



CONVENTION ON WETLANDS
CONVENTION SUR LES ZONES HUMIDES
CONVENCIÓN SOBRE LOS HUMEDALES
(Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Ramsar Secretariat Newsletter 1

October 2015

A Quarterly Update to Contracting Parties

OVERVIEW

Welcome to the first issue of a Ramsar Newsletter, an update to be sent to the Ramsar Contracting Parties every three months. This newsletter is intended to share the Ramsar Secretariat's news and activities, news from the Regions and highlights of the upcoming Ramsar meetings and international events. Hopefully this newsletter will be a useful summary for Contracting Parties and we would very much welcome your thoughts and ideas on its format and content, which you can send to ramsar@ramsar.org.

Topics covered in this update

1. Summaries of recent activities
2. Highlights from the Regions
3. Calendar: Upcoming Events | Workshops | Meetings
4. Highlights from the Communications team

1. SUMMARIES OF RECENT MEETINGS

Summary of the JAXA meeting on Global Mangrove Watch

Date & Place: 7 October 2015 | Gland, Switzerland

Ake Rosenquist on behalf of JAXA (Japanese Space Exploration Agency) and the Ramsar Secretariat discussed the potential uses of Mangrove Watch data to monitor the Ramsar Sites as there are around 263 Ramsar Sites with mangroves covering the surface of 27 million ha. Ake Rosenquist offered to generate 20-25 maps covering 20-25 Ramsar sites in areas where mangroves are particularly under threat. It was noted that Global Mangrove Watch data can provide an important contribution to State of the World's Wetlands and Services (SOWWS) by providing findings on large-scale trends in the changes of wetlands (mangroves) globally.

It is expected that Global Mangrove Watch will produce detailed maps of all the mangrove areas of the world by June 2016 as a result of satellite mapping by JAXA and the support of many groups to achieve the complementary analysis on the ground. These will be maps of the extent of mangroves, and also of the changes in mangrove extent over time, from a 2010 global baseline, with a 25 metre resolution. See [here](#) for more details.

Summary of the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit 2015

Date & Place: 25-27 September 2015 | New York, United States

Ramsar Secretariat attendance: Christopher Briggs

The United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda was held from 25 to 27 September 2015, in New York and convened as a high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly. There, UN member states formally adopted 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) that will provide the blueprint for the world's development over the next 15 years. The goals are designed to end poverty and hunger by 2030. Water and wetlands are referenced in at least seven of the SDGs with particular reference to Goals 6, 12, 13, 14 and 15, which are most relevant to the Ramsar Convention's mission with particular relevance for target 6.6 where the Convention has been working on the Indicator for Wetland Extent. Other important meetings in which the SG participated focused on (1) Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support for SDG implementation (MAPS), (2) UNEP and the Green Economy, and (3) the UN Private Sector Forum with Angela Merkel, Mark Zuckerberg and Paul Polman.

Summary of the meeting of an expert group on indicators for the Ramsar Strategic Plan (2016-2024)

Date & Place: 18 September 2015 | Geneva, Switzerland

In response to Contracting Parties' request in COP12 Resolution XII.2, the Secretariat convened a small expert group meeting on 18 September in Geneva, after the meeting of the CBD's Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Indicators in Switzerland to develop options, for improved and additional indicators for the Fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan. Participants included members of the AHTEG, Mission representatives, IOP representatives, as well as representatives of other MEAs and international bodies, with a total of 28 participants. The outcomes of the meeting will be provided to the Standing Committee for its consideration and their use to map out a process and timeline for revising and developing indicators for the 4th Ramsar Strategic plan to be considered at COP13.

Summary of the Informal Gathering UN Watercourses Convention

Date & Place: 16 September 2015 | Paris, France

Ramsar Secretariat attendance: Christopher Briggs

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses (UN Watercourses Convention - UNWC) was concluded in New York in 1997 and entered into force in August 2014, thus creating a global, legally binding framework for inter-state cooperation in water issues. The informal gathering in Paris brought together UNWC Parties, UN organizations, especially the UNECE Water Convention on transboundary water courses as well as specialized agencies, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organisations and academia. The meeting ended with the conclusions that there is a wealth of knowledge and experience in the countries on transboundary water cooperation, which should be better shared, taking into account that there are clear regional differences with regard to needs and resources. The Ramsar Convention declared their willingness to offer support to both transboundary conventions and to enhance exchanges and create greater synergies.

2. HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE REGIONS

ASIA

Events | Workshops | Meetings

Mongolia

From 5 to 9 October, the first national workshop was held in Mongolia for the managers of all the Ramsar Sites, Flyway Network Sites of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) and other important wetlands. The workshop focused on how the existing and emerging threats to wetland ecosystems in Mongolia and identifying management opportunities to address these threats. The training was funded and organized by the Ramsar Regional Center for East Asia, EAAFP, both Ramsar Regional Initiatives and the Mongolian Ornithological Society, among others.

New Ramsar Sites included in the global Ramsar List since COP12

Iraq

Sawa Lake | Site number: 2240 | Area: 500.0 ha

Sawa Lake is a permanent lake located in the western field of the Mesopotamian Plains, near the border with the Western Desert. The lake is unique for the biogeographic region because it is a closed water body in an area of sabkha (salt flat) with no inlet or outlet.

Central Marshes | Site number: 2241 | Area: 219.700,0 ha

Hammar Marsh | Site number: 2242 | Area: 137.700,0 ha

Central Marshes and Hammar Marsh - these two marshes, together with the existing Ramsar Site of Hawizeh Marsh, form the last remnants of the once extensive, lush and richly diverse Mesopotamian Marshlands.

Japan

Hinuma | Site number: 2232 | Area: 935.0 ha

About 6,000 years ago, a rise in sea level on the east coast of Honshu Island formed a cove, and subsequently the narrowing of the cove's entrance with sand from rivers made it into a brackish lake, namely Hinuma.

Yoshigadaira Wetlands | Site number: 2233 | Area: 887.0 ha

Yoshigadaira Wetlands are located in the centre of Honshu Island on the north-east flank of Mount Kusatsu-Shirane, an active volcano that erupted eight times in the 30 years to 2015.

Higashiyoka-higata | Site number: 2234 | Area: 218.0 ha

Higashiyoka-higata is a tidal mudflat at the mouths of Honshoe River and Hattae River on the north shore of the innermost section of Ariake Bay.

Hizen Kashima-higata | Site number: 2235 | Area: 57.0 ha

Hizen Kashima-higata is a tidal mudflat at the mouths of Shiota River and Kashima River on the western shore of the Ariake Bay.

Kuwait

[Mubarak Al-Kabeer Reserve](#) | **Site number: 2239 | Area: 50,948.0 ha**

The Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention is pleased to announce the State of Kuwait as the 169th Contracting Party of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. On the occasion of accession to the Ramsar Convention, and in fulfilment of a key obligation of all Parties, Kuwait announced the designation of the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Reserve onto the List of Wetlands of International Importance.

Oman

[Qurm Nature Reserve](#) | **Site number: 2144 | Area: 106.8 ha**

The Site is internationally important as it supports one of the largest areas of natural mangrove forests along the east coast of the Arabian Peninsula as well as in the Oman Sea ecoregion.

Republic of Korea

[Sumeunmulbaengdui](#) | **Site number: 2225 | Area: 117.5 ha**

Sumeunmulbaengdui is a natural mountainous peat wetland on Halla Mountain or 'Hallasan', a shield volcano on Jeju Island and the largest mountain in the Republic of Korea.

[The Hanbando Wetland](#) | **Site number: 2226 | Area: 191.5 ha**

The Hanbando Wetland is representative of natural riverine wetlands. The water that flows through Hanbando Wetland is collected at a nearby water harvesting plant that supplies the majority of drinking water for locals.

Thailand

[Khao Sam Roi Yot Wetland](#) | **Site number: 2238 | Area: 6,892.0 ha**

Khao Sam Roi Yot Wetland on the Gulf of Thailand is internationally important because of its combination of freshwater marsh and coastal wetlands, which is rare in Thailand.

