

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.38

Waterbird population estimates and the identification and designation of Wetlands of International Importance

1. RECOGNIZING that the regular review and updating of estimates of waterbird population sizes is necessary to track the efficacy of measures for the conservation and wise use of waterbird populations, including the establishment of national and international networks of protected sites on migratory waterbird flyways, as called for in the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance* (Resolution VII.11);
2. RECALLING Resolution 5.9, in which the Contracting Parties requested IWRB (now Wetlands International) to provide information on the sizes of waterbird populations as a basis for the application of the Convention's site-selection Criterion 3 (c) (now Criterion 6), and ALSO RECALLING Resolution VI.4, in which they outlined the desired timetable for such updates and requested Wetlands International to bring updated information to each future meeting of the Conference of the Parties;
3. REAFFIRMING the importance of data collected by Wetlands International through its International Waterbird Census for the assessment of wetlands against Criteria 2, 4, 5 and 6 of the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance* (Resolution VII.11);
4. NOTING AGAIN the value of regular waterbird counts at wetlands as an effective means of monitoring aspects of the ecological character of particular sites, especially for the purposes of management planning, environmental impact assessment, and the evaluation of national or regional wetland policies;
5. AWARE of the wide international consultation undertaken by Wetlands International to collate data and information for the third edition of its publication *Waterbird Population Estimates*, prepared for this meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, which brings together the most recent information on the population sizes of waterbirds, as envisaged by Resolution VI.4, and which identifies 1% population thresholds for 1,138 (50%) biogeographic populations of waterbirds, but also AWARE that, despite this, there remain 1,133 populations of waterbirds for which there is no reliable population estimate from which to establish a 1% threshold for the application of Ramsar Criterion 6;
6. WELCOMING BirdLife International's publications *Important Bird Areas and potential Ramsar Sites in Europe* and *Important Bird Areas and potential Ramsar Sites in Africa*, and RECOGNIZING the value of BirdLife International's Important Bird Areas (IBA) programme in assisting Contracting Parties in their identification of potential Wetlands of International Importance;

7. NOTING the publication by BirdLife International in 2000 of the most recent assessment of the status of the world's birds in *Threatened Birds of the World*, which indicated that 158 species of waterbird were globally threatened and that for a further six species of waterbirds data were so deficient that it is not possible to assign conservation status, and RECOGNIZING that this publication provides information in support of the identification and designation of Ramsar sites under Criterion 2; and
8. RECOGNIZING the role of the international Specialist Groups of the Species Survival Commission of IUCN – The World Conservation Union as well as those of Wetlands International in collecting, analysing and interpreting waterbird population data;
9. AWARE of the need for monitoring information on alien, non-native and invasive waterbird populations and hybrid forms, as well as those waterbirds whose populations are rapidly increasing outside their native ranges, so as to inform management responses;
10. FURTHER AWARE of the development of the African/Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Flyways project by Wetlands International, which will enhance the coverage and quality of data underpinning future versions of *Waterbird Population Estimates* and will lead to identification of potential Ramsar sites, by identifying critically important wetlands along migratory waterbird flyways, as well as to an enhanced capacity to survey and monitor them; and
11. DESIRING to promote the application of a consistent global source of information on 1% thresholds for the application of Criterion 6 for designation of Wetlands of International Importance;

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12. WELCOMES the publication of the third edition of *Waterbird Population Estimates* prepared for this meeting of the Conference of the Parties, and CONGRATULATES Wetlands International on the work undertaken to further develop this global and consistent source of data and information of importance for wetland and waterbird conservation and wise use, and for increasing the number of biogeographic populations for which population estimates and 1% thresholds are now available;
13. URGES all Contracting Parties to use appropriate 1% thresholds contained in the third edition of *Waterbird Population Estimates* as the official and consistent basis for their application of Criterion 6 of the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance* for the designation of Ramsar sites during the 2003-2005 triennium;
14. ALSO URGES Contracting Parties to work together to identify and designate coherent flyway-scale networks of Ramsar sites for migratory waterbirds, in line with Action 12.2.2 of the Convention's Strategic Plan 2003-2008, including working cooperatively with the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) through the Joint Work Plan between the Ramsar Convention, CMS and AEWA;

15. FURTHER URGES Contracting Parties to select Ramsar sites for globally threatened waterbirds in implementation of Action 12.2.1 of the Convention's Strategic Plan 2003-2008, noting also the value of selecting Ramsar sites to support conservation strategies for nationally or regionally threatened waterbirds;
16. REQUESTS Wetlands International, with the assistance of the Ramsar Bureau, to make widely available, including in electronic formats, the 3rd edition of *Waterbird Population Estimates* to all Contracting Parties, non-Parties and other organizations involved in the identification and designation of Ramsar sites;
17. REQUESTS Wetlands International to continue to bring an updated edition of *Waterbird Population Estimates* to each future Conference of the Parties, having first undertaken international scientific consultation on its contents, so that the population estimates and 1% thresholds it contains may be used as the basis for the application of Criterion 6 in the succeeding triennium;
18. WELCOMES the intention of Wetlands International to enhance the scope and coverage of future editions of *Waterbird Population Estimates* so as to include all waterbird taxa listed in the glossary to the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance*;
19. ALSO WELCOMES the proposed establishment by Wetlands International of a Global Waterbird Monitoring Steering Committee as a means of focusing the future development of the International Waterbird Census, and in particular its contribution to the strategic development of the Ramsar List, and REQUESTS this Committee, once established, to identify ways and means of increasing the availability of data and information from the IWC to Contracting Parties and others in support of their identification and designation of Ramsar sites;
20. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties and others with relevant data and information to assist Wetlands International and BirdLife International through the continued collection and supply of population data on waterbirds, including globally threatened species and those species identified by BirdLife International in *Threatened Birds of the World* as being data deficient;
21. ENCOURAGES the Species Survival Commission of IUCN and Wetlands International to facilitate the establishment of further Specialist Groups for waterbird taxa where no such expert networks currently exist, so as to assist in the collation and critical interpretation of waterbird population data of value for the application of Criterion 6;
22. ENCOURAGES BirdLife International to make available to Contracting Parties and others information from its Important Bird Areas (IBAs) programme, including its analyses of IBAs and potential Ramsar sites for Europe and Africa, and to consider the preparation of such analyses for other regions;
23. REQUESTS the support of the Global Environment Facility to assist eligible countries in the implementation of the African/Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Flyways project; and

24. URGES Contracting Parties to apply waterbird monitoring data, and analyses drawn from them, when appropriate, as a means of providing objective information for site management planning and the evaluation of national or regional wetland policies.