



STRP The Scientific and Technical Review Panel
of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

Meet our Experts STRP 2013-2015

The Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) is the subsidiary body of the Ramsar Convention that provides scientific and technical guidance to the Conference of the Contracting Parties, the Standing Committee and the Ramsar Secretariat. Its members are appointed every three years by the STRP Oversight Committee and the Standing Committee has overall responsibility for its work (see *modus operandi*, as adopted by Resolution X.9 and adjusted by Resolution XI.18). The STRP develops and implements its work plan for each triennium based on the priority tasks set by the Conference of the Contracting Parties (see Resolution XI. 17). For the 2013-2015 triennium, the STRP is composed by: a Chairperson and a Vice Chairperson; 13 members, including the Vice Chair, appointed in their own right for their expertise on matters relating to wetland conservation and wise use; representatives from the five International Organization Partners (IOPs); invited experts and Observer Organisations. STRP members are assisted in their work by a network of STRP National Focal Points, who advise them directly on STRP matters and provide a liaison between the STRP and the networks of other relevant experts within each of their countries.

STRP Chair



Royal C. Gardner, STRP Chair

Roy is a Professor of Law and Director of the Institute for Biodiversity Law and Policy at Stetson University College of Law in Florida. His teaching and research focus on wetland law and policy, with particular emphasis on biodiversity offsets and the Ramsar Convention. He began working on wetland policy at a national level while at the Pentagon (from 1989-1993) and served on the (U.S.) National Research Council's Committee on Mitigating Wetland Losses. A member of the U.S. delegation to COPs 8 and 9, Roy participated in COP10 as an STRP member and COP11 as an STRP invited expert. He is the former Chair of the U.S. National Ramsar Committee and the recipient of the 2006 National Wetlands Award for education and outreach.

STRP Vice Chair



Christine Prietto, STRP Vice-chair

Christine Prietto is Board Member of the Hunter Wetlands Centre Australia (HWCA), Australia's first dedicated wetlands centre, which is located in Newcastle, NSW. Involvement with HWCA has provided her with significant experience in involving the local community in wetland restoration and management. Christine led the Ramsar listing process for Shortland Wetlands from 2001-2002 and in COP9 accepted the Ramsar Education Award on behalf of HWCA. Since 2001, she has served as Australia's Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) Non-government Focal Point for the Ramsar Convention. She has been involved in drafting and negotiating the passage of the Ramsar Convention's 2002-2008 CEPA programme and more recently the Convention's 2009-2012 CEPA programme. Since 2006, Ms Prietto has served as the thematic lead for CEPA on the STRP.

STRP Members



Cui Lijuan

Professor Cui Lijuan is the director and chief specialist of the Institute of Wetland Research, Chinese Academy of Forestry, with 23 years of professional experience in the field of wetland ecology and environmental science. She is currently interested in wetlands restoration, wetland monitoring and evaluation. She serves as supervisor for doctoral and master candidates. She is the leader of several Chinese national projects and international cooperative projects on wetland conservation and restoration. She is also a member of the Chinese National Wetland Science and Technology Committee, a member of China's National Science and Technology Committee for the Ramsar Convention's implementation and has also acted as an invited expert of the STRP from 2009-2012 and STRP member from 2002-2005.



Guéladio Cissé

Guéladio Cissé is a sanitary engineer, public health and environmental epidemiology researcher at the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute (Swiss TPH) in Basel, Switzerland. He is currently the head of the research group “Ecosystem services, climate and health,” within the Ecosystem Health Sciences Unit of the Epidemiology and Public Health Department. He holds a M.Sc. and a Ph.D. from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL). He has been, from 2001 to 2009, the West Africa Regional Coordinator of the National Centre of Competence in Research North-South (NCCR-North-South), a 12 year Swiss international partnership research programme on sustainable development. For more than 20 years, his field of research has covered mainly environment and health risks assessment in urban areas. His current interests and projects include investigations on the ecosystem health approach, applied to assessments in an integrative way to climate variability and climate change effects, vulnerabilities, adaptation challenges and disaster risk reduction.



