.5 implementation:

STRATEGY 1.6 Science-based management of wetlands. *Promote successful implementation of the wise use concept by ensuring that national policies and wetland management plans are based on the best available scientific knowledge, including technical and traditional knowledge.*

1.6.1 Has research to inform wetland policies and plans been undertaken in your country on: a. agriculture-wetland interactions b. climate change c. valuation of ecosystem services KRA 1.6.i	 A - Yes A - Yes A - Yes

1.6.1 Additional information: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Refuge System relies on science to inform its actions. For example, bird-banding studies in the early 20th century contributed to an understanding of migratory patterns. In response to a dramatic continental decline of waterfowl populations, the Refuge System used scientific information to inform a shift to a new conservation strategy based on the creation and management of a series of connected migratory habitats. Science is dynamic and continually changing in light of new data, field methods and analytical techniques. The evolution of conservation biology has introduced concepts such as landscape ecology, biodiversity, ecosystem health, ecological function and sustainability. The Refuge System has integrated these ideas into its policies and practices, testing their validity and adaptively applying the resulting information to refine habitat and wildlife population management decisions. Since the Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 and publication of Fulfilling the Promise in 1999, the Service has outlined and implemented strategies to accomplish the wildlife and habitat goals set before the Refuge System. In the intervening time the Refuge System has learned to better appreciate adaptive management, become more aware of global climate change, and recognized the need to address conservation at multiple spatial scales. The Refuge System has long been a leader in fish and wildlife conservation; ecosystem management is complex but climate change has magnified the challenge. The Service is broadening its management focus to landscape level and is exploring new ways to measure the performance of management practices. This new approach involves the creation of Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCC's) where management, science and shared visions can be blended through collaborative efforts.

1.6.2 Have all wetland management plans been based on sound scientific research, including on potential threats to the wetlands? KRA 1.6.ii	A - Yes

1.6.2 Additional information: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service maintains a tradition of excellence in science. This tradition is sustained by expansion its capacity to acquire, apply, and communicate scientific information and promoting active involvement of the Service and its employees in the larger scientific community as well as by encouraging strengthened partnerships between the Service and scientific organizations, particularly the U.S. Geological Survey.

Additional information on any other aspects of Strategy 1.6 implementation: To ensure the correct application of science the Service and U.S. Geological Survey have developed a national geographic framework for implementing strategic habitat conservation at landscape scales. The framework provides a platform upon which the Service can work with partners to connect project- and site-specific efforts to larger biological goals and outcomes across the continent.

STRATEGY 1.7 Integrated Water Resources Management. *Ensure that policies and implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), applying an ecosystem-based approach, are included in the planning activities in all Contracting Parties and in their decision-making processes, particularly concerning groundwater management, catchment/river basin management, coastal and nearshore marine zone planning and climate change mitigation and/or adaptation activities.*

1.7.1 Has the Convention's water-related guidance (see Resolution IX.1. Annex C) been helpful in informing decision-making related to water resource planning and management? {1.4.1} KRA 1.7.i	C - Partly
1.7.1 Additional information:	

1.7.2 Does your country's water governance and management treat wetlands as natural water infrastructure integral to water resource management at the scale of river basins? KRA 1.7.ii	A - Yes
1.7.2 Additional information: The U.S.Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has long focused on identifying impaired waters and restoring their water quality but now EPA has begun efforts for the protection and conservation of healthy, functioning watersheds, which provide the ecological support system essential for achieving large scale water quality restoration. The challenge is to weave a range of voluntary programs, regulations, and strategies into an effective method of protecting whole geographically-based drainage areas. The watershed approach is a proven tool to deal with non-point discharges and for providing an integrated framework for aligning government and private management and conservation efforts.	

1.7.3 Have Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) expertise and tools been incorporated into catchment/river basin planning and management (see Resolution X.19)? {1.4.2}	A - Yes

1.7.3 Additional information: Education is a core element of the watershed approach and is a required foundation to develop and sustain fruitful collaborative watershed management initiatives.Some eight themes of watershed management are commonly involved in local watershed efforts and frame the discussion of watershed approaches. These are: 1) Increasing public education and awareness; 2) Developing new partnerships and coordinating efforts; 3) Collecting necessary information through monitoring and research; 4) Establishing appropriate plans and priorities; 5). Obtaining funding and technical assistance; 7) . Implementing solutions; 8) Evaluating the results. It is evident that training and education elements are found in each of these themes. Public education is widely recognized as a core component of collaborative watershed management.

1.7.4 Has the Convention's guidance on wetlands and coastal zone management (Annex to Resolution VIII.4) been used/applied in Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) planning and decision-making? {1.4.3}	A - Yes

1.7.4 Additional information: The U.S. participated in the preparation of the Ramsar guidance on ICZM and in fact those guidelines reflect U.S. experience in Coastal management. The Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) was passed in the U.S. in 1972, before the United States became a Party to the Convention. The CZMA provides a formal structure to address the challenges of continued growth and change in coastal areas. Administered by NOAA, the CZMA recognizes that ensuring access to clean water and healthy ecosystems that support a vibrant coastal economy requires effectively integrating science, technology, and public policy. The goals of the CZMA are to preserve, protect, develop, enhance, and restore where possible, the coastal resources. Since the inception of the CZMA, NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management has assisted states with over $1 billion in federal spending to address critical coastal issues, leading to better planned projects that support economic development as well as environmental conservation. It is the only program of its kind to address coastal issues through a comprehensive and integrated approach. By leveraging federal and state matching funds, this program gives states the flexibility to determine local priorities and subsequent initiatives to accommodate their unique coastal challenges and legal framework. .

