

**14th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands**

**“Wetlands Actions for People and Nature”
Wuhan, China and Geneva, Switzerland, 5-13 November 2022**

Ramsar COP14 Doc.18.21 Rev.1

Note from the Secretariat:

At the resumed session of its 59th meeting, the Standing Committee in Decision SC59/2022-32 accepted the revised draft resolution in document SC59/2022 Doc.24.13 Rev.1 *Waterbird population estimates to support new and existing Ramsar site designations under Ramsar Criterion 6 – use of alternative estimates*, with the removal of the text in square brackets, and agreed to forward it to COP14 for its consideration.

**Draft resolution on waterbird population estimates to support
new and existing Ramsar Site designations under Ramsar Criterion 6
– use of alternative estimates**

Submitted by Australia, in consultation with the Chair of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel

1. RECALLING:
 - i. Resolution V.9: *Application of the Ramsar Criteria for Identifying Wetlands of International Importance*
 - ii. Resolution VI.4: *Adoption of population estimates for operation of the specific criteria based on waterfowl*
 - iii. Resolution VIII.38: *Waterbird population estimates and the identification and designation of Wetlands of International Importance*
 - iv. Resolution X.22: *Promoting international co-operation for the conservation of waterbird flyways;*
 - v. Resolution XIII.20: *Promoting the conservation and wise use of intertidal wetlands and ecologically-associated habitats to the list,*
2. RECOGNIZING the critical importance of waterbirds to the biodiversity and ecological character of wetlands and that Ramsar Criterion 6 facilitates the designation of Ramsar Sites that are internationally important for waterbird conservation;
3. NOTING:
 - i. the effectiveness of Criterion 6 in supporting waterbird conservation depends on availability of scientifically robust estimates of biogeographical population sizes of waterbirds, and
 - ii. the use of inaccurate or out of date population estimates, particularly for species in rapid decline, may undermine the intent of the 1% threshold embedded in Criterion 6;

4. RECOGNIZING the current 'Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance of the Convention on Wetlands' (Ramsar, Iran, 1971), – 2012 Revision, (adopted as Resolution XI.8, Annex 2, Rev. COP13) provides guidance on the application of Criterion 6;
5. RECOGNIZING that measures to enhance the effectiveness of waterbird conservation are relevant to meeting the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework targets under the Convention on Biological Diversity and other international biodiversity conservation agreements;
6. ACKNOWLEDGING the important role of Wetlands International in collating and publishing, at the request of the Conference of the Parties, previous periodic Waterbird Population Estimates and WELCOMING the new Waterbird Populations Portal launched in 2021;
7. ACKNOWLEDGING critical work being undertaken through cooperative arrangements in the world's migratory bird flyways including Conservation Status Reviews undertaken in the African, Eurasian and East Asian-Australasian flyways and the Avian Conservation Assessment and Population Estimates Databases (ACAD), from the Partners in Flight programme and Bird Conservation, RECOGNIZING that such work contributes to the ongoing update of the Waterbird Population Estimates;
8. DEEPLY CONCERNED about ongoing global decline of waterbird populations, notably of migratory waterbird species, and the underpinning loss and degradation of intertidal wetlands as well as other habitats on which waterbirds depend that are essential for supporting them throughout their lifecycles; and
9. ALSO CONCERNED that the Waterbird Population Estimates have not been updated since 2012 due to a lack of funding and there is currently no mechanism in place to ensure that these essential updates are completed in a timely manner;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

10. REAFFIRMS the use of Waterbird Population Estimates to underpin application of Ramsar Criterion 6 as agreed and affirmed under Resolutions VI.4 and VIII.38 and as outlined in the Strategic Framework – 2012 Revision (adopted as Resolution XI.8, Annex 2 (Rev. COP13));
11. AGREES that until the Waterbird Population Estimates are updated with accurate population estimates, alternative data sources may be used by Contracting Parties for the purposes of determining the 1% threshold in the context of applying Ramsar Criterion 6, provided:
 - i. that the biogeographical population of the species concerned is clearly stated for the species as listed in Waterbird Population Estimates available through the Waterbird Populations Portal;
 - ii. that such thresholds should be derived from estimates that are published in the Waterbird Populations Portal, for migratory species, based on Conservation Status Reviews (CSR) produced under the auspices of flyway instruments, or other peer-reviewed assessments for other migratory populations for which CSR-type assessments do not exist as well as non-migratory and endemic populations;
 - iii. that the reasons why a new estimate is considered more appropriate are documented with a clear audit trail to original sources, thus allowing third parties to check any derivation of the estimate;