Hiromi Yamashita

Hiromi has expertise in social scientific evaluation of wetland restoration projects (especially in citizens’ perceptions of the risks and benefits of tidal flat restorations); decision-making and consensus building for wetland conservation activities and CEPA for adults and decision-makers, as well as for young people. In addition to working on wetland research projects, she conducts practical activities such as taking university students to tidal flats as part of her lectures and has created visual commercials about tidal flats. Her Ph.D. study looked at issues on environmental risk communication, especially in wetland conservation cases where conflict existed. Other interests of Hiromi include: inclusion of local ‘experiential’ knowledge in decision-making and the interface between international conventions and national wetland policy. She currently works at the Graduate School of Environmental Studies, Nagoya University, Japan.



Lars Dinesen

Lars is a dedicated biologist and has worked on biodiversity conservation and use for the last 20 years. He is the Ramsar STRP National Focal Point in the Danish Ministry of Environment. Lars participated in Ramsar COP7, 8 and 11 in Danish and Tanzanian delegations, and he has also been to five CBD COPs since 1997. He works with the implementation of EU Bird and Habitat Directives (Natura 2000), nature assessment and reporting obligations. Lars worked over three years in Tanzania (2000-2004), supporting Ramsar ratification and implementation in the country, including designation of four large-sized Ramsar sites, and he is proud to have found in Tanzania, 10 years earlier, a bird genus new to science. He has worked with wetland (and forest) management planning and monitoring in Europe, including Russia since 1990, and in a few countries in South East Asia. He has dealt with Ramsar site designations in Denmark, the Faroe Islands and in high arctic Greenland.



Matthew McCartney

Matthew is a Principal Researcher with the International Water Management Institute (IWMI). He is a hydrologist, specializing in water resources and wetland and hydro-ecological studies. His experience comes from having participated in a broad range of research and applied projects, often as part of a multi-disciplinary team. His research relates to climate change and water storage, as well as the environmental and health impacts of irrigation schemes, ecosystem services and the use of wetlands for livelihood support. He joined IWMI in 2002 and has been based in IWMI’s office in both South Africa and Ethiopia. In January 2012, he moved to IWMI’s office in Laos PDR.



Matt Walpole

Matt is Head of Science, Economics, Policy and Partnerships at UNEP-WCMC, where he has worked since 2008. An applied ecologist by training (one of his early research projects explored the impacts of tourism in Keoladeo National Park, a Ramsar site in India), Matt joined the conservation NGO sector before moving into the intergovernmental policy arena. Matt’s work at UNEP-WCMC has focused largely on biodiversity and ecosystem service monitoring, indicators, models and assessments. He oversaw the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (BIP), established to improve the development and use of biodiversity indicators at national, regional and global scales in support of MEAs, including the Ramsar Convention. Matt spends much time participating in and promoting ecosystem assessments, including understanding the economic values of ecosystem services, past, present and future, and their impacts on human wellbeing and poverty alleviation. Matt co-ordinated the UK National Ecosystem Assessment and has contributed to a number of other international assessment processes including the CBD’s Third and Fourth Global Biodiversity Outlooks (GBO-3, GBO-4) and UNEP’s Fifth Global Environmental Outlook (GEO-5). He also sits on the Steering Committee of GEO BON, which is helping to develop the Global Wetland Observing System (GWOS).



Pierre Horwitz

Pierre Horwitz has nearly 30 years of experience in wetland management, including the areas of invertebrate ecology, systems ecology, community-based participation approaches, wetlands and human health and together the role of ecosystems in the human condition. He was a founding Co-editor of the international journal Eco-Health, the field in which he works. He is a Professor at Edith Cowan University in south-western Australia, where he focuses on the role of learning and teaching about water and wetlands management and the importance of improving connectivity across sectors to deal with complexity and uncertainty. He looks older now than he did a few years ago.



Randy Milton

Randy Milton is the Manager for the Ecosystems and Habitats Program with the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources and an Adjunct Professor at Acadia University. He has dedicated his career to wetlands and waterbirds since being introduced, while an undergraduate, to the Tantramar Marshes. Delivering the North American Waterfowl Management Plan locally, regionally and internationally is a significant part of his program, serving on Joint Venture working groups and the international Plan Committee. Randy was Canada's STRP National Focal Point (2000-2012) and a member of its Delegation to COPs 7 thru 10, participating in COP11 as an STRP invited expert, and with the STRP since COP7.