1.7.5 Has your country established policies or guidelines for enhancing the role of wetlands in mitigation and/or adaptation to climate change? KRA 1.7.iii	D - Planned

1.7.5 Additional information: An unprecedented collaborative effort, federal, state, and tribal partners with input from many other diverse groups from across the nation is ongoing to develop a unified approach that reflects shared principles and science-based practices for reducing the negative impacts of climate change on fish, wildlife, plants, and the natural systems upon which they depend. This effort results from a request by Congress for the development of a national, government wide-strategy to address climate impacts on fish, wildlife, plants and related ecological processes. Five interagency technical teams were formed in March 2011 and charged with developing draft chapters by July 2011. On the marine environment the strategy recognizes the importance of further developing and enhancing marine managed areas (MMAs) and MMA networks as tools for understanding, adapting to, and mitigating climate change effects on fish, wildlife, plants working within the context of Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) or seascapes. The strategy considers the importance of international partnerships for developing adaptation strategies within and across Large Marine Ecosystems (LME's) as part of an ecosystem-seascape-based approach to management. The strategy recognizes that climate change is a global issue needing global solutions and that resource managers entrusted with the stewardship of ecologically important resources at all scales will be required to take key management steps in the face of overwhelming issues to build and strengthen local and regional resilience. Increasing the capacity of resource managers is an important component of the overall response to global climate change. According to the Strategy increasing the capacity of resource managers to build that resilience at all scales is more critical now that it ever was. The Strategy is in its final stages of completion and is expected to be released in May/June 2012.

1.7.6 Has your country formulated plans or projects to sustain and enhance the role of wetlands and water in supporting and maintaining viable farming systems? KRA 1.7.v	A - Yes

1.7.6 Additional information: The Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (1996 Farm Bill). Established by section 334 of the 1996 Farm Bill, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contains programs that create incentives that promote wetland conservation within multiple use landscapes that include productive farming communities. Each Farm Bill since 1985 has included key conservation programs that have dramatically slowed wetland loss to agricultural conversion. Provisions of the1990 Farm Bill prohibits the Secretary of Agriculture from approving any loans to drain, fill, level, or otherwise manipulate a wetland. The Food Security Act of 1985 was authorized to reduce the amount of wetland conversion directly related to agricultural production and included two major wetlands-related provisions; the Swampbuster and the Conservation Reserve Program. The Swampbuster Provision denies federal farm program benefits to farmers who produce a commodity crop on converted wetlands. The Conservation Reserve Program is a voluntary program offering annual rental payments to farmers to protect highly erodible and environmentally sensitive lands, including wetlands, with grass, trees, and other long-term cover. The 1996 Farm Bill extended the program until fiscal year 2002, The Wetlands Reserve Program included in the 1990 Farm Bill, represents one of Agriculture's major programs to restore wetlands. The WRP is a voluntary, incentive-based program in which landowners enroll wetlands previously impacted by agriculture in perpetual, 30-year easements, or in 10-year restoration agreements. Converted wetlands are often flood prone, marginally productive as cropland. WRP provides landowners with the financial and technical assistance to restore these former wetlands on the landscape. The landowner maintains ownership but receive a one-time payment based on an appraisal of the property and in return, keep up the area for the life of the easement. The easement is recorded with the property's deed. Areas accepted in WRP have use restrictions. These areas can only be used for recreational activities such as hunting, fishing, trapping or hiking. The WRP has been tremendously popular among farmers and other private landowners. Of more than 2.45 million acres enrolled in the program, about 80 percent is permanently protected with perpetual easements. In 2010 alone the NRCS worked with more than 1,400 farmers to enroll a one-year record of 272,762 acres. Restoring wetlands on WRP land not only benefits landowners financially but also U.S. taxpayers by reducing the acreage of flood-prone land eligible for subsidized crop insurance and disaster payments. Approximately 26 percent of the nation's WRP acreage is in the highly flood-prone alluvial valleys. Restored wetlands store runoff that otherwise could contribute to downstream flooding. Thus wetlands restored through WRP and other Farm Bill conservation programs benefit downstream riverside communities in addition to farmers and ducks. In August 2011 The Secretary of Agriculture announced that the federal government will provide $100 million in financial assistance from the Wetlands Reserve Program of the Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service to acquire permanent conservation easements from eligible landowners in four Florida counties and to assist with wetland restoration on nearly 24,000 acres of agricultural land in the Northern Everglades Watershed. Farm Bill conservation programs have been instrumental in slowing the loss of wetlands important to waterfowl. The Farm Bill is reauthorized every 5 years so work on the 2012 Farm Bill reauthorization has already started.There are concerns that the funding for the 2012 Farm Bill could be significantly lower than the reauthorization passed in 2008.

Additional information on any other aspects of Strategy 1.7 implementation:

STRATEGY 1.8 Wetland restoration. *Identify priority wetlands and wetland systems where restoration or rehabilitation would be beneficial and yield long-term environmental, social or economic benefits, and implement the necessary measures to recover these sites and systems.*

1.8.1 Have priority sites for wetland restoration been identified? {1.5.1} KRA 1.8.i	A - Yes
1.8.1 Additional information: Large scale restoration efforts are underway to address wetland loss in coastal Louisiana which had increased dramatically during the second half of the twentieth century and worsened due to subsidence and Louisiana's naturally highly dynamic coastal environment, global sea level rise and tropical cyclones. Similar large scale restoration efforts are underway in the Florida Everglades. Several other restoration activities are part of the management activities of various National Wildlife Refuges across the nation. These activities include restoration of hydrology in previously drained wetlands and restoration after fire.	

1.8.2 Have wetland restoration/rehabilitation programmes or projects been implemented? {1.5.1} KRA 1.8.i	A - Yes

1.8.2 Additional information:
The Everglades National Park is one of America's greatest treasures. In addition to being a one-of-a-kind subtropical destination for tourists, this Ramsar and World Heritage Site is a tremendous economic generator for Florida. The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) is an ongoing 30-year plan for large-scale restoration. Restoration efforts continue being implemented in accordance with The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), approved in 2000, with an initial budget of US $8 billion. A total of 232,505 acres, or 60 percent, of estimated lands needed for CERP have been acquired as of September 2010. In Fiscal Year 2010, 130 shoreline acres were acquired to help restore freshwater flows to Biscayne Bay and Biscayne National Park .These strategically located lands will be used for the construction of water quality improvement projects that will bring meaningful environmental benefits to the ecosystem. Lake Okeechobee's ecological health is the best in years. Clear water and flourishing aquatic plants are providing a nursery for fish and other animals, while submerged aquatic vegetation coverage surpassed the lake's target goal. These conditions also enhance recreational opportunities such as fishing that support the regional economy. North of the lake, five hybrid wetland treatment technology sites are being operated and managed for phosphorus load reductions. Also in the Northern Everglades watershed, dispersed water storage on private, public, and tribal lands has been expanded to almost 130,000 acre-feet. Over the last three years, Everglades's restoration projects have generated 10,500 jobs, 22,000 short- to mid-term jobs on the restoration itself, and more than 442,000 jobs are expected to be created over the next several decades in tourism, real estate and commercial and recreational fishing industries. The President's proposed 2011 federal budget included significant funding for Everglades restoration projects that supports continued efforts to restore the habitats that this unique wetland system once supported. In a tough financial environment, the federal government's $263 million request for Everglades funding in Fiscal Year 2011, represents an increase over the appropriations received in FY 2010, demonstrating the administration's continued support for, and commitment to Everglades's restoration. The President's 2012 proposal calls for $271.5 million in federal Everglades expenditures, up $20 million from 2011.