Viet Nam

[Lang Sen Wetland Reserve](#) | **Site number: 2227 | Area: 4,802.0 ha**

Lang Sen Wetland Reserve is a wetland complex in the “Plain of Reeds” of the Mekong Delta, which comprises a mosaic of seasonally flooded grassland, open swamp, and riverine Melaleuca and mixed forests.

[U Minh Thuong National Park](#) | **Site number: 2228 | Area: 8,038.0 ha**

U Minh Thuong National Park is one of the last remnants of climax peat swamp forest in the biogeographic region, dominated by mixed forests and Melaleuca forests on peat that covers approximately 37% of the Park.

AFRICA

Events| Workshops| Meetings

Mali

The Senior Advisor for Africa, Paul Ouedraogo, facilitated the training workshop of NigerWet and WacoWet national Focal Points on the IPCC's GRADS software to analyze recent climate scenarios of Ramsar Sites. The meeting took place from 12 to 16 October in Bamako, Mali. During the meeting the participants also discussed the draft Operational Guidelines for Ramsar Regional Initiatives.

Mozambique-Angola-South Africa

From 14 to 25 September, the SRA for Africa, Paul Ouedraogo, visited Mozambique, Angola and South Africa in order to:

- Follow up with Mozambique on its National Wetlands Inventory project and advise Government officials how to mainstream wetlands issues within the ongoing review of the Environmental Law and finalize the designation of the Zambezi Delta as Ramsar Site
- Follow up with Angola on its accession to the Convention: meeting with the Secretariat of State for Biodiversity in order to identify the barriers for the country's accession to the Convention and advice as well as train the Biodiversity Directorate staff on the Online version of the RSIS
- Meet with ICLEI in South Africa to work on the draft City Accreditation nomination form and meet with the national focal point on Ramsar Sites update and on the case of the Ndumo Game Reserve Ramsar Site.

Côte d'Ivoire

The Senior Advisor for Africa, Paul Ouedraogo, represented the Ramsar Convention Secretariat at a workshop on « Climate-Agriculture-Forest: Challenges and opportunities for sustainable development in West and Central Africa » in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire from 29 to 30 June 2015 to prepare the side-event on "Efficiency and sustainability of climate and environmental policies in Africa: What are the scientific, political and financial barriers?" scheduled to be held at COP21 in Paris.

Côte d'Ivoire

On 1 July 2015, a shared desire to improve the management of Côte d'Ivoire's wetlands brought together experts from the Ramsar Convention Secretariat, Ministry of Water and Forests, NGOs and the academic community at a seminar held in Abidjan. Almost 20 managers of Ramsar Sites received training to improve the sustainable development of wetlands both through their development and promotion and by defining management approaches. The training was facilitated by the Ramsar Senior Advisor for Africa.

New Ramsar Sites included in the global Ramsar List since COP12

Guinea-Bissau

[The Parc Naturel des Mangroves du Fleuve Cacheu \(PNTC\)](#) | **Site number: 2229 | Area: 88,615.0 ha**

The Parc Naturel des Mangroves du Fleuve Cacheu (PNTC) is an outstanding representative intertidal forested wetland considered as the largest area of mangrove forest in West Africa.

Guinea-Bissau

[The Lagune de Wendu Tcham](#) | **Site number: 2230 | Area: 14,970.2 ha**

The Lagune de Wendu Tcham (Lagoa de Wendu Tcham) is a unique water reservoir fed by many tributaries and surrounded by a series of hills with flat peaks and open valleys. It is the largest freshwater zone in Guinea-Bissau after the Cufada Lagoon.

Madagascar

[The Complexe des lacs Ambondro et Sirave](#) | **Site number: 2224 | Area: 14,481.5 ha**

The Complexe des lacs Ambondro et Sirave features a variety of habitats including dune lakes, mangrove forests, intertidal zones and marshes.

Republic of Congo

[Loubetsi-Nyanga](#) | **Site number: 2221 | Area: 251,151.1 ha**

Characterized by a range of habitats including dryland gallery forests, swamp forests and river bodies, the site is an important biological reserve.