Randy Thaman

Randy Thaman is University of South Pacific's (USP) longest serving academic staff member. He received his BA and MA in geography from the University of California, Berkeley, and a Ph.D. from UCLA. Randy has conducted research in most of the USP member countries, with his most recent studies having been on community-based biodiversity conservation in Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Niue, Tuvalu and Kiribati and the floras of Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Tuvalu and a number of islands in Fiji. Over the years countless USP students have worked with him on these projects. Many of these students now hold important positions with government and non-government agencies working in the areas of environmental management and sustainable development throughout the region. His main areas of research interest include: sustainable development, Pacific Island floras, atoll and small-island ecosystems and biodiversity, mangroves and coastal vegetation, marine biodiversity, agroforestry, invasive species, Pacific Island food systems, ethnobiology and traditional environmental knowledge, community-based biodiversity conservation and ecotourism. In March 1997 he was invested as a Member of the Order of Fiji for his contributions to Fiji through his teaching, sport and community service. Most recently, he was awarded Honorary Membership of IUCN at the 2012 World Conservation Congress in Jeju, Korea and was elected as a member of the first Multidisciplinary Expert Panel (MEP) of the recently established Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) in Bonn, Germany.



Reda Fishar

Mohamed Reda Fishar is Professor of Hydrobiology and Director of the Inland water and Aquaculture Branch at the National Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries in Egypt. He has 25 years of professional experience in the field of aquatic ecology. His works involve biodiversity of aquatic habitats, invasive species, ecology and biology of benthic fauna in marine and freshwater ecosystems, as well as policies and strategies for biodiversity and wetlands in Egypt and the Arab region. He is a national and regional expert for Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency and the League of Arab States in wetlands, biodiversity and cross-cutting issues. He is in charge of many projects funded by donor countries and international agencies (e.g., GEF, EU and USAID) for the conservation and monitoring of natural resources in Egypt and North Africa. He has supervised more than 10 M.Sc. and Ph.D. theses and published about 50 scientific articles, book chapters and reports on aquatic biodiversity, the Nile River and wetlands.



Ritesh Kumar

Ritesh is a natural resource economist with the South Asia Programme of Wetlands International. His work centres on application of resource economics-based principles and approaches for conservation and wise use of wetland ecosystems. He has actively contributed to and led several wetland management initiatives in the South Asia region, focusing on application of economic valuation as a tool for decision-making and management planning; integration of wetlands into river basin management; wetlands and climate change adaptation; and sustainable management of agriculture-wetland interactions. Ritesh currently leads a regional programme on wetlands and livelihoods, focused on enhanced recognition of the role of wetlands in water resources management and climate change adaptation.



Stanley Liphadzi

Mbofho Stanley Liphadzi is the Executive Manager for Water-linked Ecosystems in the Water Research Commission (WRC) of South Africa, which focuses on wetlands research (health integrity and restoration of processes, form and functions). Stanley previously worked as a Research Manager for Water-linked Ecosystems in the WRC, and as manager in the Agriculture Research Council in South Africa. He obtained his Ph.D. at the Kansas State University, USA. Stanley was a chairperson of the Science Councils and Statutory Bodies Sector of the National Science and Technology Foundation (NSTF), between 2007 and 2010, and has served in boards of several research institutions. He has published several peer reviewed journal papers, abstracts /proceedings, book chapters and books on natural resource management. He serves as reviewer for a number of international Journals. "I believe in making science and technology relevant and beneficial to mankind—and that development is for the people and not for anything else."