Efforts are underway to restore wetlands at Blackwater Refuge, a designated Ramsar site in Maryland threatened by sea level rise. Blackwater's Comprehensive Conservation Plan calls for restoring the Refuge's wetlands conditions similar to those in the 1930s. To accomplish this goal, a Mid-Chesapeake Bay Marshland Restoration Project has been developed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Maryland Port Administration, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, and the University of Maryland. Dredged material from the approach channels in Chesapeake Bay will be used for rebuilding wetlands. The sediment is recent, clean and possesses the necessary environmental qualities needed for rebuilding wetlands and submerged habitats.

1.8.3 Has Ramsar guidance (Annex to Resolution VIII.16) or equivalent guidance on wetland restoration been used in designing and implementing wetland restoration/ rehabilitation programmes or projects? {1.5.2}	C - Partly

1.8.3 Additional information: Wetland restoration takes place under a complex framework of federal and state laws, local zoning and local needs as a result generalized guidance on restoration is of limited use. Considerable national expertise is available that integrates hydrologic know how with local laws and regulations allowing for comprehensive restoration. In fact, restoration concepts have evolved and now takes place in the context of the landscape, not site by site. The most basic restoration step however, remains restoration of hydrology. Another recent development is that large scale restoration involves high level coordination bodies to align and integrate multi agency efforts and state/federal coordination as well as widespread citizen engagement and participation.

Additional information on any other aspects of Strategy 1.8 implementation:

STRATEGY 1.9 Invasive alien species. *Encourage Contracting Parties to develop a national inventory of invasive alien species that currently and/or potentially impact the ecological character of wetlands, especially Ramsar Sites, and ensure mutual supportiveness between the national inventory and IUCN's Global Register on Invasive Species (GRIS); develop guidance and promote procedures and actions to prevent, control or eradicate such species in wetland systems.*

1.9.1 Does your country have a comprehensive national inventory of invasive alien species that currently or potentially impact the ecological character of wetlands? KRA 1.9.i	B - No

1.9.1 Additional information: Inventories, directories and databases are being developed. Wetlands seem to be especially vulnerable to invasions. Even though ≤6% of the earth's land mass is wetland, 24% (8 of 33) of the world's most invasive plants are wetland species.

1.9.2 Have national invasive species control and management policies or guidelines been established for wetlands? {1.6.1} KRa 1.9.iii	B - No

1.9.2 Additional information: Control of non-native plant or tree species is a component of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife (PFW) program. The PFW program works with private landowners across regions to control and eradicate invasive vegetation in native grasslands, riparian areas, and streams.
Although invasive species control is a priority of many FWS regions and refuge management plans invasive species continue to spread and threaten fish and wildlife resources. Funding provided specifically for invasive species control has led to new and innovative removal techniques and long-term control efforts. Mechanical, cultural, biological, and chemical controls have been used with an interest to minimize chemical applications as much as possible. Vulnerability of natural communities to invasion by non-native plants has been linked to factors such as recent disturbance and high resource availability, suggesting that recently restored habitats may be especially invasible. Invasive Alien Species may be a component and result of climate/environmental change.

Additional information on any other aspects of Strategy 1.9 implementation: In 2011, The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the states will be conducting a groundbreaking survey of the condition of the nation's wetlands, with a report planned for 2013. EPA is collaborating with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to design the National Wetland Condition Assessment to ensure that it effectively complements the FWS Status and Trends reports, which focus on the distribution of wetlands rather than their condition. EPA, states and tribes are coordinating a number of regional pilot projects to test design approaches, field protocols, and indicators for use in the survey. Lessons learned from these pilot projects are informing the final preparations for field and lab manuals, quality assurance, and other aspects of the survey. Development of the NWCA builds on the accomplishments of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and their production of national reports on status and trends in wetland acreage. When taken together, NWCA and the USFWS Wetland Status and Trends (S&T) results will over time be used to measure progress toward attainment of the national goal to increase the quantity and quality of the Nation's wetlands. These complementary assessments can influence how wetlands are managed at local, state, and national scales. Special consideration will be given to the analysis of alien invasive plants during data analysis. The hypothesis is that reported wetland degradation will likely be explained, in part, by the occurrence of alien invasive plants.

STRATEGY 1.10 Private sector. *Promote the involvement of the private sector in the conservation and wise use of wetlands.*

1.10.1 Is the private sector encouraged to apply the Ramsar wise use principle and guidance (Ramsar handbooks for the wise use of wetlands) in its activities and investments concerning wetlands? {4.2.1} KRA 1.10.i	A - Yes
1.10.1 Additional information:	

1.10.2 Has the private sector undertaken activities or actions for the wise and management of: a. Wetlands in general b.Ramsar Sites KRA 1.10.ii	A - Yes A - Yes

1.10.2 Additional information: In the United States non-governmental organization have historically taken a lead role in wetland conservation at national and state levels. Legislation provides for funds that are matched by the private sector for land acquisition or conservation activities. Seventy four percent of the land in the United States is privately owned. To conserve privately owned wetlands the Federal government relies on voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs. The Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act. Passed in 1934, requires waterfowl hunters to purchase duck stamps, the proceeds of which are deposited into the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund to be used to acquire small wetland and pothole areas and rights-of-way providing access to such areas. Ninety-eight cents of every dollar spent on The Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps, often called the Duck' Stamp, goes directly into purchasing habitat for protection in the National Wildlife Refuge System. Since its inception in 1934, the Federal Duck Stamp Program has generated over $700 million used to purchase or lease more than 5.3 million acres of wetland habitat, now protected in the National Wildlife Refuge System including the establishment of National Wildlife Refuges contributing to recovery of bird populations. The USFWS and many state wildlife agencies prioritize wetlands for acquisition and management because of their value for waterfowl. The National Wildlife Refuge System includes nearly 7,000 Waterfowl Production Areas (WPAs) that preserve vital wetlands and grasslands for millions of nesting waterfowl and other wildlife. These WPAs preserve more than 677,000 acres of wetlands nationwide. Incorporated into the refuge system in 1966, nearly 95 percent of WPAs are in the Prairie Pothole Region. This is considered the “duck factory” for North America.