[Leketi-Mbama](#) | **Site number: 2222 | Area: 774,965.0 ha**

The Leketi-Mbama is a unique inland wetland with a mixture of varied habitats including lakes, marshes and floodplains. It supports a wide range of animals including the critically endangered western lowland gorilla.

[Tchikapika-Owando](#) | **Site number: 2223 | Area: 970,165.8 ha**

The Tchikapika-Owando is a biodiversity-rich wetland which supports fish, reptiles, birds, mammals, and invertebrate species and plays an important role in the hydrological regulation of the Congo river basin.

South Africa

[The False Bay Nature Reserve](#) | **Site number: 2219 | Area: 1,542.0 ha**

The False Bay Nature Reserve is a unique area on the Cape Flats, situated between False Bay and Table Bay, consisting of about 50% permanent wetland and 49% terrestrial vegetation including the critically endangered Cape Flats Sand Fynbos and Cape Flats Dune Strandveld and some sand beaches.

Tunisia

[The Réserve Naturelle de Saddine](#) | **Site number: 2220 | Area: 2,610.0 ha**

The Réserve Naturelle de Saddine is a nature reserve composed of forest areas, permanent rivers and seasonal streams.

AMERICAS

Events| Workshops| Meetings

Argentina

The XI meeting of the Regional Initiative for the Conservation and Wise Use of High Andean Wetlands was organized by the Secretariat of Environment and Sustainable Development of Argentina and the Secretariat of Environment of la Rioja Province in Villa Unión, from the 14-18 of September. The Parties agreed a time frame for the submission of the High Andean project to the GEF council in June 2016 and selected FAO as the implementing agency for the project. Parties reviewed the progress on the agreements for improving the criteria under the framework of Regional Initiative (RI) operational guidelines 2013-2015 and made comments and amendments to the draft operational guidelines 2016-2024. Argentina was selected as Coordinator of the new initiative.

Paraguay

The Senior Advisor for the Americas, Maria Rivera, represented the Ramsar Convention at the 6th meeting of the Regional Initiative for the Conservation and wise use of wetlands of La Plata River Basin. The meeting took place from 19 to 24 October in Asunción, Paraguay. During the meeting the participants revised Regional Initiative's action plan and its alignment with Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024 and discussed actions for the development of the Initiative. There was a rich discussion with NGOs (WI, WWF, Alianza Sistema, and Guyra Paraguay) and governmental organizations such as the CIC Plata to agree on actions of mutual interest under the framework of the initiative.

New Ramsar Sites included in the global Ramsar List since COP12

Chile

[Las Salinas de Huentelauquén](#) | **Site number: 2237 | Area: 2,772.0 ha**

Las Salinas de Huentelauquén in the Coquimbo Region which includes the last section of the Choapa River and its extensive estuarine lagoon.

United States

[Chiwaukee Illinois Beach Lake Plain](#) | **Site number: 2243 | Area: 1,584 ha**

This Ramsar Site is located along the south-western shore of Lake Michigan, and features the highest quality coastal dune and swale ecosystem in south-east Wisconsin and north-east Illinois.

Uruguay

[Laguna de Rocha](#) | **Site number: 2236 | Area: 10,933 ha**

This Ramsar Site is entirely within the “Laguna de Rocha Protected Landscape”. It is part of a complex of coastal wetlands on the Atlantic coast, linked to the Atlantic Ocean by a dynamic system of closing and opening sandbars, which contributes to the Site's high productivity and biodiversity

EUROPE

Events| Workshops| Meetings

France

The longest active Ramsar Regional Initiative, the Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative (MedWet), held a Steering Group meeting in Paris 7-9 October in order to prepare for the 12th meeting of the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee, bringing together all 26 Mediterranean countries plus a number of additional MedWet Members to adopt its Framework for Action 2016-2030, based on the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024. The MedWet/Com12 meeting will take place 7-11 February 2016 in Paris, at the “Palais de la Porte dorée”, and include a high-level segment for the Heads of the Ramsar national Administrative Authorities.

