

"Wetlands: water, life, and culture"

**8th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)**

Valencia, Spain, 18-26 November 2002

Resolution VIII.21

Defining Ramsar site boundaries more accurately in Ramsar Information Sheets

1. RECALLING that Article 2.5 of the Convention makes provision for site deletions or restrictions and states that “any Contracting Party shall have the right . . . because of its urgent national interests, to delete or restrict the boundaries of wetlands already included by it in the List”, and that Article 4.2 states that “where a Contracting Party in its urgent national interest, deletes or restricts the boundaries of a wetland included in the List, it should as far as possible compensate for any loss of wetland resources, and in particular it should create additional nature reserves for waterfowl and for the protection, either in the same area or elsewhere, of an adequate portion of the original habitat”;
2. RECALLING Resolution VIII.20 on *General guidance for interpreting “urgent national interests” under Article 2.5 of the Convention and considering compensation under Article 4.2* and AFFIRMING that the present Resolution only relates to those cases where urgent national interest under Article 2.5 of the Convention has not been invoked by the Contracting Party concerned;
3. RECALLING that Resolution VII.23 recognized that there are situations other than the urgent national interest provision of Article 2.5 of the Convention text in which Ramsar site boundaries may warrant further definition, for example, where boundaries were erroneously or inaccurately defined at the time of listing;
4. ALSO RECALLING that in Resolution VII.23 the Contracting Parties asked the Standing Committee to develop and propose to the 8th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties a procedure for the review of Ramsar site boundaries for reasons other than urgent national interest without prejudice to other international obligations;
5. AWARE that Article 2.1 of the Convention obliges Contracting Parties to describe precisely and delimit on a map the boundaries of the wetlands designated for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance, and RECALLING Resolution 5.3 which recognized that some wetlands were designated for the List before any criteria or information recording system had been developed under the Convention;
6. ALSO RECALLING that in Resolution VI.13 the Contracting Parties resolved to revise for monitoring purposes the Ramsar site data, consisting of maps and Information Sheet for each designated wetland at least every six years; and
7. NOTING that Resolution VIII.13 has adopted revised guidance on the completion of the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands, including on the provision of maps;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

8. URGES Contracting Parties to make the necessary efforts so that the Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) and map for each listed site provides, as far as possible, an accurate and up to date description of the site, utilizing the guidance on the completion of the RIS adopted by Resolution VIII.13, and RECOGNIZES that this may require an improved description of the boundary of a site in the RIS and in some cases refinement of the mapped site boundary itself;
9. RECOMMENDS to Contracting Parties that refinement of the mapped Ramsar site boundary should only occur where the change is so minor that it does not substantially affect the fundamental objectives for which the site was listed, and:
 - a) the site boundary has been drawn incorrectly and there has been a genuine error; and/or
 - b) the site boundary does not accurately match the description of the boundary as defined in the RIS; and/or
 - c) technology allows for a higher resolution and more accurate definition of the site boundary than was available at the time of Listing;
10. CALLS UPON any Contracting Party that submits to the Bureau an updated description of the boundary of a site in the Ramsar Information Sheet and/or the Ramsar site map, to:
 - a) make any such change clear in its revised RIS and/or on the site map; and
 - b) document reasons for such refinement by referring to the considerations in paragraph 9 of this resolution;
11. INSTRUCES the Ramsar Bureau to bring the content of this Resolution to the attention of any Contracting Party that is proposing to refine the description of the site boundary in a Ramsar Information Sheet and on the Ramsar site map, and to report to the Standing Committee on any such revisions and accompanying documentation provided in response to paragraph 9 (b) of this Resolution; and
12. CALLS upon the Scientific and Technical Review Panel to investigate the inclusion of a core data field in the Ramsar Information Sheet to allow for the insertion of a precise site boundary description and the preparation of guidance about this field for inclusion in the accompanying RIS *Explanatory Notes and Guidelines*, as revised by Resolution VIII.13.