The North American Wetlands Conservation Act of 1989 (NAWCA). NAWCA encourages voluntary public-private partnerships to conserve North American wetlands ecosystems and wetland-dependent migratory birds in support of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan in an effort to increase waterfowl populations. The Act authorizes the Congress to appropriate up to $30 million annually for its implementation. The act is financed, in part, by funds received from the investment of unobligated Federal Aid to Wildlife Restoration Act funds, which are derived from excise taxes on ammunition and sporting arms, handguns, and certain archery equipment, as well as fines, penalties, and forfeitures associated with Migratory Bird Treaty Act violations. Between 50 and 70 percent of the available funds are to be spent on wetlands conservation projects in Canada and Mexico; the remaining funds are to be spent on projects in the United States. Projects are recommended to the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission for funding, and costs are shared with state and private organizations working toward the goal of wetland preservation.

Since 1989, NAWCA has provided an additional source of funds to federal and state agencies to acquire, enhance, and restore an estimated 2.9 million acres of wetlands and associated uplands for birds. NAWCA supports projects in all three countries shortly after the Act was passed. These projects involve long-term protection, restoration, and/or enhancement of wetlands and associated uplands habitats. In Mexico, projects include technical training, environmental education and outreach, organizational infrastructure development, and sustainable-use studies. Funding in FY 2010 was $83.8 million. From September 1990 through March 2011, some 3,850 partners in 1,573 projects have received more than $1.07 billion in grants. Since 1989 NAWCA has provided funds to federal and state agencies in the U.S. to acquire, enhance, and restore more than 2.9 million acres of wetlands. A benefit of the act is its capacity to promote investment in wetland conservation by organizations in Canada and Mexico.

1.10.3 Have awareness-raising materials been made available to enable wetland-friendly consumer choices? KRA 1.10.iii	A - Yes
1.10.3 Additional information: Environmental awareness has increased in the United States through multiple means and media. This is reflected in greater citizen participation in wetland conservation issues as well as in specific wetland conservation and restoration projects. However, much of this activity is dispersed among multiple partners and partnerships and cannot be easily traced. Conservation of wetlands is a highly interlaced activity and much of it is self-organized as well. The activity is fueled by federal funding available to private parties for developing conservation activities at multiple levels.	

Additional information on any other aspects of Strategy 1.10 implementation:

STRATEGY 1.11: Incentive measures. *Promote incentive measures that encourage the application of the wise use provisions of the Convention.*

1.11.1 Have actions been taken to implement incentive measures which encourage the conservation and wise use of wetlands? {4.3.1} KRA 1.11.i	A - Yes
1.11.1 Additional information: To achieve the objective of no net loss, the federal government utilizes several different tools which legally protect wetlands, provides rules and regulations for citizens and corporations interacting with wetlands, and incentives for the preservation and conservation of wetlands. Incentive measures are part of most wetland legislation in the nation.	

1.11.2 Have actions been taken to remove perverse incentive measures which discourage conservation and wise use of wetlands? {4.3.2} KRA 1.11.i	A - Yes
1.11.2 Additional information: Swampbuster is a provision of the Food Security Act of 1985 (P.L. 99-198) that discourages the conversion of wetlands to cropland use. Producers converting a wetland area to cropland lose eligibility for several federal farm program benefits.Federal policies, such as Swampbuster have eliminated incentives and other mechanisms that have made the destruction of wetlands technically and economically feasible. From about 1987 to the present, Federal efforts to restore wetlands have increased. Congress has responded by passing critical wetland conservation and restoration legislation which is now administered by the Department of Agriculture's National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). These programs have slowed down and even reversed the loss. These two programs are the Wetland Conservation Provisions (WC) which was authorized in the 1985 Farm Bill, and the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) which was later authorized in the 1990 Farm Bill.	

Additional information on any other aspects of Strategy 1.11 implementation: Congress has passed laws that 1) protect wetlands through regulation; 2) create economic disincentives to wetland destruction; 3) Created Grant programs that provide incentives and financial assistance to State and local governments, Tribes and private parties to restore, improve, and protect the nation's wetlands. The Food Security Act of 1985 discourages conversion of wetlands to farmland by eliminating most farm program benefits for anyone who produces crops in wetlands converted (drained) after1985 (the date the law was enacted). At the national level, wetland protection is achieved through six broad legislative acts (national laws). These laws not only provide regulatory power but allocate funds for actual conservation as well. Over 25 federal statutes have been enacted relating to wetlands, although three of the most important regulatory mechanisms are not wetland specific, but play key roles in wetland conservation these are; the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (CWA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Among the most important laws are 1) Migratory Bird Conservation Act; ; 2) The Rivers and Harbors Act; 3) North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA); 4) Farm Bill; 5) Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act; and 6) The Clean Water Act. These laws have resulted in the (1) regulation of activities undertaken in areas designated as wetlands; (2) acquisition of wetlands through purchase or protective easements that prevent certain activities, such as draining and filling; (3) restoration of damaged wetlands or the creation of new wetlands; and (4) disincentives to altering wetlands or incentives to protect them in their natural states. In addition, Presidential Executive Orders (EOs) have played central roles in wetland conservation. EOs are legally binding orders that direct federal agencies in their execution of congressionally established laws and policies. More than $700 million each year is associated with the efforts of federal agencies to protect and restore wetlands.

GOAL 2. WETLANDS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE

Note. An optional Annex (Section 4) to this COP11 National Report Format is provided so that a Contracting Party, if it so wishes, can also provide additional information separately on any of its designated Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites).