Norway

At the request of the Norwegian Ramsar Administrative Authorities (Ministry of Environment and Climate and Environment Agency), a Ramsar Advisory Mission on 1-3 July 2015 looked into the planned high speed road and railway tracks, possibly supposed to cross the Storelva river floodplain with its remaining meanders and oxbows, being part of the Northern Tyrifjord Ramsar Site. The report was published in early September on the Ramsar Website and you can access it [here](#)

Belarus

On 25 August 2015, peatland and climate specialists from Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine (with additional experts from Germany, Latvia and Thailand, including Ramsar’s Focal Point Ms Nirawan Pipitsombat) gathered in Minsk, the capital of Belarus, for a Clima-East EU supported project workshop to share experience in peatland management and greenhouse gas monitoring, to learn about the current state of monitoring methods for peatlands, and to discuss common challenges for the ecosystem-based approach. And the following day, they visited one of the pilot projects of the project – the Sporovsky Ramsar Site. And through their visit, and from the explanations received in the new visitor centre in Visokoje village (established with help of the Global Environment Facility and UNDP), they learned about how a tiny migratory wetland bird (Aquatic Warbler) triggered a project to designate Belarus’s first Ramsar Site Sporovsky Biological Reserve in 1999, restore its wetland breeding habitat, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to replace fossil fuel with wetland biomass for energy production in Belarus.

Romania

The Senior Advisor for Europe, Tobias Salathe, represented the Ramsar Convention Secretariat at the anniversary seminar in Tulcea, Romania to celebrate 25 years of professional management of the Danube delta. The seminar provided a renewed opportunity to address the Delta ecosystem in an integrative way, including the Ukrainian and Moldovan parts of the extensive Delta landscape. The whole area hosts a dozen different Ramsar Sites, the oldest of them being the Ukrainian Danube Plain originally designated in 1976 by the then Soviet Union.

Armenia

A workshop on “Armenia’s Wetlands: Values, Threats and Ways for Action (with Special Emphasis on Khor Virap Marsh Ramsar Site)” took place in October 2015 at the Khosrov Forest State Reserve in Vedi, in the Ararat Region. The workshop was organized to share the outcomes of COP12. Participants from the Ministry of Nature Protection, the Ramsar Secretariat, representatives of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia, educational institutions, WWF Armenia and other environmental NGOs, discussed the implementation of the Ramsar Convention at national and local levels. Tobias Salathe, in his presentation on “Wetland Wise Use

for Sustainable Development” introduced the role of the Ramsar Convention and the new Strategic Plan for Wetlands 2016-2024.

3. CALENDAR

Upcoming Events | Workshops | Meetings

Wetland celebration event in the DPR Korea

Date & Place: 27 October 2015 | Pyongyang, DPR Korea

On 27 October 2015, the Ramsar Secretariat will co-organize a national wetland workshop in Pyongyang (DPR Korea), in collaboration with the National Coordinating Committee for Environment and the Ministry of Land and Environment Protection. Over the past few years, the government has been showing an interest in accession to the Convention and has sent representatives to Standing Committee meetings and the recent 12th Conference of Parties. It is expected that the workshop will be attended by some 100 national and provincial officials with responsibility for the management of wetlands. The overseas participants, including representatives from Hanns Seidel Foundation, IUCN, WWF, and the Ramsar Secretariat will work with them to develop proposals for longer term wetland projects, as well as the country's accession to the Convention.

19th Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP)

Date & Place: 2-6 November 2015 | Gland, Switzerland

The purpose of this first STRP meeting is to welcome the new Panel and to develop a work plan for the 2016-2018 triennium based on the five thematic work areas in alignment with the Fourth Strategic Plan of the Convention and ongoing scientific work in other international processes, such as IPBES, for approval of the Standing Committee at its 51st Meeting (23-27 November 2015).

Ramsar Centre for Eastern Africa (RAMCEA) Meeting

Date & Place: 8 – 11 November 2015 | Kampala, Uganda

RAMCEA is one of the most active African Regional Initiatives working with the Ramsar Convention on wetlands. The members will discuss the achievement of the 2015 workplan and the key regional orientations for the triennium with regards to the last COP12 resolutions. The participants will validate the measures to be taken in the implementation of the regional plan for year 2016.