- iv. ~~that the standard rounding conventions methodology used by Wetlands International for the Waterbirds Population Portal to convert from a biogeographic population estimate size to a 1% population threshold should be used; and finally~~
 - v. ~~that any alternate thresholds used by Parties for Criterion 6 purposes, and their justification, be communicated both to the Secretariat (to maintain a log of such instances), and Wetlands International (to review and include in future updates of the Waterbird Population Estimates presented on the Waterbird Populations Portal);~~
12. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to amend the Strategic Framework – 2012 Revision, (adopted as Resolution XI.8, Annex 2, Rev. COP13) to give effect to paragraph 11, as outlined in Annex 1;
 13. ENCOURAGES Parties to work cooperatively with flyway agreements and partnerships to facilitate regular updates to Waterbird Population Estimates;
 14. ALSO ENCOURAGES Parties to use best available, scientifically robust data, through the process set out in paragraphs 10 and 11, for determining the 1% threshold for Site designations made on the basis of Criterion 6 and for future updates of the Ramsar Information Sheets;
 15. REQUESTS the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) to include in its workplan for the next triennium the preparation of guidance to facilitate appropriate application of this Resolution by Contracting Parties in liaison with the technical and scientific subsidiary bodies of other relevant treaties, such as the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) and the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), as well as the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) and other flyway initiatives;
 16. ~~REQUESTS the Scientific and Technical Review Panel STRP to develop a technical proposal to enable the resourcing and implementing of future timely and comprehensive of both the update process and data collection. The technical proposal will address the process for the future Waterbird Population Estimates updates, in consultation with Contracting Parties, Secretariat, relevant flyway agreements and partnerships, Wetlands International and interested entities. In terms of data collection, the technical proposal will focus on the most biodiverse regions and also address capacity building, technical and scientific cooperation and that this exchange needed to support developing Contracting Parties. The technical proposal, including, with advice from the Secretariat, an outline of funding implications and will be presented to SC63, ahead of a draft resolution for the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties, concerning the arrangements, for future regular updates of the Waterbird Population Estimates Portal.~~

Annex 1

Amendments to the ‘Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)’, – 2012 Revision (adopted as Resolution XI.8, Annex 2, Rev. COP13)

Delete and replace paragraph 90 as follows:

For waterbirds, please use Wetlands International’s Waterbird Population Estimates as the definitive source of information on populations and species taxonomy (see also sections 6.1.5 and 6.1.6 below). (Note that there are only a few differences between the nomenclatures adopted by Waterbird Population Estimates and CITES). The most recent reference source is Waterbird Population Estimates, 5th edition, available in the Waterbird Populations Portal.

Amend paragraph 197 by inserting the new text in italics, as follows:

197. Current estimates of the sizes of all waterbird species’ populations and 1% thresholds for those populations for which there is a reliable population size estimate are also available in Wetland International’s periodic publication Waterbird Population Estimates, available in the Waterbird Populations Portal. If this Criterion is being applied to a waterbird species or population which is not covered in Waterbird Population Estimates, or for which that publication does not provide a 1% threshold *or the threshold provided is considered to be out of date, an alternative source of the population size estimate may be used and details of the source must be provided, both to the Secretariat to and to Wetlands International (to maintain a log of such instances). And to Wetlands International (to review and include in future updates. In doing so, details of the Waterbird Population Estimates) methodology for the estimate, which should be well-founded, are to be provided.*

After paragraph 207 insert a subparagraph as follows:

207(a). An alternative source may also be used where population estimates published in the current Waterbird Population Estimates are considered to be out of date.

Remove the existing hyperlinks and amend paragraph 210 as follows:

International Waterbird Census: Wetlands International, <https://www.wetlands.org/IWC> and the publication *Waterbird Population Estimates* available through the Waterbird Populations Portal <https://wpp.wetlands.org/>.