STRATEGY 2.1 Ramsar Site designation. *Apply the "Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance" (Handbook 14, 3rd edition).*

2.1.1 Have a national strategy and priorities been established for the further designation of Ramsar Sites, using the *Strategic Framework for the Ramsar List*? {2.1.1} KRA 2.1.i	B - No
2.1.1 Additional information: A number of planned or potential designations are under various stages of consideration but there is no strategic or prioritized plan for designation of Ramsar sites because the designation process is not centralized and is based on local initiatives. Designations are supported by actions by the National Ramsar Committtee. Some three applications are in development stage and two others are being discussed.	
2.1.2 Have all required updates of the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands been submitted to the Ramsar Secretariat? {2.2.1} KRA 2.1.ii	C - Partly
2.1.2 Additional information:	
2.1.3 How many Ramsar Site designations in your country have been submitted to the Secretariat but are not yet placed on the List of Wetlands of International Importance? KRA 2.1.iii	0 sites
2.1.3 Additional information:	
2.1.4 If further Ramsar Site designations are planned for the next triennium (2012-2015), please indicate how many sites (otherwise indicate 0) KRA 2.1.iii	-- sites

2.1.4 Additional information (please indicate the anticipated year of designation):
in the United States designations are grassroot-driven. There are is no centralized process for designations which are only promoted and catalyzed by the National Ramsar Committee.The USNRC provides support and advice to initiatives that promote the conservation and wise, sustainable use of domestic and international wetlands. Based on the USNRC's work, there is increased interest in the Ramsar Convention within the United States. Accordingly, with this increased interest and the benefits of Ramsar designation now clearly identified, greater opportunities are developing to designate additional U.S. Ramsar sites and to use Ramsar designation as a non-regulatory means to promote wetland conservation. Small grants have been provided to develop new US Ramsar Designations by assisting wetland organizations in identifying and evaluating potential Ramsar sites locally and regionally; assisting with public meetings and workshops to educate land managers about the Ramsar Convention and the designation process; and assisting with other efforts to designate new Ramsar sites, especially in states or regions that currently are not represented in the Ramsar listing of designated sites.

Additional information on any other aspects of Strategy 2.1 implementation:

STRATEGY 2.2 Ramsar Site information. *Ensure that the Ramsar Sites Information Service . . . is available and enhanced as a tool for guiding the further designation of wetlands for the List of Wetlands of International Importance and for research and assessment, and is effectively managed by the Secretariat.*

2.2.1 Are the Ramsar Sites Information Service and its tools being used in national identification of further Ramsar Sites to designate? {2.2.2} KRA 2.2.ii	A - Yes
2.2.1 Additional information:	

Additional information on any other aspects of Strategy 2.2 implementation:

STRATEGY 2.3 Management planning - new Ramsar Sites. *While recognizing that Ramsar Site designation can act as a stimulus for development of effective site management plans, generally encourage the philosophy that all new Ramsar Sites should have effective management planning in place before designation, as well as resources for implementing such management.*

2.3.1 Have all sites being prepared for Ramsar designation (2.1.2 above) had adequate management planning processes established? KRA 2.3.i	A - Yes

2.3.1 Additional information: Management plans are a core requirement for Ramsar designations. For those Ramsar wetlands that are National Wildlife Refuges comprehensive conservation plans are required by law. The Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 Act includes two fundamental requirements; that the Secretary of the Interior maintain the biological integrity, diversity and environmental health of the Refuge System, and a requirement for preparing a comprehensive conservation plan for each refuge

Additional information on any other aspects of Strategy 2.3 implementation:

STRATEGY 2.4 Ramsar Site ecological character. *Maintain the ecological character of all designated Ramsar Sites, through planning and management.*

2.4.1 How many Ramsar Sites have a management plan? {2.3.2} KRA 2.4.i	All sites
2.4.2 For those Ramsar Sites with a management plan,for how many is the management plan being implemented? KRA 2.4.i	All sites
2.4.3 How many Ramsar Sites have a management plan in preparation? KRA 2.4.i	0 sites
2.4.4 For those Ramsar Sites with a management plan, for how many is the management plan being revised or updated? KRA 2.4.i	sites
2.4.1 – 2.4.4 Additional information: All Ramsar sites have management plans. All Ramsar sites which are National Wildlife Refuges have management plans as required by law and also have permanent staff assigned.	

2.4.5 Do the Ramsar Site management plans establish the maintenance of the ecological character as a management objective? KRA 2.4.ii	A - Yes
2.4.5 Additional information: The conservation of ecological character is a requirement of the Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997.	
2.4.6 How many sites have a cross-sectoral management committee? {2.3.3} KRA 2.4.iv	sites
2.4.6 Additional information (If at least "1 site", please name the site(s)):	
2.4.7 For how many sites has an ecological character description been prepared? KRA 2.4.v	sites
2.4.7 Additional information (If at least "1 site", please give the site(s) name and official number): Each Comprehensive Management Plan includes a description of the resource and its ecological character.	

Additional information on any other aspects of Strategy 2.4 implementation:

STRATEGY 2.5 Ramsar Site management effectiveness. *Review all existing Ramsar Sites to determine the effectiveness of management arrangements, in line with the "Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance".*

2.5.1 Have any assessments of Ramsar Site management effectiveness been carried out? {2.3.4} KRA 2.5.i	A - Yes
2.5.1 Additional information (if "Yes" or "Some sites", please indicate the year of assessment and from whom, or from where, the information is available):	

Additional information on any other aspects of Strategy 2.5 implementation:

STRATEGY 2.6 Ramsar Site status. *Monitor the condition of Ramsar Sites and address negative changes in their ecological character, notify the Ramsar Secretariat of changes affecting Ramsar Sites, and apply the Montreux Record, if appropriate, and Ramsar Advisory Mission as tools to address problems.*

2.6.1 Are arrangements in place for the Administrative Authority to be informed of negative human-induced changes or likely changes in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites, pursuant to Article 3.2? {2.4.1} KRA 2.6.i	A - Yes
2.6.1 Additional information (if "Yes" or "Some sites", please summarise the mechanism(s) established):	

2.6.2 Have all cases of negative human-induced change or likely change in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites been reported to the Ramsar Secretariat, pursuant to Article 3.2,? {2.4.2} KRA 2.6.i	A - Yes
2.6.2 Additional information (if "Yes" or "Some cases", please indicate for which Ramsar Sites Article 3.2 reports have been made by the Administrative Authority to the Secretariat, and for which sites such reports of change or likely change have not yet been made):	