Workshop to agree the contribution of Earth Observation data to the Wetlands Extent indicator for SDG Goal 6.6

Date & Place: 11-12 November 2015 | Gland, Switzerland

International Water Management Institute (IWMI) is working with the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and other key partners and UNEP with the drafting of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Goal 6.6 Indicator for Wetlands Extent. The plan is that this indicator will be produced in a draft form by December 2015 and then finalised for SDG implementation by April 2016. Earth Observation (EO) techniques have great potential to form part of the Wetland Extent indicator as was highlighted at both the Bonn SDG conference and the Stockholm World Water Week in August. The purpose of this workshop is to consult with a small group of key EO specialists, particularly those who have experience in wetland monitoring, to agree on the EO techniques that should be included in the SDG Wetland Extent indicator.

¹Goal 6.6: By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes.

The 5th Meeting of the Regional Initiative for the Conservation and Wise Use of Mangroves and Coral Reefs

Date & Place: 9-13 November 2015 | San Salvador, El Salvador

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the alignment of the work plan of the regional initiative with the new Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024, the implementation of a regional project and discussion of the proposal of new Guidelines for the operation of regional initiatives 2016-2024 in preparation of the meeting of Ramsar Regional Initiatives that will take place on the 22 November.

Workshop hosted by the Convention Secretariat for the Ramsar Regional Initiatives

Date & Place: 22 November 2015 | Gland, Switzerland

At COP12 in Uruguay, the Parties reiterated their strong support to Ramsar Regional Initiatives and adopted Resolution XII.8. Responding to this Resolution, the Secretariat is preparing to host a workshop to create increased collaboration and information-sharing among the initiatives and the Secretariat. This would be the first workshop for all Ramsar Regional Initiatives, and would ensure a more participatory approach to the development of shared guidelines, and adoption of a common methodology for assessing the Ramsar Regional Initiatives.

Standing Committee 51st Meeting

Date & Place: 23-27 November 2015 | Gland, Switzerland

Ramsar Secretariat attendance: All Ramsar Secretariat staff

In 2015, the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP12) elected a new Standing Committee to oversee Convention affairs until COP13 in 2018. The 51st meeting of the Standing Committee will take place at Secretariat headquarters in Gland, Switzerland, from Monday 23 to Friday 27 November 2015. To access all related documents please click [here](#)

UNFCCC

Date & Place: 30 November to 11 December 2015 | Paris, France

December 11; 9:45 – 12:45: Venue: Pavilion "Climate Generation / Generation Climat" The Ramsar SG, Christopher Briggs is invited to make an official statement together with the President Director General of IRD; France; and the Director of African Climate Policy Center (ACPC), UNECA during the opening ceremony.

December 4; 10:00: Venue: Africa 1 (Africa Pavilion; Paris-Le Bourget). The SRA for Africa, Paul Ouedraogo, will be speaking at the side-event: Climate observing systems, climate information and African development. Venue COP21 Africa pavilion event.

4. HIGHLIGHTS FROM COMMUNICATIONS

CEPA

The CEPA Oversight Panel is being formed for the 2016-2018 triennium. We would like to thank to all the Parties who sent their nominations. We are currently reviewing the submitted forms and the CEPA Panel members will be announced shortly.

As for now, we are delighted to confirm:

- Chris Rostron (WWT) as the IOP representative in the Panel
- Arturo Dominici of the Ramsar Regional Centre for Training and Research in the Western Hemisphere (CREHO) as the Regional Ramsar Centre representative in the Panel

WWD 2016

2016 World Wetlands Day theme announced – “Wetlands for our Future: Sustainable Livelihoods”

The Ramsar Secretariat announced Wetlands for our Future: Sustainable Livelihoods as the theme for World Wetlands Day in 2016. This theme is selected to demonstrate the vital role of wetlands for the future of humanity and specifically their relevance towards achieving the new Sustainable Development Goals. Thanks to the financial support from Danone-Evian, the Secretariat is currently preparing outreach material to support country activities organized to celebrate World Wetlands Day and raise awareness about the value of wetlands for humanity.

