

"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.22

Issues concerning Ramsar sites that cease to fulfil or never fulfilled the Criteria for designation as Wetlands of International Importance

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. NOTING that Resolution VIII.20 provides general guidance for interpreting “urgent national interests” under Article 2.5 of the Convention and for considering compensation under Article 4.2;
3. FURTHER 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;
4. ALSO NOTING that Resolution VIII.21 provides guidance for defining Ramsar site boundaries more accurately in the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS), in order to address situations where boundaries were erroneously or inaccurately defined at the time of listing, and that Resolution VIII.13 provides further guidance for the application and completion of the RIS, including the provision of maps;
5. FURTHER NOTING that at present there is no guidance provided by the Convention to assist Contracting Parties where a Ramsar site ceases to fulfil the Criteria for designation as a Wetland of International Importance, with the exception of Resolution 5.3 which includes as its annex a Review Procedure for sites which did not meet the Criteria at the time of listing; and that no guidance has been provided on situations where part of a site either unavoidably loses the values, functions and attributes for which it was included, or was included in error; and
6. RECOGNIZING that there may be situations where:
 - a) a Ramsar site never met the Criteria for designation as a Wetland of International Importance;

- b) part or all of a Ramsar site unavoidably loses the values, functions and attributes for which it was included, or was included in error; or
- c) a Ramsar site at the time of listing met the criteria but, whilst its values, functions and attributes remain unchanged, it later fails to meet the Criteria because of a change in those Criteria or in the population estimates or parameters which underpin them;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

- 7. PROPOSES that, with regard to such situations, a number of issues require further consideration, covering:
 - a) identification of scenarios in which a listed Ramsar site may cease to fulfil the Criteria for designation as a Wetland of International Importance;
 - b) obligations of Contracting Parties under the Convention and the possible application of compensation measures under Article 4.2; and
 - c) procedures that could be applied should the deletion or restriction of boundaries need to be contemplated in such situations; and
- 8. REQUESTS that the Standing Committee, taking account of the issues in paragraph 7 above, with support from the Ramsar Bureau and International Organization Partners, the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), appropriate legal and other experts, and interested Contracting Parties, develop for consideration and possible adoption at COP9 guidance for Contracting Parties about the issues covered in this Resolution and their relationship to the issues covered by Resolutions VIII.20 and VIII.21.