2.6.3 If applicable, have actions been taken to address the issues for which Ramsar Sites have been listed on the Montreux Record, including requesting a Ramsar Advisory Mission? {2.4.3} KRA 2.6.ii	A - Yes
2.6.3 Additional information (if "Yes", please indicate the actions taken):	

Additional information on any other aspects of Strategy 2.6 implementation:

STRATEGY 2.7 Management of other internationally important wetlands. *Appropriate management and wise use achieved for those internationally important wetlands that have not yet been formally designated as Ramsar Sites but have been identified through domestic application of the* Strategic Framework *or an equivalent process.*

2.7.1 Has the ecological character of internationally important wetlands not yet designated as Ramsar Sites been maintained? KRA 2.7.i	A - Yes
2.7.1 Additional information:	

Additional information on any other aspects of Strategy 2.7 implementation:

GOAL 3. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

STRATEGY 3.1 Synergies and partnerships with MEAs and IGOs. *Work as partners with international and regional multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and other intergovernmental agencies (IGOs).*

3.1.1 Are mechanisms in place at the national level for collaboration between the Ramsar Administrative Authority and the focal points of other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs)? {3.1.1} KRAs 3.1.i & 3.1.ii	A - Yes
3.1.1 Additional information: Consultative (inter-agency) efforts insure that such collaboration take place as required. Efforts have been made to maintain collaboration with Global Environmental Facility through routine project reviews. Additionally, on March 2011 U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and World Bank President Robert Zoellick signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on behalf of eighteen USG agencies and the World Bank Group amid celebrations marking World Water Day 2011 in Washington D.C. The MOU combines the intellectual capital and technical expertise of the largest-ever alliance of U.S. government agencies with those of the World Bank Group. It enables the parties to collaborate in assisting developing countries' efforts in water security and water quality.This partnership grew out of Secretary Clinton's call to broaden the United States' international collaboration on water issues. The United States is the World Bank's single largest shareholder and one of the largest donors to regional development banks. From 2005 to 2009, the U.S. government invested $3.4 billion dollars in water-related foreign aid.	

3.1.2 Are the national focal points of other MEAs invited to participate in the National Ramsar/Wetland Committee? {3.1.2} KRA KRAs 3.1.i & 3.1.iv	A - Yes
3.1.2 Additional information: The USNRC meetings are open to the public and other interested parties.	

3.1.3 Are mechanisms in place at the national level for collaboration between the Ramsar Administrative Authority and the focal points of UN and other global and regional bodies and agencies (e.g. UNEP, UNDP, WHO, FAO, UNECE, ITTO, etc)? KRA 3.1.iv	A - Yes
3.1.3 Additional information: Although formal mechanisms are not in place interagency meetings are held when necessary. The lead for the coordination with these entities resides with the Department of State.	

3.1.4 [For African Contracting Parties only] Has the Contracting Party participated in the implementation of the wetland programme under NEPAD? {3.1.3} KRA 3.1.iii	---

3.1.4 Additional information:

Additional information on any other aspects of Strategy 3.1 implementation:

STRATEGY 3.2 Regional initiatives. *Support existing regional arrangements under the Convention and promote additional arrangements.*

3.2.1 Has the Contracting Party been involved in the development and implementation of a Regional Initiative under the framework of the Convention? {2.6.1} KRA 3.2.i	A - Yes

3.2.1 Additional information (If "Yes" or "Planned", please indicate the regional initiative(s) and the collaborating countries of each initiative): The United States has taken a leading role in supporting CREHO, the Ramsar Regional Training Center in Panama;The Ramsar Regional Center for Training and Research on Wetlands in the Western Hemisphere(CREHO) promotes the Convention objectives 1, 2 and 3 in general and, specifically, the execution of actions under the Ramsar's Strategic Plan and its Operational Objectives. CREHO's training activities support Ramsar Parties in the Americas.

3.2.2 Has your country provided support to, or participated in, the development of other regional (i.e., covering more than one country) wetland training and research centres? {4.10.1}	A - Yes

3.2.2 Additional information (If "Yes", please indicate the name(s) of the centre(s):

The United States has supported the activities of the The Neotropical Wetlands Training Center (Centro Neotropical de Entrenamiento en Humedales - CNEH). CNEH is a non-governmental organization based in Chile and Peru that promotes and supports wetland conservation and management in the Neotropics.

Additional information on any other aspects of Strategy 3.2 implementation: The Neotropical Center for Wetland Training (CNEH) provide park rangers and other personnel involved in decision-making and management of protected areas with the tools they need, ranging from the general to the specific, according to the needs of each protected area and specifically the wetlands found within them. The goal of this activity is to strengthen human resources in government and non-government institutions for the conservation and adequate management of wetlands in Latin American and Caribbean protected areas. CNEH has undertaken numerous activities at different countries and levels and has published a management manual with the objective of strengthening local and institutional capacities for managing wetlands in Latin American and the Caribbean protected areas.

STRATEGY 3.3 International assistance. *Promote international assistance to support the conservation and wise use of wetlands, while ensuring that environmental safeguards and assessments are an integral component of all development projects that affect wetlands, including foreign and domestic investments.*

3.3.1 [For Contracting Parties with development assistance agencies only ("donor countries")]: Has funding support been provided from the development assistance agency for wetland conservation and management in other countries? {4.5.1} KRA 3.3.i	A - Yes
3.3.1 Additional information (If "Yes", please indicate the countries supported since COP10): The North American Wetlands Conservation Act of 1989 (NAWCA). NAWCA encourages voluntary public-private partnerships to conserve North American wetlands ecosystems and wetland-dependent migratory birds in support of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan in an effort to increase waterfowl populations. The Act authorizes the Congress to appropriate up to $30 million annually for its implementation. The act is financed, in part, by funds received from the investment of unobligated Federal Aid to Wildlife Restoration Act funds, which are derived from excise taxes on ammunition and sporting arms, handguns, and certain archery equipment, as well as fines, penalties, and forfeitures associated with Migratory Bird Treaty Act violations. Between 50 and 70 percent of the available funds are to be spent on wetlands conservation projects in Canada and Mexico; the remaining funds are to be spent on projects in the United States. Projects are recommended to the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission for funding, and costs are shared with state and private organizations working toward the goal of wetland preservation.	