Under the proposed ongoing 5 year theme of “Wetlands for our Future”, WWD 2016 zeros in on Sustainable Livelihoods, echoing the inter-relationship between poverty alleviation and ecosystem protection and restoration, as agreed by the SDGs. This is the first of a planned series of pillars within the campaign, which will highlight five key aspects of how wetlands ensure our future.

WEBSITE

1. Current work on website

The Website Action Team, in the Secretariat, is currently working to implement website updates and improvements. [The Library](#) features a new tree of categories, which we hope will help users find relevant documents. The Library is being currently updated.

The Main Menu on the home page has been developed further. The Main Menu now displays all subcategories making it easier for the users to find topics they are looking for.

All sections of the website are being reviewed, updated and crossed referenced with the previous Ramsar website.

2. Downloadable materials – statistics

The six Ramsar Fact Sheets, which can be found here [have been downloaded 5,399 times since November 2014](#), with the two page Fact Sheets on “Wetlands: Why Should I Care” and “Wetlands: A global disappearing act” as the clear leaders in popularity. In both cases, the highest number of downloads was found in the Americas region.

RSIS

As requested by the Parties in Resolution XI.8, streamlining procedures for describing Ramsar Sites at the time of designation and subsequent updates, the Ramsar Secretariat has been working on an offline format for the Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS). The offline RIS form will help Parties on designations and updates such that the National Focal Point can collect data without an internet connection and will also be able to seek inputs from different local compilers

working offline, while keeping control of the final content to be entered into the online RIS. The development is in the final stage, and the offline form will be launched shortly together with more detailed information on how to use it.

PROMOTING RAMSAR SITES IN STAR ALLIANCE AIRPORT LOUNGES

A proposal is underway to promote the Ramsar Sites within selected Star Alliance Lounges. This initiative is within the framework of the ongoing partnership between the Secretariat and Star Alliance Biosphere Connections, dedicated to supporting sustainability issues and environment initiatives. The Airport lounges offer a unique opportunity to show photographs, videos, and interactive displays etc. that will give greater visibility to the Ramsar sites in the country and create greater awareness about this vast network of protected sites around the world.

BOOK OF KNOWLEDGE - WATER, WETLANDS A SOLUTION FOR CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION

In the lead up to the UN Climate Conference COP21 in Paris in December 2015, the Ramsar Secretariat and Danone - Evian, will launch a publication that positions water and wetlands as a solution for climate change mitigation. The Book of Knowledge is titled Water and Climate Change: “How can water have a positive impact on Climate Change”, and the publication is authored by Max Finlayson (member of the STRP), and is based on a synthesis of scientific literature. The publication cites the interconnections between carbon and the water cycle and argues that healthy wetlands store large quantities of carbon and therefore are a natural solution to climate change mitigation. The publication proposes a raft of solutions including the conservation and restoration of wetlands. As part of the launch, a series of leadership dialogues will be held at the *Grand Palais* during COP21 in Paris.

MEDIA OUTREACH

1. A video interview was given by Dr. Christopher Briggs to Green Views TV, about the relationship between businesses, water and wetlands. You can view the video [here](#).

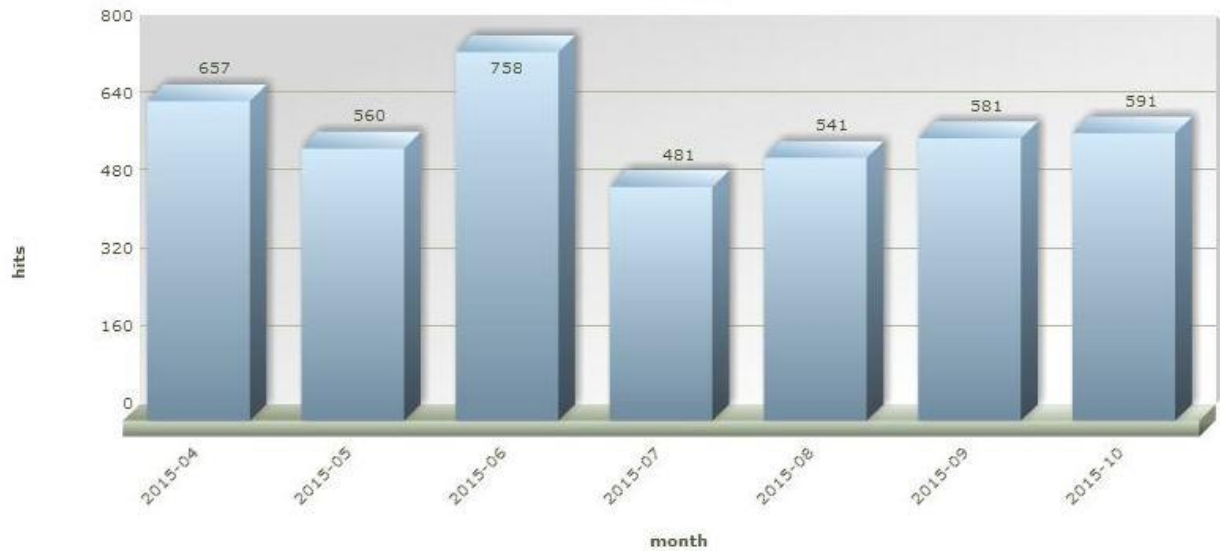
2. Yale Climate Connections (www.yaleclimateconnections.org) featured Dr. Christopher Briggs in a 90-second story about peatlands and climate change. The show airs five days a week on approximately 200 radio stations as well as online via subscription. Here is [the link to](#) the podcast.

3. Two press releases were sent out to international media:

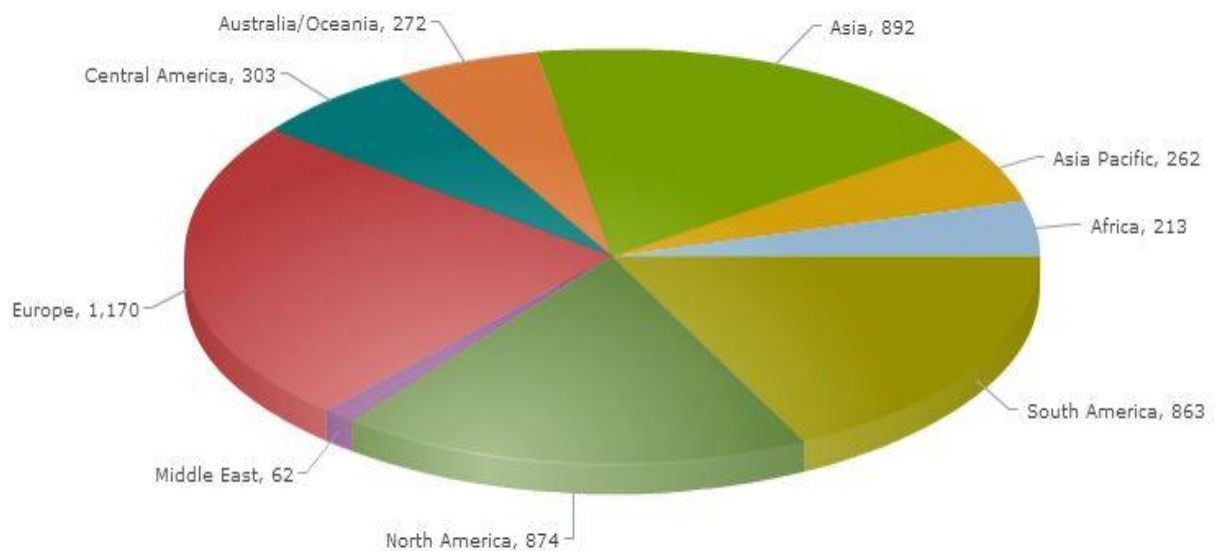
1. The State of Kuwait becomes the 169th Contracting Party to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands
2. The “Garden of Eden” in Iraq now internationally protected as Wetlands of International Importance

4. Ramsar Convention in the News (source Meltwater News, online coverage only)

News related to the Ramsar Convention by month globally (Time period: May – October, 2015)



News related to the Ramsar Convention by world region (Time period: May – October, 2015)



News related to the Ramsar Convention by country (Time period: May – October, 2015)