International Organisation Partners' (IOP) Members



Eugenio Barrios, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)

Eugenio obtained a Chemical Engineering degree at the University of Mexico and holds a M.Sc. in Environmental Engineering from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, USA. He has worked for the Mexico National Water Commission; the Institute of Engineering at the National University of Mexico; and as an international consultant for the World Bank, the World Meteorological Organization, the Mekong River Commission and the Government of Panama. With more than 20 years of professional experience, he has a solid background in water resource protection projects (wetlands and water resource management). Since 2004, he has been the Director of the Water Program in WWF Mexico and, currently, he is coordinating the implementation of the national environmental water reserves program in Mexico, aiming to allocate water to all Natural Protected Areas in Mexico (176), including Ramsar wetlands (55), based on e-flow assessments and hydrological balances for wetlands.



Stefano Barchiesi, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

Stefano has been working in the IUCN Water Programme on environmental flows, climate change adaptation, transboundary river basins and water risk for business. He is engaged in action oriented research and project management on nature-based solutions for the sustainable management of water resources. Prior to joining IUCN in April 2008, Stefano worked on implementing environmental management systems for a local government in Italy and was involved in waterbird conservation biology research and education. He holds a Master's equivalent degree (Hons) in Natural Science from the University of Bologna (Italy) and a M.Sc. in Environmental Management and Policy from Lund University (Sweden).



Sonali Senaratna, International Water Management Institute (IWMI)

Sonali has 16 years of experience in natural resource management, livelihoods and poverty-related issues in this context. She has a B.Sc. (Honours) in Biology and an M.Sc. in 'Ecosystems Analysis and Governance,' both from the University of Warwick (UK), and a doctoral degree from Imperial College London (UK). Sonali is a Senior Researcher (Livelihoods) at the International Water Management Institute (IWMI). She is responsible for providing social science perspectives, methodologies and analysis, with a special focus on livelihoods approaches. Her research has included exploring ways of improving livelihoods for communities impacted by hydropower dams and assessing how different interventions may be required in relation to gender, ethnic minorities or poorer households, as well as incorporating livelihoods considerations into participatory community planning processes and using qualitative approaches to assess the impact of irrigation infrastructure on livelihoods options.



Stephan Flink, Wetlands International (WI)

Stephan Flink holds a Dutch Judicium Doctorandus degree (equivalent to M.Sc.) in Biology, specializing in Natural Resource Management and GIS. He has worked at Wetlands International on a diverse range of wetland conservation projects since 2007, gathering, analyzing and providing information for policy making at various scales. Mr. Flink is Wetlands International's focal point for Ramsar Convention-related inventory work and is responsible for the maintenance of the Ramsar Site Information Service. In the past, he has been involved in international projects such as the UNEP-GEF Wings over Wetlands (WoW), Global Avian Influenza Network for Surveillance (GAINS) and the International Waterbird Census programme, creating a bridge and solutions for their IT, ecological and policy needs.



Vicky Jones, BirdLife International

Vicky Jones currently co-ordinates the science element of BirdLife International's evolving global flyways programme and links BirdLife's flyways science work with relevant policy mechanisms. She coordinated BirdLife's scientific/technical input into the Wings Over Wetlands project and helped organise the Global Waterbird Flyways Workshop held in Korea in 2011. Her other waterbird experience includes conservation, research, monitoring and developing a project to restore a coastal fen for waterbirds in Ireland. Vicky has ten years' experience working on endangered bird species recovery, invasive species eradication and bird conservation research, from a variety of countries and she holds a B.Sc. Hons. in Zoology (University of Bristol), an M.Sc. in Conservation Biology (Durrell Institute, University of Kent) and a Ph.D. (University of Cambridge) on endemic bird conservation/ comparative ecology.

Invited Experts



Amiro Perez-Leroux, Neotropical Expert

Amiro is Director of BirdLife International's Americas Secretariat, leading the team since 2009. He has expertise in strategic planning, programme design and management, fundraising, network development, governance, local communities, climate change, etc. He has travelled extensively in Latin America and the Caribbean. He represents BirdLife at the different Ramsar Convention's regional initiatives for the Americas. Amiro started his career as an environmental plant biologist doing research on plant growth, photosynthesis, mineral nutrition and climate change. He joined the world of NGOs in 1994 working for TNC, based in Brussels, Belgium. He joined BirdLife in 1997 in Cambridge, U.K., and then moved to Quito, Ecuador in 2001. Amiro received his B.Sc. in Tropical Biology from the Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. He earned his Ph.D. in Environmental Biology from Essex University, U.K.



Dave Pritchard

Dave is an independent consultant whose association with Ramsar since the 1980s includes several terms on the STRP, 8 COPs, advisory missions, 12 years on a national committee, editing the 4th edition Wise Use Handbooks and receipt of the Wetland Conservation Award. Before becoming independent, he led BirdLife International's involvement in the Convention, as well as undertaking personal initiatives on a variety of policy and technical issues. Dave has been a Director on the governing Boards of Wetlands International, the UK Government's Joint Nature Conservation Committee and two national NGOs. He also co-chairs the Ramsar Culture Working Group and is Chair of the Arts & Environment Network in the UK.



David Stroud

David Stroud is a Senior Ornithologist with the UK's Joint Nature Conservation Committee. He has particularly been involved in conservation of waterbirds and wetlands at international scales, working for many years with Wetlands International, the International Wader Study Group, AEWA, the EU's Birds Directive committees and CMS. He has been involved in the UK's implementation of the Convention since the late 1980s, has been a member of UK delegations to COPs since 1996 (COP6) and a member of the STRP since 2003. David currently chairs AEWA's Technical Committee. Among David's personal ornithological interests are the long-term population study of Greenland White-fronted Geese, a bird which he has studied throughout their world range and which continues to provide insights into the challenges of conserving threatened waterbirds and their wetland habitats.



Max Finlayson

Professor Max Finlayson is a wetland ecologist and a proponent of inter-disciplinary research and management. His interests developed in Australia and extended in Europe, Africa and Asia. He has often spoken and written about climate change and has worked on the inventory, assessment (including risk, vulnerability and environmental impact assessment) and monitoring (including the use of remote sensing) of wetlands, covering water pollution, invasive species and land cover/use change. He is a survivor of the first STRP and Chair from 2002-2005 and has been involved in global assessments of climate change, ecosystems and ecosystem services and water management in agriculture.



Mike Acreman

Mike Acreman is head of hydro-ecology and wetlands at the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, UK, and visiting Professor at UCL, University of London. He has over 25 years research experience. He has led major programmes on wetland hydrology and environmental flows in rivers worldwide. In the UK, he is an advisor to the Environment Agency, Natural England and Thames Water on hydro-ecological issues. Current projects include water requirements of river and wetland ecosystems and impacts of climate change on hydrological functions of wetlands. He worked for IUCN-The World Conservation Union during the 1990s and leads the World Bank panel on Environmental flows.

Ramsar Secretariat Support to STRP



Nick Davidson, Deputy Secretary General

A citizen of the UK, Nick Davidson has been Deputy Secretary General since February 2000, with overall responsibility for the Convention's global development and delivery of scientific, technical and policy guidance and advice. He has a B.Sc. (Hons) in Zoology from the University of Aberdeen, and over 30 years of experience in the ecology, inventory, assessment and conservation of coastal and inland wetlands and the ecology and ecophysiology of migratory waterbirds, with a 1981 Ph.D. from the University of Durham (UK) on that topic. Prior to joining the Secretariat, he worked for the UK's national conservation agencies (Nature Conservancy Council, English Nature, and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee), particularly in coastal wetland inventory and assessment, and then as International Science Coordinator for Wetlands International. He has a longstanding interest in, and strong commitment to, the transfer of environmental science into policy-relevance and decision-making.



Marcela Bonells, Scientific & Technical Support Officer

A Colombian Citizen, Marcela holds a B.A. degree in Political Science from the University of South Florida (USA), and a J.D. degree with a concentration in Environmental Law from Stetson University College of Law (USA). She is fluent in Spanish and English. Marcela gained experience on international environmental and U.S. environmental law issues, particularly wetlands law and policy and biodiversity offsets, as a Biodiversity Fellow and as a Teaching Assistant of International Environmental Law at Stetson. She also worked as a legal intern for U.S. government environmental agencies, like the Environmental Protection Commission of Hillsborough County in Tampa, Florida, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Marcela worked with the Secretariat in summer 2011, preparing an analysis of National Ramsar Committees.