3.3.2 [For Contracting Parties with development assistance agencies only ("donor countries")]: Have environmental safeguards and assessments been included in development proposals proposed by your development assistance agency? KRA 3.3.ii	A - Yes
3.3.2 Additional information: The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) recognizes the critical importance of restoring and maintaining environmental quality to overall welfare, declaring that it is the continuing policy of the Federal Government, in cooperation with State and local governments, and other concerned public and private organizations, to use all practicable means and measures, including financial and technical assistance to foster and promote the general welfare, creating and maintaining conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony. NEPA, requires every federal agency to examine the environmental impacts of proposed major federal actions and to consider reasonable alternatives and cumulative impacts, sharing its analysis with the public for comment, before deciding on action. NEPA is applicable domestically and internationally. Actions abroad by federal government agencies must comply with NEPA.	

3.3.3 [For Contracting Parties that have received development assistance only ("recipient countries")]: Has funding support been received from development assistance agencies specifically for in-country wetland conservation and management? {4.5.2}	Z - Not applicable
3.3.3 Additional information (If "Yes", please indicate from which countries/agencies since COP10):	

Additional information on any other aspects of Strategy 3.3 implementation:

STRATEGY 3.4 Sharing information and expertise. *Promote the sharing of expertise and information concerning the conservation and wise use of wetlands.*

3.4.1 Have networks, including twinning arrangements, been established, nationally or internationally, for knowledge sharing and training for wetlands that share common features? {3.2.1}	A - Yes
3.4.1 Additional information (If "Yes" or "Partly", please indicate the networks and wetlands involved):	

3.4.2 Has information about your country's wetlands and/or Ramsar Sites and their status been made publicly available (e.g., through publications or a website)? {3.2.2}	A - Yes
3.4.2 Additional information: Information is available through both publications and a web site hosted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.	

3.4.3 Has information about your country's wetlands and/or Ramsar Sites been transmitted to the Ramsar Secretariat for dissemination? KRA 3.4.ii	A - Yes
3.4.3 Additional information:	

Additional information on any other aspects of Strategy 3.4 implementation:

STRATEGY 3.5 Shared wetlands, river basins and migratory species. *Promote inventory and cooperation for the management of shared wetlands and hydrological basins, including cooperative monitoring and management of shared wetland-dependent species.*

3.5.1 Have all transboundary/shared wetland systems been identified? {2.5.1} KRA 3.5.i	A - Yes

3.5.1 Additional information:

3.5.2 Is effective cooperative management in place for shared wetland systems (for example, in shared river basins and coastal zones)? {2.5.2} KRA 3.5.ii	A - Yes

3.5.2 Additional information (if "Yes" or "Partly", please indicate for which wetland systems such management is in place): An effective cooperative arrangement is the Canada, Mexico, United States Trilateral Committee where wildlife agencies and non-governmental organizations meet to discuss shared environmental concerns.Canada, Mexico, and the U.S. share a wide array of ecosystems, habitats and species. They are also linked by strong economic, social and cultural ties. To more effectively address priorities of continental significance and boost the concerted efforts of the three countries of the North America bioregion, the Canada/Mexico/U.S. Trilateral Committee of Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management was established in 1995. The Trilateral Committee is headed by the directors of the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Mexico (SEMARNAT).

3.5.3 Does your country participate in regional networks or initiatives for wetland-dependent migratory species? KRA 3.5.iii	A - Yes

3.5.3 Additional information: The United States took a leading role in the development of the Western Hemisphere Migratory Species initiative (WHMSI). This activity was developed as a coordination tool for the conservation of the migratory species of the Western Hemisphere. Its purpose is to strengthen cooperation and communication among States, international initiatives and civil society, and to expand constituencies, awareness and political support. All countries of the Western Hemisphere which are parties to international conventions, treaties and accords regarding which they are committed to the conservation of migratory species. WHMSI is an initiative to assist countries in fulfilling this commitment.

Additional information on any other aspects of Strategy 3.5 implementation: The United States is also a Party to the Cartagena Convention and the SPAW Protocol.

GOAL 4. IMPLEMENTATION CAPACITY

STRATEGY 4.1 CEPA. *Support, and assist in implementing at all levels, where appropriate, the Convention's Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness Programme (Resolution X.8) for promoting the conservation and wise use of wetlands through communication, education, participation awareness (CEPA) and work towards wider awareness of the Convention's goals, mechanisms, and key findings.*

4.1.1 Has/have an Action Plan/Plans for wetland CEPA been established? {4.4.2} KRA 4.1.i	
a) At the national level	C - In progress
b) Sub-national level	---
c) Catchment/basin level	---
d) Local/site level	---
(Even if no CEPA plans have been developed, if broad CEPA objectives for CEPA actions have been established, please indicate this below in the Additional information section below)	
4.1.1 Additional information (if "Yes" or "In progress" to one of the four questions above, please describe the mechanism, and identify if it has involved CEPA NFPs): Environmental Concern, the NGO focal point for CEPA is completing the National CEPA Action Plan.	

4.1.2 How many centres (visitor/interpretation/education) have been established at Ramsar Sites and other wetlands? {4.4.6} KRA 4.1.ii	centres
4.1.2 Additional information (If centres are part of a national or international network, please describe the network(s)):	

4.1.3 Does the Contracting Party:	
a) promote public participation in decision-making with respect to wetland planning and management	A - Yes
b) specifically involve local stakeholders in the selection of new Ramsar Sites and in Ramsar Site management?	A - Yes
{4.1.3} KRA 4.1.iii	
4.1.3 Additional information (if "Yes" or "Partly", please provide information about the ways in which local communities are involved): The designation of Ramsar sites requires letters of endorsement of all stakeholders, including state and local authorities.	

4.1.4 Has an assessment of national and local training needs for the implementation of the Convention been made? {4.10.2} KRAs 4.1.iv & 4.1.viii	---
4.1.4 Additional information:	

4.1.5 How many opportunities for wetland site manager training have been provided since COP10? {4.10.3} KRA 4.1.iv	opportunities
4.1.5 Additional information (including whether the Ramsar Wise Use Handbooks were used in the training): Wetland training takes many forms and takes place at many levels across the nation. Federal agencies regularly organize training on many topics related to wetland regulations, delineation and restoration. However, the private sector and professional societies offer training sessions as well. An example of private sector training is that offered by Environmental Concerns. Since its inception in 1972, Environmental Concern Inc. has put a premium on building the capacity of those in the wetland field (consultants, government, higher education, non-profits) through quality professional development opportunities. Unlike other wetland training centers, Environmental Concern is a working firm engaged in the work of wetlands. EC provides students a unique learning experience presented from the practitioner's perspective. The Wetland Learning Center in St. Michaels, Maryland includes the nation's first wholesale wetland plant nursery – currently growing over 120 different species, and an active restoration department engaged in cutting edge enhancement, restoration and creation initiatives. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife National Conservation Training Center campus in West Virginia offers numerous courses on wetland management during the year. Some courses are offered within the campus at West Virginia and others are held throughout the country. Basic courses provides an overview of wetland ecology, and cover what wetlands are and the ecological conditions lead to wetland development, and what functions wetlands serve in the landscape. Courses discuss regional wetland types, wetland classification, the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI), wetland functional assessment, and wetland restoration This introductory course is delivered in different locations in the country so as to be regionally pertinent. In relation to wetland restoration participants learn to assess wetland functions, develop restoration and enhancement plans, and implement plans on degraded wetlands. The course emphasizes wetland ecology, wildlife needs, enhancement of wetland functions, conceptual design and implementation processes, and monitoring considerations. The course consists of two portions. The first portion is a self-pace workbook to be reviewed prior to attending the on-site portion of the class. The workbook contains readings and exercises on wetland ecology and wildlife principles applicable to different wetland types. The on-site portion provides detailed discussions, field demonstrations, and reinforces the principles covered in the workbook. Depending upon enrollment the course location will be selected to emphasize the following wetland types: bottomland hardwoods, prairie potholes, Carolina bay and flats, depressional wetlands, floodplains, northwest freshwater wetlands, and others. The Society of Wetland Scientists maintains a web page which lists current and forthcoming training opportunities in the nation.	

4.1.6 Do you have an operational National Ramsar/Wetlands Committee (or equivalent body)? {4.8.2}	A - Yes
4.1.6 Additional information (If "Yes", indicate a) its membership; b) its frequency of meetings; and c) what responsibilities the Committee has): The United States National Ramsar Committee (USNRC) is an organization formed to support the goals and objectives of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands within the United States and internationally. The USNRC provides support and advice to initiatives that promote the conservation and wise, sustainable use of domestic and international wetlands. The committee meets several times a year at various locations across the United States.	

4.1.7 Are other communication mechanisms (apart from a national committee) in place to share Ramsar implementation guidelines and other information between the Ramsar Administrative Authority and	
a. Ramsar Sites managers?	A - Yes
b. other MEA national focal points?	---
c. relevant ministries, departments and agencies? {4.4.3} KRA 4.1.vi	---
4.1.7 Additional information (If "Yes" or "Partly", please describe what types of mechanism are in place): The National Ramsar Committee web site is the designated place for sharing Ramsar information and for acting as a clearinghouse for information relevant to wetlands of interest to Ramsar managers.	

4.1.8 Have World Wetlands Day activities, either government and NGO-led or both, been carried out in the country since COP10? {4.4.5}	A - Yes
4.1.8 Additional information: World Wetland Day celebrations take place across the nation as well as abroad in many United States Embassies.	

4.1.9 Have campaigns, programmes, and projects (other than for World Wetlands Day) been carried out since COP10 to raise awareness of the importance of wetlands to people and wildlife and the ecosystem benefits/services provided by wetlands? {4.4.4}	A - Yes
4.1.9 Additional information (including, if support has been provided for the delivery of these and other CEPA activities by other organisations, please indicate this):	

Additional information on any other aspects of Strategy 4.1 implementation:

STRATEGY 4.2 Convention financial capacity. *Provide the financial resources necessary for the Convention's governance, mechanisms and programmes to achieve the expectations of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, within the availability of existing resources and by the effective use of such*

resources; explore and enable options and mechanism for mobilization of new and additional resources for implementation of the Convention.

4.2.1 a) Have Ramsar contributions been paid in full for 2009, 2010, 2011? {4.6.1} KRA 4.2.i	A - Yes
b) If "No" in 4.2.1 a), please clarify what plan is in place to ensure future prompt payment:	

4.2.2 Has any additional financial support been provided through voluntary contributions to non-core funded Convention activities? {4.6.2} KRA 4.2.i	A - Yes
4.2.2 Additional information (If "Yes" please state the amounts, and for which activities): The U.S. Government provides support for the Wetlands for the Future Initiative as well as other Secretariat activities.	

Additional information on any other aspects of Strategy 4.2 implementation:

STRATEGY 4.3 Convention bodies' effectiveness. *Ensure that the Conference of the Contracting Parties, Standing Committee, Scientific and Technical Review Panel, and Secretariat are operating at a high level of efficiency and effectiveness to support the implementation of the Convention.*

4.3.1 Has the Contracting Party used its previous Ramsar National Reports in monitoring its implementation of the Convention? {4.7.1} KRA 4.3.ii []	B - No
4.3.1 Additional information (If "Yes", please indicate how the Reports have been used for monitoring):	

4.3.2 Has the Secretariat been updated on any appointments and changes in Administrative Authority focal points and daily contacts (including CEPA and STRP National Focal Points)? KRA 4.3.i	A - Yes
4.3.2 Additional information:	

Additional information on any other aspects of Strategy 4.3 implementation:

STRATEGY 4.4 Working with IOPs and others. *Maximize the benefits of working with the Convention's International Organization Partners (IOPs*) and others.*

* The IOPs are: BirdLife International, the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature), Wetlands International, and WWF International.

4.4.1 Has your country received assistance from one or more of the Convention's IOPs in its implementation of the Convention? {4.9.1} KRA 4.4.iii	B - No
4.4.1 Additional information (If "Yes" please provide the name(s) of the IOP(s) and the type of assistance provided):	

4.4.2 Has your country provided assistance to one or more of the Convention's IOPs? {4.9.2} KRA 4.4.iii	B - No
4.4.2 Additional information (If "Yes" please provide the name(s) of the IOP(s) and the type of assistance provided):	

Additional information on any other aspects of Strategy 4.4 implementation:

Section 4 (www.ramsar.org/doc/cop11/cop11_nrform_e_sec4.doc) is an optional Annex to the National Report Format to allow any Contracting Party that wishes to do so to provide additional information separately for any or all of its Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites).