

# Wetlands for the Future Fund

Benefitting Wetland Management and Conservation  
in Latin America and the Caribbean



Prepared by:  
María Rivera • Mila Llorens

February 2010



CONVENTION ON WETLANDS  
CONVENTION SUR LES ZONES HUMIDES  
CONVENCIÓN SOBRE LOS HUMEDALES

(Ramsar, Iran, 1971)



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Authors: María Rivera and Mila Llorens

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The support provided by the Fund to Latin American and Caribbean countries in implementing the Convention is invaluable not only in financial terms but also in concrete actions for the management of wetlands.

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## Foreword

The Wetlands for the Future initiative was created by the United States State Department, the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Ramsar Convention Secretariat, dating as far back as 1996 – its objective was, and still is, to promote the implementation of Ramsar’s concept of “wise use” of wetlands in the Western Hemisphere by strengthening the capacity of countries to manage their wetland resources, as well as to help to integrate wetland conservation and management into the development process.

From the assessment of the first ten years of the initiative carried out by the Secretariat in 2006, it was already clear that the support that Wetlands for the Future has provided for the implementation of the wise use concept in the Neotropic region has been extraordinarily fruitful.

Now, twelve years after the initiative began, this publication highlights the contribution that the Fund has made to the on-the-ground implementation of the Convention’s three pillars -- *the wise use of wetlands*, *wetlands of international importance*, and *international cooperation* – as well as to the Ramsar Strategic Plan. It draws upon the outcomes of many successful projects over the past twelve years in the thematic areas of Training & Capacity Building, Awareness-Raising Activities, Documentation, Wetland Management and Tools, Academic and Research, and Networking.

We encourage the Latin American and Caribbean countries to make use of this tool for strengthening their capacity to manage their wetland resources, but we also hope that the experiences reflected here can be helpful for Ramsar practitioners, not only in the Neotropics, but also in other Ramsar regions of the world, as we work together to achieve our mission and objectives at the global level.



Anada Tiéga  
Secretary General  
Ramsar Convention

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## Executive Summary

Since 1996, the Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971), the United States Department of State, and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service have operated the Wetlands for the Future Fund (WFF) initiative to benefit Latin American and Caribbean institutions and individuals through capacity building and training in the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

Ten years after its inception, the Ramsar Secretariat undertook an assessment of the Fund's performance. This assessment highlighted that the Fund implemented 225 projects in 21 of the 26 countries eligible for funding in the region and provided training for 8,217 people.

This publication compiles the lessons learned over the 12-year lifespan of WFF with a selection of projects successfully implemented in each focus area, projects which could be replicated in other countries in the region and more broadly within the worldwide Ramsar family.

Information on these projects can also contribute to the state of knowledge and management of wetlands in the region, since in many cases projects or information on activities in wetlands are not widely disseminated.

Project selection was based on the following criteria: a) that the projects have been successfully completed and have met all the requirements of the operational guidelines, b) that the materials and technical reports produced are of good quality and c) that the projects have contributed to the wise use of wetlands.

The information for this purpose was drawn from the projects through progress reports, final reports and communications and outputs generated by the projects, as well as from the Fund's evaluation document prepared by the Secretariat in 2006. It is worth mentioning that this is only a small sample of many projects that have been equally successful.

The distribution of this document is aimed primarily at decision makers and technical staff of the Ramsar Administrative Authorities in the Americas, other relevant government organizations, Ramsar site managers, NGOs and academic institutions.

Similarly, this new publication highlights the Fund's contribution to the implementation of the objectives of the Convention, particularly to achieve in practice the Wise Use of Wetlands. Thus, it is our sincere hope that beneficiary countries find it useful as a management tool.

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## Introduction

Since 1996, the Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971), together with the United States Department of State and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, have operated the Wetlands for the Future Fund (WFF) initiative for the Western Hemisphere to benefit Latin American and Caribbean institutions and individuals through capacity building and training in the conservation and wise use of wetlands. This activity promotes the concept of “wise use” of wetlands through strengthening the capacity of countries to manage their wetland resources in perpetuity and to integrate wetland conservation and management in the development process.

The assessment undertaken by the Ramsar Secretariat in 2006 on the Fund’s performance during its first ten years of existence showed that the Fund allowed the implementation of 225 projects in 21 of the 26 countries eligible for funding in the region and provided training for 8,217 people. Now after 12 years of their implementation we have considered it important to publicize the most successful projects and to highlight the value and impact of the Fund in implementing the objectives of the Convention in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

For this purpose we have made a review of the projects implemented, the outputs produced and the lessons learned in each of the focus areas supported by the Fund. The 2006 report has been used as a reference.

We are confident that this publication will allow that projects implemented in the Neotropics and Mexico may be replicated in other countries in the region, but we also hope to generate a catalytic effect, taking into account that the mission of the Convention is global and that the experiences reported in this document may serve all countries in other Ramsar regions, as in the end wetlands connect us all.



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## Activities Supported by the Fund

As outlined in the Operational Guidelines of the Fund for 2003-2008 and 2009-2012, those Contracting Parties and countries that are not yet Contracting Parties but meet the requirements may apply to the Fund for: a) Activities that contribute to the implementation of the Ramsar Strategic Plan and are applicable in the Neotropics and Mexico; b) Emergency assistance related to Ramsar sites or wetlands of regional importance; c) Assistance to support Non-Contracting Parties in the process of joining the Convention; and d) Activities that create a link between the Fund and other programs that share the general objectives of management and conservation of wetlands.

The focus areas of support of the Fund are:

1. Long and short-term training
  - a) Preparation of training materials and implementation of university level courses.
  - b) Support for participation in training courses related to wetlands.
  - c) Support for thesis research and fieldwork on wetlands.
  - d) Graduate placement (for MSc and PhD graduates who have specialized in wetlands and want to initiate a project on wetlands on their return to their home countries after graduation).
2. Practical application of Ramsar's "Wise Use" Concept and Guidelines
  - a) On-the-job training opportunities and internships for wetland managers, planners, teachers and technical field staff.
  - b) Exchange opportunities to enable managers, planners and field staff in technical sites that practice the "wise use" of wetlands to travel to other countries in the region, particularly when such exchanges can contribute to training efforts in the framework of the Fund and/or the establishment of similar projects elsewhere.
  - c) Hands-on training experience in wise use activities for members of local or indigenous communities that depend on wetlands.
3. Training Programs for Protected Area Personnel (reserves, parks, sanctuaries and natural monuments, natural World Heritage sites, etc.)
  - a) Assistance to develop and implement programs for reserve personnel in the areas of management and care of wetlands in the region.
  - b) Revision and/or strengthening of existing training programs to improve the management of wetlands and to provide a more complete training in this area.
4. Management and transfer of information
  - a) Information exchange and networking through collaborative documentation centers in the region.
5. Emergency assistance related to Ramsar sites or wetlands of regional importance.
6. Assistance to support Non-Contracting Parties in the process of joining the Convention.

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## Focus Areas of the Fund

In 2006, the Ramsar Secretariat produced the document “The Wetlands for the Future Fund: A Performance Review of the First Ten Years” as a first effort to evaluate the success of the Fund. The study identified six focus areas to categorize projects according to the main activities for which the Fund provides assistance. These focus areas are Training and Capacity Building, Awareness-Raising Activities, Documentation, Wetland Management and Tools, Academic and Research, and Networking.

### A. Training and Capacity Building

This includes all projects that aim to provide technical training on wetlands. Although the standard recipients are field staff and government employees, instances where lay people are trained to perform a specific activity such as processing fish products, marketing wetland handicrafts or engaging in ecotourism activities are also included here.

### B. Awareness-Raising Activities

Non-technical information provided to all groups within society. School visits, campaigns involving the general public, and activities with indigenous groups all fall into this category. Academic events, documentation and training also contribute to raising participant awareness.

### C. Documentation

This includes books, CDs, handbooks, leaflets, posters and other reference materials. Visitor centers have also been included here. Videos and radio broadcasts fall as much under this category as under “Awareness-Raising”, while websites belong to “Networking”.

### D. Wetland Management and Tools

Infrastructure and equipment, baseline and monitoring data about the characteristics of a site, guidance documents (e.g., management plans, policies and consensus documents), maps, software and databases all fall under this category.

### E. Academic and Research

Those interventions whose main goals are to obtain and process information without making it readily available to the people in charge, or alternatively only do so through specialized journals and theses. Forum presentations in national and international events and new curricula (i.e. introduction of wetlands subjects into academic programs) are also included.

### F. Networking

Any initiative aimed at establishing or strengthening linkages between specialized and non-specialized groups are considered networking. In addition to the usual multi-stakeholder meetings and congresses, tools such as e-newsletters, virtual forums and joint (regional) initiatives are also included.

## The Fund's Relationship to Ramsar's Strategic Plan

The Wetlands for the Future Fund addresses the issues identified in the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008, particularly General Objective 4: "Implementation capacity to ensure that the Convention has the required implementation mechanisms, resources, and capacity to achieve its mission" and therefore, in Goal 4 of the new Strategic Plan 2009-2015: "Institutional capacity and effectiveness: To progress towards fulfillment of the Convention's mission by ensuring that it has the required mechanisms, resources, and capacity to do so." Notwithstanding the above, each of the focus areas is related to other goals of the Strategic Plan, such as Goal 1: Wise Use; Goal 2: Wetlands of International Importance; and Goal 3: International Cooperation.

The main objectives of the Wetlands for the Future Fund are to catalyze the training activities on wetlands, currently underway or planned for the region, and to complement existing initiatives for training and education related to wetlands.

Table No. 1 displays each focus area and its relation to the various General Objectives of the Strategic Plan 2003-2008, as well as to the current Strategic Plan (2009-2015). In this sense, the Wetlands for the Future Fund has clearly contributed to the direct or indirect implementation of the Strategic Plan in four of its five General Objectives. Although the Fund focuses primarily on Goal 4 through ongoing communication, education, awareness and training activities, it is linked to other goals. For example, these activities contribute to the implementation of the concept of "wise use" of wetlands and the involvement of local communities in the process. In addition, they support strengthening wetland policies and management plans (Goal 1), the inclusion of wetlands in the List of Wetlands of International Importance (Goal 2), and the creation of forums to exchange expert information and support regional initiatives (Goal 3).

Focus Area	General Objectives Strategic Plan	Operational Objectives Strategic Plan 2003-2008	Strategies Strategic Plan 2009-2015
<b>Training and Capacity Building</b>	General Objective 1. The wise use of wetlands	Operational Objective 3. Integration of wetland Wise Use into Sustainable Development	Strategy 1.4 Cross-sectoral recognition of wetland services
		Operational Objective 6. Local communities, indigenous people, and cultural values	
		Operational Objective 7. Private Sector involvement	Strategy 1.10 Private sector
	General Objective 4. Implementation capacity	Operational Objective 9. Communication, education, and public awareness (CEPA)	Strategy 1.4 Cross-sectoral recognition of wetland services
		Operational Objective 20. Training	
<b>Awareness-Raising</b>	General Objective 1. The wise use of wetlands	Operational Objective 3. Integration of wetland Wise Use into Sustainable Development	Strategy 1.4 Cross-sectoral recognition of wetland services
		Operational Objective 6. Local communities, indigenous people, and cultural values	
		Operational Objective 7. Private Sector involvement	Strategy 1.10 Private sector
	General Objective 4. Implementation capacity	Operational Objective 9. Communication, education, and public awareness (CEPA)	Strategy 4.1 CEPA
		Operational Objective 20. Training	

Focus Area	General Objectives Strategic Plan	Operational Objectives Strategic Plan 2003-2008	Strategies Strategic Plan 2009-2015
<b>Documentation</b>	General Objective 1. The wise use of wetlands	Operational Objective 3. Integration of wetland Wise Use into Sustainable Development	Strategy 1.4 Cross-sectoral recognition of wetland services
		Operational Objective 7. Private Sector involvement	Strategy 1.10 Private sector
	General Objective 4. Implementation capacity	Operational Objective 9. Communication, education, and public awareness (CEPA)	Strategy 4.1 CEPA
		Operational Objective 20. Training	
<b>Wetland Management and Tools</b>	General Objective 1. The wise use of wetlands	Operational Objective 1. Inventory and Assessment	Strategy 1.1 Wetland inventory and assessment
		Operational Objective 2. Policies and legislation, including Impact Assessment and Valuation	Strategy 1.3 Policy, legislation and institutions
		Operational Objective 6. Local communities, indigenous people, and cultural values	Strategy 1.6 Science-based management of wetlands
		Operational Objective 7. Private Sector involvement	Strategy 1.10 Private sector
	General Objective 2. Wetlands of International Importance	Operational Objective 11. Management planning and monitoring of Ramsar Sites	Strategy 2.4 Ramsar site ecological character
<b>Academic and Research</b>	General Objective 1. The wise use of wetlands	Operational Objective 3. Integration of wetland Wise Use into Sustainable Development	Strategy 1.4 Cross-sectoral recognition of wetland services
			Strategy 1.6 Science-based management of wetlands
		Operational Objective 7. Private Sector involvement	Strategy 1.10 Private sector
	General Objective 3. International cooperation	Operational Objective 14. Sharing of expertise and information	Strategy 3.4 Sharing information and expertise
	General Objective 4. Implementation capacity	Operational Objective 9. Communication, education, and public awareness (CEPA) Operational Objective 20. Training	Strategy 4.1 CEPA
<b>Networking</b>	General Objective 1. The wise use of wetlands	Operational Objective 7. Private Sector involvement	Strategy 1.2 Global wetland information
			Strategy 1.10 Private sector
	General Objective 3. International cooperation	Operational Objective 12. Management of shared water resources, wetlands and wetland species Operational Objective 14. Sharing of expertise and information	Strategy 3.2 Regional initiatives
			Strategy 3.4 Sharing information and expertise
	General Objective 4. Implementation capacity	Operational Objective 9. Communication, education, and public awareness (CEPA) Operational Objective 20. Training	Strategy 4.1 CEPA

**Table No. 1.** Relationship between the focus areas and the Strategic Plan 2003-2008 and 2009-2015.

Through the 256 projects implemented up to December 2008, the Fund has contributed in particular to applying the three pillars of the Convention: the wise use of wetlands, management of Ramsar Sites and international cooperation.

In summary, in the Neotropical region the Fund has contributed, *inter alia*, to:

- Building capacities
- Increasing awareness of wetland values
- Promoting the dissemination of information on the wise use of wetlands
- Developing policies and management plans, and support the creation of wetland committees
- Encouraging the wise use of wetlands
- Supporting the development of strategies and action lines aimed at the conservation and wise use of wetlands
- Creating spaces for awareness raising and education on wetlands.

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## Distribution of Projects in the Neotropics and Mexico

From its inception in 1996 to 2008, the Fund has received contributions from the U.S. government totaling US\$ 3,365,749. Up to 2008, the Fund received over 460 proposals for funding in 23 countries in the Neotropics and Mexico, of which 256 (56%) have been funded.

The countries that stand out for making extensive use of the Fund, continuously submitting proposals and which have been funded for a greater number of projects, include Argentina (51), Colombia (25), Costa Rica (25), Brazil (17), Mexico (16), Peru (13), Ecuador (12), Guatemala (12) and Chile (11).

Contracting Parties like Belize, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uruguay have secured funding for only one project per country due to their low number of proposal submissions, while Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, and Barbados have not been financed as they have not submitted any proposals.

The reason for which countries have been financed by the Fund for a greater or lesser number of projects depends primarily on the number of proposals that they have submitted to the Secretariat, as this increases their chances to obtain funding. The technical quality of proposals and their relationship to the concept of “wise use” of wetlands are as important as the relevance of the project for the country, among other factors.

For countries like Honduras, Nicaragua and Paraguay funding of proposals has been low as the United States Government requested the Secretariat not to fund projects in countries with substantial arrears in payments of their contributions as Parties to the Secretariat. More recently, proposals submitted by Peru have not been funded due to the lack of payment of contributions.

It is important that countries that submitted fewer proposals and secured funding for fewer projects, or that never submitted proposals, use the fund more actively, since it serves all the Contracting Parties and Non-Contracting Parties in the Neotropics and Mexico.

In this regard, the Fund has supported countries in the region that are Non-Contracting Parties, such as Guyana, which is in the accession process.

Table No. 2 displays the number of projects funded in each country, as well as regional and other projects<sup>1</sup> from the time of inception of the Fund, 12 years ago.

Country	Number of projects funded
Antigua & Barbuda	0
Argentina	51
Bahamas	0
Barbados	0
Belize	1
Bolivia	6
Brazil	17
Chile	11
Colombia	25
Costa Rica	25
Dominican Republic	1
Ecuador	12
El Salvador	2
Guatemala	12
Guyana	1
Honduras	1
Mexico	16
Nicaragua	3
Panama	3
Paraguay	5
Peru	13
Saint Lucia	5
Surinam	3
Trinidad & Tobago	1
Uruguay	1
Venezuela	8
Regional and others	47
<b>Total</b>	<b>256</b>

**Table No. 2.** Projects funded by country<sup>2</sup>

In summary, the most active countries using the Fund in the different sub-regions in the Neotropics include: Costa Rica and Guatemala in Central America; Argentina, Colombia and Brazil in South America; and Saint Lucia and Surinam in the Caribbean region. Mexico is the only North American country to which the Fund provides financial support.

In this respect, one of the priorities of the Secretariat in the new triennium is to promote the implementation of the Convention in Caribbean Contracting Parties, and the Fund is a key tool to support this process.

1 The projects "Regional and others" include, among others, projects proposed by the Ramsar Secretariat, short-term projects (e.g., support for publication and printing of books), multi-country projects, regional workshops, and support to professionals to attend courses and workshops related to the issue of wetlands.

2 This includes projects that are still running or projects with pending materials or reports in order to close officially.

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## Projects in Ramsar Sites

Although the Fund seeks to promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands in the Neotropics and Mexico in general, since 2002 it started to give priority to those wetlands in the region that have been designated as Wetlands of International Importance by the Contracting Parties to the Convention. Map No. 1 displays the Ramsar sites where WFF projects have been carried out, including a total of 76 sites (30%) out of the 252 Ramsar sites in the Neotropics and Mexico<sup>3</sup>. It is worth mentioning that in some cases more than one project has been implemented per Ramsar site.

The Fund has contributed to awareness raising activities, site management training, Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) activities, and conservation programs in Ramsar sites where projects have been carried out. Moreover, activities have included, *inter alia*, creation of databases, wildlife inventories, installation of visitor centers, and recovery of sites that have undergone changes in their ecological characteristics. Projects have also been implemented in wetlands to provide support in compiling information to complete the Ramsar Information Sheets and to include sites on the List of Wetlands of International Importance. Such is the case in the sites of Lagunas de Guanacache and Lagunas de Vilama in Argentina, Banco Chinchorro Biosphere Reserve, National Park Arrecife de Puerto Morelos, as well as watersheds and coral reefs in the coastal zone of Huatulco in Mexico, Wetlands System of San Miguelito in Nicaragua, and the Lucre-Huacarpay Wetland in Peru.

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3 Data on Ramsar sites in the Neotropics and Mexico up to June 2009.



Map No. 1. Ramsar Sites where projects of the Fund have been implemented.





## A. Training and Capacity Building

This includes all projects that aim to provide technical training on wetlands. Although the standard recipients are field staff and government employees, instances where lay people are trained to perform a specific activity such as processing fish products, marketing wetland handicrafts or engaging in ecotourism activities are also included here.

### ARGENTINA

#### **Capacitación y concienciación de la comunidad regional, protectores ambientales y guarda-faunas en el Sitio Ramsar Jaaukanigás (WFF/02-2/ARG/3)**

[Training and Awareness-Raising of the Regional Community, Environmental Protectors and Park Rangers in the Jaaukanigás Ramsar Site]

Executing Organization: Instituto Nacional de Limnología, Argentina

Funds approved by the Wetlands for the Future Fund: US\$ 6,300

Ramsar Site

#### Objectives

- Raise popular awareness of the importance, objectives and scope of the Jaaukanigás Ramsar site.
- Strengthen awareness of the importance of cultural aspects in the region and their contribution to knowledge and sustainable use of resources.
- Develop training materials and promote the importance of cultural aspects in the region and their contribution to knowledge and sustainable use of resources.
- Train staff and key social actors to play the role of “environment protectors” at the Jaaukanigás Ramsar site.
- Interact with residents and resource users of the site to know their views and gain knowledge to develop a site management plan.

The project implemented by the Instituto Nacional de Limnología has raised awareness in the general society and in political, social, academic and technical sectors of the Jaaukanigás Ramsar site about the problems related to the conservation and revaluation of wetlands and the importance of the Ramsar



Convention as a tool to address these issues. Several multidisciplinary management groups were created and joined the process, including educational, governmental, academic, scientific and technological sectors, as well as indigenous NGOs, social development and conservation NGOs and related media. This allowed for an active exchange, coordinating several projects and actions that enabled mutual enrichment and an improved effectiveness and quality of the efforts.

As part of the activities, two training courses were held with 50 key actors of the site (including teachers from different school levels, fishing associations, industrial and agronomic productive sectors, indigenous associations, control and security forces, and representatives of municipalities and communes, among others). Also, 13 dissemination lectures were conducted in different areas (schools, universities, municipalities, professional associations, etc.) and an Intersectoral Management Committee (CIM) was created for the site management, which has coordinated activities with various organizations, such as:

- Including the wetlands, Ramsar and Jaaukanigás issues in the elementary and high school curricula through the Ministry of Education.
- Advising fishermen families on sustainable enterprises on La Fuente island.
- Creating an interpretive center and the museum of Jaaukanigás to develop ecotourism ventures with municipalities and property owners.

Radio spots have been produced for dissemination, as well as a manual on biodiversity, socio-cultural aspects and conservation, and the documentary “*Jaaukanigás, gente del agua*” [Jaaukanigás, people from the water], in addition to three TV commercials, brochures, posters and stickers to be distributed throughout schools, the interpretive center and the museum. The dissemination has been steady and has been carried out through newspaper articles, press conferences and radio and television interviews on the project activities, the site’s characteristics and the objectives of the Ramsar Convention. The project has been presented at three conferences, and two technical papers have been published in books.

This project has enabled the Intersectoral Management Committee (CIM) to encourage and promote the involvement of different society sectors in the management and conservation of the site. Institutions have been enriched by the interaction between knowledge and strategies, conveying a more complete picture of the site’s characteristics and operation and its management problems.<sup>4</sup>

### Lessons learned

The main difficulties encountered in the development of this project range from historical conflicts in natural resource management to lack of financial support. However, the creation of the Ramsar site offers several opportunities, including dialogue and respectful discussion of conservation and natural resource management problems, as well as the possibility of understanding and applying new approaches to overcome problems that could not be solved through traditional approaches.<sup>5</sup>

## CHILE

### **Comunicación, educación y concienciación del público para el uso racional del Sistema de Humedales Costeros de Coquimbo, Chile (WFF/04/CL/2)**

[Communication, Education and Public Awareness-Raising for the Wise Use of Coquimbo Coastal Wetland System, Chile]

Implementing Organization: Corporación Ambientes Acuáticos de Chile (CAACH)

Funds approved by the Wetlands for the Future Fund: US\$ 15,000

#### Objectives

- Encourage the enhancement of the Coquimbo Coastal Wetland System among key actors for its wise use.
- Increase citizen awareness about the value of wetlands of the Coquimbo coastal system.
- Strengthen management capacity and decision making of regional public institutions (policy, technical and economic sector) for the wise use of wetlands in Coquimbo.

<sup>4</sup> Information extracted from the Manual “Sitio Ramsar Jaaukanigás: Biodiversidad, aspectos socioculturales y conservación” [Jaaukanigás Ramsar Site - Biodiversity, conservation, social and cultural aspects] developed under the project financed by the Fund.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

- Mobilize the school population as a key player and as advocate of the wise use of wetlands at the local level.
- Incorporate in regional public opinion the concept of wise use of wetlands and encourage a broad discussion on this issue.

Through this project, the Corporación Ambientes Acuáticos de Chile (CAACH) has successfully promoted the wise use concept to be incorporated into local social and political awareness, providing expertise, encouraging reflection and furthering discussion of elements that promote actions for a more efficient use of these wetlands. To achieve this, communication, education and public awareness-raising actions have been implemented, focusing on key actors and direct stakeholders around the Coquimbo wetlands. In particular these actions were directed to actors and stakeholders of recognized ability to influence significantly and immediately the state and long-term sustainability of these ecosystems.

A Handbook for the Wise Use of the Coquimbo Coastal Wetland System entitled “Los humedales no pueden esperar” [Wetlands cannot wait] was prepared together with a Practical Guide for schools entitled “Manos al humedal” [Hands to the wetland]. Also, coastal communities, key actors and decision makers were empowered and informed about the importance of the wise use of wetlands.



The results of the project implementation were published on the website of the Corporación Ambientes Acuáticos de Chile, CAACH ([www.humedalescoquimbo.cl](http://www.humedalescoquimbo.cl)). These include publications, series of workshops, audiovisual recording, key lessons and experiences, and project follow-up.



The dissemination and discussion of publications created informed key players who learned to value the wise use of wetlands, and are able to further it. Thus, they can start to adopt promotional roles, participate in strategic decision making, take local action, and join in the various processes that relate to wetlands, such as planning and the productive use of wetlands in Tongoy Playa Grande (Ministry of National Heritage) among other processes. Particular attention was given to school groups in existing communities around the Coquimbo Coastal Wetland System.

The international response after completion of the project exceeded expectations. A large number of requests for publications were received, which were sent via email to Argentina, Bolivia, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador and Spain.

## Lessons learned

In this project, communication was a major awareness-raising tool, especially to generate public opinion. Thus, there was a high degree of public incidence with explicit responses from the recipients. The communication strategy was developed based on the CEPA Program guidelines of the Ramsar Convention, including general and operational objectives.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Lessons learned extracted from the Wetlands for the Future Fund Questionnaire completed by project implementers WFF/04/CL/2 in 2006.

## COLOMBIA

### Conservación de humedales altoandinos en el departamento de Caldas (WFF/05/CO/4)

[High Andean Wetland Conservation in the Department of Caldas]

Executing Organization: Fundación Pangea-Corpocaldas

Funds approved by the Wetlands for the Future Fund: US\$ 17,000

#### General Objectives

- Contribute to the conservation of High Andean Wetlands through training programs in management and wise use in the municipalities of Manizales, Marulanda, Neira, Villamaría and Salamina.
- Conduct a rapid participatory analysis of the impact of agriculture and cattle farming activities on the High Andean Wetlands in the municipalities of Manizales, Marulanda, Neira, Villamaría and Salamina.
- Design and implement a training plan in the management and wise use of High Andean Wetlands, considering the socioeconomic impact of production systems.
- Implement actions of wetland restoration and restructuring of production systems.

Through this project, Pangea-Corpocaldas Foundation has identified different complex High Andean Wetlands and highlighted their socioeconomic and biophysical importance. This has allowed the production of an environmental education plan for the conservation of High Andean Wetlands in order to achieve continued development and protection of these areas. The education plan includes a video and posters with photographs and information to facilitate the understanding of the importance of protecting these wetlands.

As part of the project, a study on the current state of High Andean Wetlands in the Caldas department developed a training plan in the Management and Wise Use of High Andean Wetlands. Activities for the restoration and recovery of these wetlands were also carried out and recycling systems were implemented. In addition, community residents of Manizales, Marulanda, Neira, Villamaría and Salamina were trained in the management and wise use of High Andean Wetlands.



In order to convert teachers into multiplier agents of the process, the publication of an educational module and production of a video and poster were devised as follow-up strategies. The latter were distributed among the inhabitants of wetland complexes.

This project combines the ability to recognize certain areas as wetlands and to protect them through environmental education directed towards the community. The project results are of great importance for future training and for informing the public about High Andean Wetlands in the region. Moreover, they contribute to implementing the Regional Strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of High Andean Wetlands adopted by the Ramsar Conference of the Parties in 2005. All the materials produced were published and distributed among residents of wetland complexes.

## Lessons learned

It is essential to develop comprehensive strategies and actions for the recovery and conservation of High Andean Wetlands that allow the involvement of communities through training, education and awareness-raising about wetlands. As a result, these communities, which include school children and their families, learn to value their resources.

The synergy between state entities (Corporaciones), NGOs (Fundación Pangea) and involved communities should be highlighted with regard to the conservation of High Andean Wetlands in Caldas. This allows optimizing resources and results and creating benefits for communities and wetland ecosystems.

During the project implementation it was observed that communities do not recognize peatlands as wetlands. Thus, conversion practices of wetlands to turn them into productive lands are common. The project started the process of awareness-raising, knowledge and recovery of the importance of High Andean Wetlands. Communities have been trained in an ongoing basis to date.

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## ECUADOR

### **Capacitación en base a una revisión de la legislación e institucionalidad relacionados con la gestión de humedales en el Ecuador (WFF/06/EC/2)**

[Training Based on a Review of Legislation and Institutions Related to Wetlands Management in Ecuador]  
Implementing Organizations: Centro Ecuatoriano de Derecho Ambiental (CEDA) and the Ministry of Environment

Funds approved by the Wetlands for the Future Fund: US\$ 20,000

### **Objectives**

- Advance in the implementation of the concept of wise use of wetlands (Ramsar sites and others) after the review and evaluation of relevant laws and institutions (including laws and traditional practices of indigenous/local communities) and training of relevant public and private actors.
- Achieve a knowledge base and evaluation of Ecuadorian laws and institutions that have a direct or indirect impact on the implementation of the principle of wise use of wetlands within the framework of the Decentralized National System of Environmental Management (SNDGA).
- Train public and private actors, mainly legislators, politicians, judges, administrators (both government and corporate) and lawyers to effectively apply existing policies and measures relating to wetlands and to change such policies/measures when necessary to progress implementing the principle of wise use, including policy coordination with other relevant international conventions, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

The Centro Ecuatoriano de Derecho Ambiental (CEDA), together with the Ministry of Environment, formed a review team to define the project methodology based on the guidelines laid down in the Ramsar Handbook on the review of laws and institutions. A total of eleven activities have been developed as part of the project for the identification and evaluation of the legal and institutional framework. These were applied directly and indirectly to wetland management in Ecuador in order to make recommendations for legal and institutional reform. A knowledge base of relevant legal and institutional measures was established

and strengthened with the criteria of wetland experts, who gathered in three workshops held in the cities of Quito, Guayaquil and Cuenca. The knowledge base was systematized in a juridical matrix.

The analysis and evaluation of the knowledge base was developed from the juridical matrix, and preliminary results were presented to the review team for observations and comments. Preliminary results were also submitted for consideration of wetland experts, who were gathered in two workshops in the cities of Quito and Guayaquil. The legal product is contained in the Legal Report of the project and also includes a series of recommendations for supporting the conservation and wise use of wetlands. The digital version of the Legal Report has been disseminated through CDs handed out in events to disclose the project results.

The results of the review process contained in the Legal Report were compiled, edited and published under the title “La Convención de Ramsar en el Ecuador: Guía sobre la conservación y el uso racional de los humedales” [The Ramsar Convention in Ecuador: Guidelines on the conservation and wise use of wetlands]. Additionally, the results were posted on the website of the Ecuadorian Environmental Law Center ([www.ceda.org.ec](http://www.ceda.org.ec)), a computer resource on the Ramsar Convention.

Five workshops were conducted in the cities of Loja, Santa Cruz, Cuenca, Guayaquil and Quito. These involved a total of 161 participants from government agencies, academia and civil society organizations.

On World Wetlands Day (February 2009), the CEDA organized in Quito an analysis workshop on the state of wetlands in Ecuador. Additionally, as part of the project, CEDA participated in the forum “Temáticas Ambientales de los Humedales en el Ecuador” [Environmental Subjects on Wetlands in Ecuador], organized in Guayaquil by the Ministry of Environment and the University of Guayaquil, where the project results were presented.



## Lessons learned

This project identified the degree of regulatory incidence of the international treaty on the legal regime applicable to the conservation and wise use of wetlands in the country. In this context, it was determined that the Ramsar Convention is the legal foundation essential to national legislation and policies concerning the conservation and wise use of wetlands. Also a significant influence of the legal regime of the Convention on national environmental policies was identified, especially in the national constitutional system that explicitly refers to the protection of wetlands as fragile ecosystems and to an integrated management of water resources from an ecosystem approach. In the legal and secondary regulatory area, although some weaknesses were identified as regulatory gaps or contradictions, there is evidence of a favorable regulatory framework for the implementation of the Ramsar Convention in Ecuador.

The project also identified significant efforts performed by the country to meet the commitments for the conservation and wise use of wetlands, acquired by adherence to the international treaty. In this framework, it is important to highlight the designation of 13 Wetlands of International Importance, totaling 201,126 hectares. In addition, a national institutional framework responsible for implementing the Ramsar Convention (Ministry of Environment, National Ramsar Committee) has been established, and national policies and strategies for the conservation and wise use of wetlands have been designed.

Finally, the project confirmed the importance of developing an analysis of the implementation of the Ramsar Convention at national level within the parameters of the Ramsar Strategic Plan and in accordance with guidelines developed by the Secretariat of the Convention in the Implementation Handbooks. This is an exercise that goes beyond the legal diagnosis to influence future planning for conservation and wise use of wetlands in Ecuador.

## ECUADOR

### **Contribución al mejoramiento de la calidad de vida de la población del humedal Isla Santay a través de capacitación de las mujeres en actividades económicas alternativas (WFF/03/EC/1)**

[Contribution to Improving the Life Quality of the Population of Santay Island Wetland through Training for Women in Alternative Economic Activities]

Implementing Organization: Fundación Malecón 2000

Funds approved by the Wetlands for the Future Fund: US\$ 5,000

Ramsar Site

#### **Objectives**

- Train women and men, adults and youth in sustainable productive activities oriented towards microenterprise development.
- Implement a financial system of savings and credit for the development of these productive activities.

Through this project of the Malecón 2000 Foundation, 31% of the female population and 9% of the male population of the Ecuadorian Santay Island have been trained in sustainable productive activities such as weaving, sewing, crafts and microenterprises. These activities have increased the income of families in the community. The main purpose of this project focused on improving the income of families living on Santay Island.

To achieve the project objectives, sustainable crafting practices were performed and a financial savings and credit system was set up to support the development of productive activities.

The project results were announced at a craft fair, thus starting the process of promoting and marketing the products. These activities have reduced gradually the pig-rearing activity on the island, which had been causing negative impacts on the wetland's natural resources. With support from various institutions and the training program "Aprendamos" [Let's Learn] in the Municipality of Guayaquil, the project has been granted continuity by conducting more training workshops on sustainable production activities on Santay Island.

It has been noted that most women who were trained have kept on weaving and producing handicrafts that are currently sold in the Caraguay market. Others continue to provide sewing and dressmaking services in the neighborhood. In addition, some young people have continued producing and selling jewelry, which they learned to manufacture during the project.

In conclusion, this project has been successful in achieving its objectives, raising awareness and shifting productive activities of the inhabitants of Santay Island in order to prevent further wetland deterioration caused by massive pig-rearing.

#### **Lessons learned**

Women in the communities are empowered with opportunities to improve their living conditions, which they accomplish with perseverance and effort, becoming positive examples for their children. Also, it has been observed that women are better organized compared to men when group work is required for the benefit of families, as women share common concerns for their children and their future. Through these projects, the women of Santay Island have become more confident and are willing to take on new challenges and responsibilities.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Lessons learned extracted from the Wetlands for the Future Fund Questionnaire completed by project implementers WFF/03/EC/1 in 2006.



## GUATEMALA

### Educación ambiental para el desarrollo sostenible del recurso pesquero en el Refugio de Vida Silvestre Bocas del Polochic, El Estor, Izabal, Guatemala (WFF/06/GT/1)

[Environmental Education for the Sustainable Development of Fishery Resources in the Bocas del Polochic Wildlife Refuge, El Estor, Izabal, Guatemala]

Implementing Organization: Defensores de la Naturaleza

Funds approved by the Wetlands for the Future Fund: US\$ 17,403

Ramsar Site

#### Objectives

- Promote sustainable use practices and environmental awareness of the importance of wetland Bocas del Polochic Wildlife Refuge and the region of Lake Izabal through environmental education in communities.
- Ensure compliance with existing legislation on fishing regulations for Lake Izabal in El Estor and communities in the catchment area of the wetland.
- Increase knowledge of local hydrobiological species for commercial use in the population of Lake Izabal and Bocas del Polochic Wildlife Refuge.
- Through environmental education in schools, promote sustainable production practices and environmental awareness of the importance of wetlands as an ecosystem.

This project was developed as part of the strategic goals of Defensores de la Naturaleza in environmental education, sustainable development, conservation and sustainable management. Defensores has worked for over 15 years in natural resource conservation and sustainable development, managing the Bocas del Polochic Wildlife Refuge since 1997. The catchment area of the refuge has more than 5,500 inhabitants who benefit directly from the ecological processes of the wetland.

The project had three phases, which were related to the dissemination of sustainable productive activities that do not threaten the conservation of the wetland's ecological processes. During the first phase, fishing regulations for Lake Izabal were explained to locals in Q'eqchí language, as a large proportion of people engaged in fishing within the refuge belongs to this ethnic group. The second phase consisted of



the preparation, publication and distribution of a popular catalog with biological information on commercial species living in the region. Finally, the third phase comprised the development of educational materials on sustainable production practices, the importance of wetlands as ecosystems and environmental awareness. Materials were distributed and park rangers and teachers were trained to hold environmental education workshops at schools in the region.

This project has met all its objectives. The materials produced are expected to be useful in the development of additional environmental education activities in the region and, therefore, will continue to contribute to the wise use of wetlands.

## PARAGUAY

### **Divulgación, sensibilización y capacitación de sectores específicos de la sociedad en el tema de los humedales, como estrategia para la consolidación del Comité Nacional de Humedales en el Paraguay (WFF/01/PAR/2)**

[Dissemination, Awareness-Raising and Training in Specific Sectors of Society on the Wetlands Issue as a Strategy for Consolidating the National Wetlands Committee in Paraguay]

Executing Organization: Fundación Moisés Bertoni

Funds approved by the Wetlands for the Future Fund: US\$ 20,000

#### **Objective**

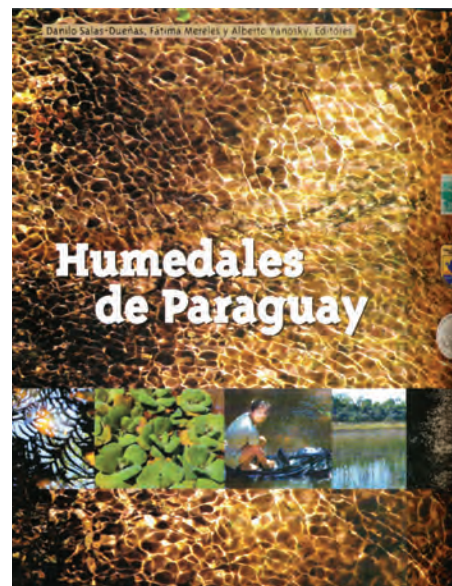
- Advance outreach, awareness raising and training actions in specific sectors of society on the issue of wetlands as a strategy for consolidating the National Wetlands Committee.

Through this project, the Moisés Bertoni Foundation has developed a series of workshops and activities that have been important in publicizing the problems of wetland conservation in Paraguay. A large number of people from different areas have been trained, including teachers, students, politicians and decision-makers.

Among the actions carried out to achieve the project's main goal were training workshops, a forum on Communication, Education and Public Awareness-Raising and activities within the framework of the celebration of World Wetlands Day. In addition, support was provided for the International Course "Aspectos de la problemática y manejo de los humedales de la Ecorregión de Ñeembucú" [Aspects of the problems and management of the Ñeembucú wetlands ecoregion]. In total, about 300 people participated, including university students, teachers, private owners and public officials of the Ministry of the Environment.

The materials produced include a proposal document for a National Wetlands Policy and a book entitled "Humedales del Paraguay" [Wetlands of Paraguay]. Also, documents on the National Wetlands Committee and on the Ramsar Convention were distributed among teachers in several schools, university students, local politicians and decision-makers of the Ministry of the Environment.

The activities performed during the project helped to raise awareness of local actors and to strengthen the National Wetlands Committee of Paraguay. In addition, there has been a significant increase in proposals and projects in the area of wetlands as a result of awareness of the issue among some civil society organizations who have identified these ecosystems as an opportunity to meet conservation goals.



#### **Lessons learned**

Participation by the state, universities and individuals is incipient, given that access to information is still in process.

The wetland issue has positioned itself among various sectors, especially NGOs, which has been positive. With an improved management of the resources raised by some of these organizations, greater progress in the conservation and sustainable use of these ecosystems will be achieved.

The Environment Secretariat has made significant progress in the management of these ecosystems and continues to work on the compliance with certain minimum parameters, especially in the wetlands included in the Ramsar List. Moreover, an approach to society and the National Wetlands Committee is still under development.<sup>8</sup>

## TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

### Policies and Institutions for Wetlands Management: Training for Managers from the Insular Caribbean (WFF/04/CAR/1)

Executing Organization: Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI)

Funds approved by the Wetlands for the Future Fund: US\$ 17,875

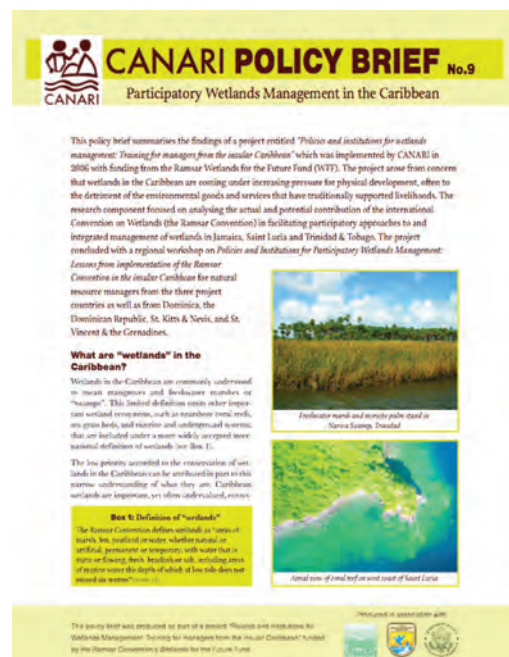
#### Objectives:

- Identify policy and institutional requirements directed towards efficient and effective wetland management.
- Analyze the impact of joining the Ramsar Convention as a tool to support policies and institutions for efficient and effective wetland management.
- Make available to decision makers the information related to institutional requirements and policies on the efficient and effective wetland management.

Through this project, the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) trained key actors of Jamaica, St. Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago in efficient and effective wetland management in the Caribbean islands through a series of workshops and national consultations. A newsletter entitled “Participatory wetland management of the Caribbean” was produced, which summarizes the main findings of the project and describes wetlands in the Caribbean, participatory management and the challenges for an effective management. The research component focused on analyzing the current and potential contribution of the Ramsar Convention to facilitating participatory approaches to integrated wetland management.

The review and analysis of policies and institutions of the Caribbean was held with the participation of key stakeholders in wetland management in Dominica, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago, including government and civil society representatives, as well as Ramsar focal points. Decision-makers from the Caribbean Islands were trained and sensitized in institutional and policy analysis for wetland management.

Results were disseminated through CANARI’s website ([www.canari.org](http://www.canari.org)). Copies of the bulletin on participatory wetland management were sent to policymakers, Ramsar focal points, wetland management agencies and key civil society actors for a broader distribution in countries participating in the project. Moreover, the report was circulated at the regional meeting of the Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds (July 2007, Puerto Rico), the Training for Trainers workshop of CANARI/FAO (August 2007, Trinidad) and other workshops and regional and national conferences.



<sup>8</sup> Lessons learned extracted from the Wetlands for the Future Fund Questionnaire completed by implementers of project WFF/01/PAR/2 in 2006.

## Lessons learned

A few conclusions can be drawn from the experiences in the Caribbean on the use of the mechanisms of the Ramsar Convention and participatory approaches in wetland management. However, caution must be exercised in determining whether these can be applied in local and national contexts in the region. For example, although the creation of National Wetland Committees is appropriate in larger Caribbean islands, such as Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, for some of the smaller Eastern Caribbean islands it might be more appropriate to have a single committee engaged in matters relating to the management of all natural resources and international conventions.

Further research is required to quantify and assess the benefits from international conventions in the Caribbean and to establish how these benefits can be maximized without imposing an unrealistic burden on small Caribbean island states. The value of joining international conventions that could entail impracticable demands on a small island with a limited implementation capacity is seriously questionable.<sup>9</sup>

## B. Awareness-Raising Activities

This focus area includes projects providing non-technical information to all groups within society. School visits, campaigns involving the general public, and activities with indigenous groups all fall into this category. Academic events, documentation and training also contribute to raising participant awareness.

### ARGENTINA

#### **Importancia de los humedales costeros patagónicos como sitios críticos para la supervivencia de aves playeras. Hacia una fuerte acción concienciadora dirigida a la comunidad y entidades gubernamentales e intermedias (WFF/04/AR/4)**

[Importance of Patagonian Coastal Wetlands as Critical Sites for the Survival of Shorebirds - Towards a Strong Awareness-Raising Action Aimed at the Community and Government Agencies and Intermediate Organizations]

Implementing Organization: Centro Nacional Patagónico (CENPAT)

Funds approved by the Wetlands for the Future Fund: US\$ 16,000

#### Objectives

- Create opportunities for vocational education and training directed towards different groups linked to decision making and control of natural protected areas.
- Raise awareness regarding the value of wetlands, while creating spaces that allow for discussion and analysis of the role of wetlands in groups that do not specialize in the subject (high school students, science clubs and the general public).
- Transfer technical knowledge to conservation institutions.
- Train university biology students to assess wetlands by using a scientific methodology.
- Spread and transfer relevant information by developing teaching materials and didactic resources that favor dissemination of issues linking wetlands and shorebird survival.

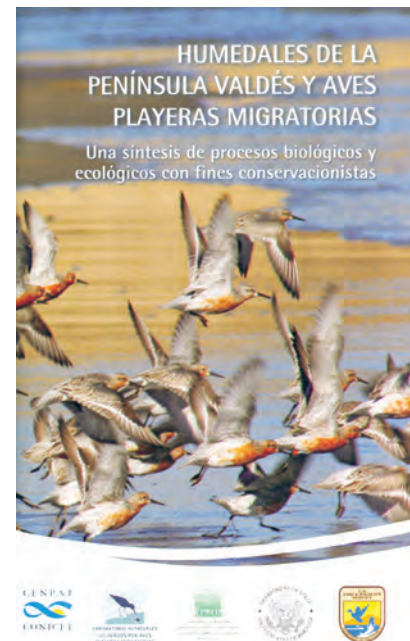
<sup>9</sup> Lessons learned extracted from Newsletter No. 9 CANARI "Participatory management of wetlands of the Caribbean", material produced as part of project WFF/04/CAR/1.

This project, carried out by the Centro Nacional Patagónico, highlighted the critical role that Patagonian coastal wetlands play for the survival of migratory shorebirds. It has contributed significantly to raising awareness of the importance of conservation and rational management of these ecosystems among the general public, officials, professionals, NGOs, students, teachers and technical and administrative staff involved in protected area management. This was achieved through various courses, workshops, internship guidance and graduate thesis.

As part of the educational materials that facilitated dissemination and transfer of information an interactive multimedia CD was produced, as well as a website about the project (<http://www.humedalesdelsur.com.ar>), a leaflet and a booklet with the contents of the themes developed in the courses.

Of the produced materials, the CDs and manuals have been delivered to participants of training courses, and to government agencies and NGOs. Printed brochures have been delivered to the Department of Conservation and Protected Areas of the Province of Chubut and the Secretariat of Tourism of Puerto Madryn, to be distributed without charge among tourists and visitors to the reserves. Every year, the Valdés Peninsula, declared a World Heritage natural property by UNESCO, is visited by approximately 70,000 to 100,000 tourists, which allows an extensive distribution of materials among the general public. The project yielded excellent results, especially with regard to producing and distributing high quality materials, as the number of materials produced exceeded the quantity specified in the proposal.

This project generated a great deal of base information on the importance of the Patagonian coastal wetlands, identifying them as sites that are critical for the survival of shorebirds, as well as the necessary tools to protect wetlands. In addition, there is an improved motivation and commitment of university students, who later became part of the working group. Thus, the number of future professionals in this field has increased.



## Lessons learned

Interaction with different partners in workshops, lectures and conferences was an intense experience. The range extended from public officials to staff living in rural establishments, teachers and students, tour guides, park rangers and volunteers from conservation NGOs, who contributed significantly by sharing their experiences and views on the issue of wetlands and shorebirds.

The work that started with this project is constantly growing. Schools, teachers and media, among others, have joined in. This is an increasing challenge for project implementers in the task of linking scientific research, human resource training and information transfer to ultimately contribute to preserving the species that are in critical condition and the environments in which they live in.

There are certain parameters for measuring the success of this project: teaching materials ran out and downloads of these from the Web page continue at a steady rate.

Therefore, it has to be regarded as natural that this project has been followed by other projects with the same objective in order to deepen the ongoing process. The continued financial support from other agencies is also an indicator of the success of this project.

## ARGENTINA

### **Importancia de los humedales costeros patagónicos como sitios críticos para la supervivencia de aves playeras. Hacia una fuerte acción concienciadora dirigida a la comunidad, y a entidades gubernamentales e intermedias (Segunda etapa) (WFF/07/AR/4)**

[Importance of Patagonian Coastal Wetlands as Critical Sites for the Survival of Shorebirds - Towards a Strong Awareness-Raising Action Aimed at the Community and Government Agencies and Intermediate Organizations (Second Stage)]

Implementing Organization: Centro Nacional Patagónico (CENPAT)

Funds approved by the Wetlands for the Future Fund: US\$ 19,415

#### **Objectives**

- Create opportunities for education and training for groups linked to decision making and control of natural protected areas.
- Raise awareness about the value of wetlands, creating spaces that allow for discussion and analysis of the role of wetlands in groups that do not specialize in the subject (high school students, science clubs and the general public).
- Transfer technical knowledge to conservation institutions.
- Train university biology students to assess wetlands through a scientific methodology.
- Spread and transfer relevant information by developing teaching materials and didactic resources (printed and electronic) that favor dissemination of issues linking wetlands and shorebird survival.
- Establish the technical bases to propose certain areas of the Valdes Peninsula as a Ramsar site.
- Strengthen the continuity of the project.

This project, developed by the National Patagonian Center as a second stage of the project WFF/04/AR/4, has sought to deepen the actions performed by this organization since 1992. The central theme of the activities was based on the critical dependence of certain shorebird species (some of them in serious danger of extinction) on coastal wetlands where they stop during migration.



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Objectives were divided into two main areas: academic activities and transfer activities. The former were aimed at human resource training (internship training of 10 university students) and the consolidation of laboratory resources, as well as financing projects of thesis students, and purchasing equipment.

Transfer activities included 25 workshops and conferences aimed at entities that ranged from the initial level to university level. These activities were carried out in cities of all the provinces of Patagonia. The message was received by about 140 actors related to decision making and control of natural protect-



Humedales costeros y aves migratorias

Por María de los Angeles Hernández

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ed areas in all sites relevant to the survival of birds. The 650 participants in the conference worked closely with NGOs Fundación Patagonia Natural (FPN) and Fundación Vida Silvestre Argentina (FVSA). Working relations have been strengthened with these NGOs and with protected area agencies and governments of the provinces of Chubut and Tierra del Fuego.

The book “Humedales costeros y aves playeras” [Coastal wetlands and shorebirds] was produced and distributed among governments, NGOs, educational institutions, teachers and workshop participants and others. Additionally, a new website ([www.humedalesdelsur.com.ar](http://www.humedalesdelsur.com.ar)) was developed, where the book and the handbook produced during the previous project (WFF/04/AR/4) can be downloaded. The relevance of this tool has exceeded expectations. In June 2008, for example, the site had an average of 51 visits per day and the book and handbook were downloaded 635 and 693 times, respectively.



The official presentation of the book was held at the National Patagonian Center at a ceremony conducted by the Directorate of the center, the Ministry of Education and the Secretariat for Natural Protected Areas in the Province of Chubut.

Additionally, specific materials were developed for primary school children. These materials included models of different species of shorebirds and tools to facilitate their working with the models (rings, flags, syringes for blood extraction, etc.).

### Lessons learned

This project has been a continuation of project WFF/07/AR/4. Despite having the same objectives, it was able to move from a local to a regional scenario. The study areas were extended and communicated to more communities, sharing feedback experiences specifically characteristic of this type of activities.

A great need for such activities was noted in many localities. Thus, activities covered all levels, ranging from lectures to the wider community, to courses for teachers and natural areas personnel. The existence of “gaps” in some localities of Patagonia due to the lack of sufficient professional or specialized agents is evident. The reasons for this are easy to understand if one considers how distant these locations are from major urban centers, and that they are often very scarcely populated.

In some localities, including San Julián (Santa Cruz) and Río Grande (Tierra del Fuego), it is evident that continuity should be given to the activities performed, which will be a challenge in the sense of raising the funds needed to make this a reality. In other cities there were difficulties that prevented the implementation of some activities, and in some cases project implementation lacked local support. Despite these seemingly negative experiences, lessons have been learned that will be capitalized upon in order to make improvements and optimize efforts and resources in the future.

## COLOMBIA

### **Contribución a la recuperación de las aves y los peces de la Laguna de Fúquene desde la comunidad (WFF/01/COL/1)**

[Contribution to the Recovery of Birds and Fish of Laguna de Fúquene from the Community]

Implementing Organization: Fundación Humedales

Funds approved by the Wetlands for the Future Fund: US\$ 15,300

#### **Objectives**

- Discover which birds and fish existed before in the lagoon and which exist today, establishing their living conditions and the actions required for their recovery.
- Design an education and outreach plan aimed at the educated sector and communities at local, regional and national levels.
- Produce educational materials.

Through this project, the Wetlands Foundation, together with artisans and fishermen of the educated sector and the wider community, designed education and outreach plans for the conservation of birds and fish of Laguna de Fúquene. A series of materials were produced, including a card game, “Aves y peces de Fúquene” [Birds and fish in Fúquene], an informative poster, “Por la vida de la Laguna de Fúquene” [For the life of the Laguna de Fúquene], and a video, “Por la vida de la laguna... al agua patos” [For the life of the lagoon ... ducks to water].

Groups of artisans and fishermen of the educated sector and the wider community in the villages of El Roble, Nuevo Fúquene and Guatancuy became involved in the project. In addition, a link was established with the Corporación Autónoma Regional de Cundinamarca (CAR), the government body responsible for the management and conservation of the lagoon, through the formation of and membership in the Committee for the Recovery of the Fúquene Lake Ecosystem, thereby ensuring the insertion of the future project activities in regional plans.

This project has provided a significant contribution to future campaigns for the conservation of birds and fish, preparing the required education and outreach plans and the respective communication materials, and it has a support group in the region of the Fúquene Lake.



#### **Lessons learned**

The community participation in project development led to its identification with the process, which had a significant impact on the results obtained during the project.

The participation of the educational community, particularly children, in preparing educational and outreach materials has been of great importance and to this date the materials are still being used in schools.



## COLOMBIA

### En busca del manejo y conservación del complejo de humedales costeros de la Guajira a través de la participación local (WFF/04/CO/2)

[In search of management and conservation of La Guajira Coastal Wetland Complex through local participation]

Implementing Organizations: Fosín and Aqualombia

Funds approved by the Wetlands for the Future Fund: US\$ 10,700

#### Objectives

- Propose alternatives for the management and wise use of wetlands within an environmental education process on the values and functions of these ecosystems that includes the traditional knowledge of inhabitants in La Guajira Coastal Wetland Complex (Laguna Grande, Musichi and Soruipa).
- Get acquainted with the perception and interpretation of the community on wetlands and their wildlife.
- Sensitize the communities surrounding wetlands on the importance and benefits of these ecosystems.
- Propose alternatives that minimize negative impacts from the communities surrounding wetlands, taking into account their socioeconomic and cultural habits.
- Gain support from local and regional organizations for the management and conservation of the wetland complex and its inhabitants.
- Publicize the activities and results obtained throughout the project.

This project was implemented by Fosín and Aqualombia and has accentuated the importance of protecting Colombian coastal wetlands considering the abundance of the species *Phoenicopterus ruber ruber*, known as “Caribbean flamingo”, and its dependence on wetlands as feeding grounds. The project focused on environmental education in the form of workshops and lectures in which 470 students took



part. The information was divided into different educational plans aimed at different ages, mainly children. Work was carried out at different levels (social, governmental, economic, institutional and environmental) to obtain further information on the history of these sites and the interactions between inhabitants and the ecosystem, thus identifying the risks that can decrease its productivity and reduce the population of Caribbean flamingos.

Most of the awareness-raising activities were carried out in workshops aimed at both adults and children, and direct contact was established with a significant number of government institutions and NGOs that work to ensure the environment protection of the department of Guajira, which includes the Parks Unit, Corpoguajira, the Tourist Office and the NGOs Asongira and Ricerca e Cooperazione.

Several materials were produced, including a booklet entitled “El flamenco caribeño: Abundancia, comportamiento, distribución y disponibilidad alimentaria” [Caribbean Flamingo: Abundance, Behavior, Distribution

and Food Availability]; an educational brochure “Complejo de humedales costeros de La Guajira: SFF Los Flamencos, Musichi y Soruipa - cultura, ambiente y conservación” [La Guajira Coastal Wetland Complex: SFF Los Flamencos Musichi and Soruipa - Culture, Environment and Conservation,]; and a final document with all the results of the project. These materials are a regional contribution to a working methodology in environmental education for coastal wetland areas. For the dissemination of the materials produced, meetings were held with educational institutions, environmental groups, and local residents in the three coastal wetlands of Navío Quebrado, Musichi and Soruipa. In addition, project results were presented at the Second Ornithology Congress in Bogota, Colombia (August 2007).

### Lessons learned

Working with adults in the communities has been a complicated process because they are rooted to their customs. However, when work is focused on youth and children the goals and outcomes are achieved more easily since they are in a developmental stage and therefore can more easily understand the messages and put them into practice. Young people and children reproduce the information and share it with their families, thus changing the way of thinking and behaviour of the adults.

Environmental education projects are processes that require constant monitoring and need to be continued, since the main objective is to change the attitude of the communities towards nature conservation. Thus, achievements are often not visible in the short term but rather in the medium and long term.

## MEXICO

### Capacitación comunitaria para la elaboración de artesanías como alternativa para disminuir la depredación sobre la tortuga marina *Lepidochelys olivacea* (WFF/00-2/MEX/2)

[Community Training for Making Handicrafts as an Alternative to Reduce Predation on Sea Turtle *Lepidochelys Olivacea*]

Implementing Organization: Instituto de Historia Natural y Ecología

Funds approved by the Wetlands for the Future Fund: US\$ 5,000

### Objectives

- Train people in two communities in manufacturing handicrafts with the theme of the conservation of sea turtles, using waste materials.
- Train people in two communities in T-shirt painting with natural dyes.
- Train people in two communities in food preparation and tourist services.

Through this project, the Institute of Natural History and Ecology worked with two communities of Las Lupes and Barra Zacapulco, where plundering eggs of marine turtle *Lepidochelys olivacea* is increasingly practiced. The project was aimed to provide people with training options to manufacture handicrafts for sale without harming the environment. Community participation was active in all workshops. After the courses, working groups were formed among trained women, especially to produce handicrafts. 40 women of Barra Zacapulco and Las Lupes were trained in manufacturing handicrafts from waste materials; 32 youth and women received training in T-shirt painting with natural dyes; 20 women were trained in preparing fish and seafood-based dishes, addressing issues of



hygiene, attitude and growth vision in a planned and organized way; and 25 restaurant owners were trained in tourist services.

The considerable decline in plundering sea turtle eggs, and the participation by residents in the project for the conservation of sea turtles, showed a positive acceptance and awareness in the population.

## C. Documentation

Under this focus area, the Fund provides support to producing books, CDs, handbooks, leaflets, posters and other reference materials, as well as to setting up visitor centers. Producing videos and radio broadcasts falls as much under this category as under “Awareness-Raising”, while creating websites belongs to “Networking”.

### ARGENTINA

#### Centro de visitantes Parque Nacional Laguna Blanca (WFF/02-2/ARG/4)

[Visitor Center National Park Laguna Blanca]

Implementing Organization: Administración de Parques Nacionales de Argentina

Funds approved by the Wetlands for the Future Fund: US\$ 5,000

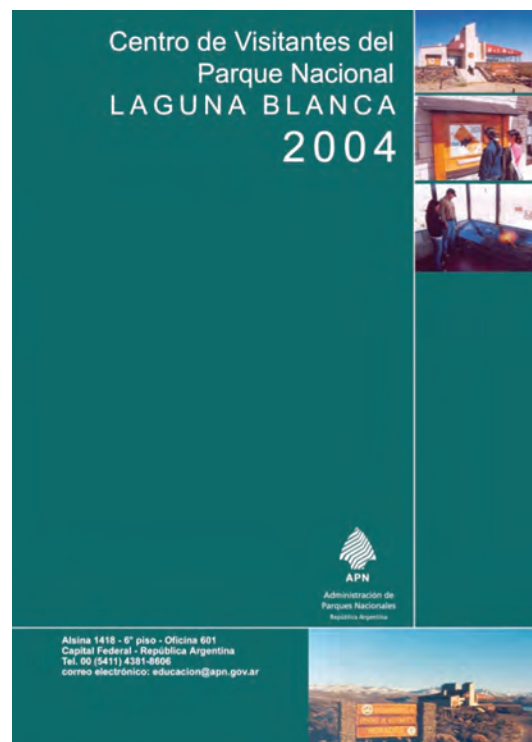
Ramsar Site

#### Objectives

- Enhance awareness by local communities about the values of the protected area.
- Increase the capacity in the protected area to work with communities, residents and visitors.

Through this project, the National Parks Administration of Argentina has set up a visitor center in Laguna Blanca National Park, thus providing the park with a valuable tool for its appreciation and for dissemination. With guidelines based on the functions established for the center, it has a practical and attractive design that allows multiple use of space while retaining the visibility of the exterior landscape. Moreover, natural and cultural resources present in the protected area have been linked conceptually and visually. Local community involvement was an important part of the planning process of the visitor center. Workshops were carried out with the participation of representatives from various fields, where members of the community voiced their opinions about the messages that should be conveyed by the exhibitions. Thus the planning model has allowed a greater integration between the protected area and the community.

A training workshop focusing on the tools provided by environmental interpretation to facilitate the knowledge and management of protected areas was conducted. Participants included staff of protected areas, local guides, and teachers in the areas adjacent to the national park. Taking



into account their role as multipliers, the actions developed in the park have been extended to include educational activities.

The visitor center was officially opened on February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2004, with the presence of the President of the National Parks Administration, the Organization's Board members and authorities of the Laguna Blanca, Lanin, Nahuel Huapi and Lihue Calel National Parks, as well as municipal and provincial authorities.

## ARGENTINA

### **Humedales de la Argentina. Un documental que descubre los secretos más valiosos de los humedales, sus problemas y sus soluciones (WFF/05/AR/7)**

[Wetlands of Argentina: A documentary that unveils the most valuable secrets of wetlands, their problems and solutions]

Implementing Organization: Wetlands International – Program for South America  
Funds approved by the Wetlands for the Future Fund: US\$ 19,546

#### Objectives

- Promote the wise use of wetlands in Argentina.
- Increase awareness of the rich wetlands of Argentina, their importance for the conservation of biological and cultural diversity, and the benefits they provide (resources, functions and attributes). In addition, contribute to the dissemination of the concepts of “biodiversity” and “conservation of historical and cultural heritage” of wetlands, and to the creation of an ecological vision.

This documentary produced by the South American Program of Wetlands International (Buenos Aires) focuses on the diversity of wetlands in Argentina and illustrates with various examples the benefits that these environments provide. Many of these examples were filmed in key wetlands and Ramsar sites in Argentina in the provinces of Córdoba (Laguna Mar Chiquita), Mendoza (Laguna Llanquanelo), Tierra del Fuego (Bahía San Sebastián, Magellanic peatlands, marshes) and Buenos Aires (Laguna de Chascomús). The materials produced will be used to promote the wise use of wetlands in Argentina and the region.

The thematic content of the documentary includes:

- Overview of the diversity of wetlands in Argentina and associated biodiversity, with reference to species of particular interest and/or endangered species.
- Resources provided by wetlands (water, food, raw materials, energy, etc.), with emphasis on the importance of their sustainable use and the consequences of their inadequate utilization.
- The environmental services that wetlands provide (recreation, transportation, retention of toxic substances, etc.) that usually are not taken into account.
- The historical and cultural value of wetlands in Argentina.

The distribution of the documentary is mainly aimed to Argentina, but also to the rest of the region. Hopefully it will serve as an incentive and example for the production of similar documentaries in other countries. It is worth noting that the documentary was developed in close collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development of Argentina (the Ramsar Administrative Authority) and other local partners.



## Lessons learned

The need for this type of audiovisual educational material is evident. Before this project the only available videos were about particular sites, which in some cases are of little use elsewhere. This video with a general approach can be used from Patagonia to northern Argentina and it has been distributed throughout the country.

There has been a coordinated and efficient inter-institutional cooperation to achieve a common objective: to produce audiovisual material to raise awareness about the importance of wetlands and the services they provide to humans. In particular, it is important to stress the cooperation of Wetlands International (WI) with the Working Group of Water Resources (Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development of Argentina - S AyDS), who have distributed and continue to distribute the video throughout Argentina.

## URUGUAY

### Documental “Corredor de Vida” (WFF/03/UY/1)

[Documentary “Corridor of Life”]

Implementing Organizations: ECOVIVIR Productora (Uruguay), NGO Alter Vida (Paraguay) and Fundación PROTEGER (Argentina)

Funds approved by the Wetlands for the Future Fund: US\$ 19,300

### Objectives

- Promote self-management ability in wetland ecosystems through participatory policies and community integration.
- Ensure wetland conservation, with the support of the Ramsar Convention, involving communities and government officials from Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay dedicated to the conservation and management of these ecosystems.
- Highlight through the documentary some of the strategies that are being promoted to achieve a sustainable and intelligent real improvement in the quality of life of communities that depend on the wealth of wet areas, rivers and water bodies that form this “corridor of life”.



The documentary “Corridor of Life” is a visual tool created by Studio ECOVIVIR (Uruguay) and partner organizations, the NGO Alter Vida (Paraguay) and the Foundation PROTEGER (Argentina), to raise awareness of some of the major wetlands in South America, placing emphasis on a corridor shared by Paraguay, Argentina and Uruguay.

This documentary presents relevant aspects of wetlands in the three countries and disseminates conservation and wise use experiences. The work also highlights the social participatory process in the creation of new Ramsar sites and the River Coastline Wetland Corridor initiative. As part of the outreach strategy, the

documentary was broadcast on television in several countries during the celebration of World Wetlands Day on 2 February 2004, and it has been shown in educational institutions.

## D. Wetland Management and Tools

Projects focused mainly on infrastructure and equipment, baseline and monitoring data about the characteristics of a site, guidance documents (e.g., management plans, policies and consensus documents), maps, software and databases all fall under this category.

### ARGENTINA

#### **Una propuesta estratégica para humedales del Chaco Salteño (WFF/05/AR/4)**

[A Strategic Proposal for Wetlands of the Salta Chaco]

Implementing Organization: Fundación OIKOS

Funds approved by the Wetlands for the Future Fund: US\$ 16,000

#### **Objectives**

- Contribute to the planning and management of Lote Fiscal No. 26<sup>10</sup> under the wetland management concept.
- Promote wetland conservation in the province of Salta in northwestern Argentina.
- Identify wetlands in the work area and survey their position and general characteristics as possible areas for conservation of a natural ecosystem.
- Characterize wetlands according to subsystems and hydrological features.
- Analyze the dynamics of wetlands in the years 1989, 2003 and 2004 using satellite imagery.
- Conduct biodiversity studies in some of the most important wetlands.
- Analyze the impact caused by the activity of social actors associated with this ecosystem.
- Propose a system to monitor biodiversity for specific wetlands that are considered important.
- Inform and train local actors according to the survey results.
- Publicize the importance of wetlands surveyed locally and in the province of Salta.

With this project, the OIKOS Foundation has identified and surveyed<sup>11</sup> 31 wetlands in the Salta Chaco. Activities included the evaluation of these wetlands and their dynamics in recent times and a study of its biodiversity. Three types of wetlands were found: 19 madrejones [dry stream beds], 10 ravines and 2 marshes. The project contributed to a better understanding of the wetland area by surveying, classifying and studying the dynamics through satellite imagery. An initial monitoring was performed on herpetofauna and birds, which resulted in new records and other tests to be applied in future monitoring activities. In addition, impacts of productive activities were identified and prioritized and a monitoring system of the Salta Chaco wetlands was launched, based on information from satellite images, types of flora and fauna, and local meteorological records.

10 Location of the City of La Unión. It has two types of residents: members of an indigenous Wichi community called Ñandutí and Creole smallholders, descendants of the Spanish conquerors.

11 The methodology for this type of survey is described in Handbook No. 10 of the Ramsar Convention. It considers information relating to site name, geographical location, size, boundaries, geomorphic position, linkages to other habitats, climate, soil, hydrology, flora and fauna associated with each site, as well as use of and pressure on flora and fauna, land tenure and benefits provided by each site, among other considerations.

As part of the project, local stakeholders were trained on the importance of wetlands in the area, their biodiversity and the impacts caused by human activities. Different governmental and non-governmental organizations participated in the training, together with indigenous communities, especially the Wichi, including women, youth and children. Furthermore, materials and dissemination mechanisms (posters, booklets and presentation of videos on wetlands) were developed in the work area and in the province of Salta, highlighting the importance of wetland conservation in the Chaco.

The participation of some residents as companions during surveys on the sites and the continued presence of researchers created a flow of exchange between actors about their concerns regarding the use of wetlands by the residents of Lote Fiscal No. 26. These concerns, especially by the Wichi community, have resulted in training on the value of wetlands, the impacts of human activities and the importance of biodiversity conservation.

The outreach meeting was held in the village of La Union, in the Rivadavia Banda Sur Department. Participants included officials from the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Production and Provincial Legislature, representatives of NGOs and productive sector institutions, indigenous communities and farmers. This study of the Chaco wetlands is considered very comprehensive, as it includes the dynamics of these wetlands, the human activities carried out in them and their biodiversity. It can also be replicated in other types of wetlands in the region.

## BOLIVIA

### Recuperación del Humedal Palmar de las Islas (WFF/05/BO/1)

[Recovery of the Palmar de las Islas Wetland]

Implementing Organizations: Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Bolivia, Fundación Kaa-lyá, Parque Nacional Kaa-lyá del Gran Chaco, Capitanía de Alto y Bajo Isoso, Museo de Historia Natural Noel Kempff Mercado

Funds approved by the Wetlands for the Future Fund: US\$ 5,000

Sitio Ramsar

#### Objective

- Contribute baseline information for the recovery and adequate Management of the Palmar de las Islas Wetland.

Through this project, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Bolivia, together with the Kaa-lyá Foundation, the Kaa-lyá del Gran Chaco National Park, the Capitanía de Alto y Bajo Isoso and the Museum of Natural History Noel Kempff Mercado, prepared a comprehensive technical study for the recovery of the Ramsar site Palmar de las Islas. Project activities included research on the biological diversity, the ecology of several species and the wetland as a whole. These investigations generated baseline information to follow up on the state of the wetland over time, thus allowing the observation of natural regeneration of the environment and the possible recovery of the wetland as a whole.



To educate the general public, an illustrative guide has been produced, based on the results of the research on the wetland. Known as one of the most important wetlands in Bolivia, Palmar de las Islas is under constant threat due to livestock activities which destroy wildlife and to the pollution of its bodies of water. Through the project, an evaluation of taxonomic species living in the wetland was carried out, which will serve as a base to measure the progress made in the wetland's recovery in the future.

Research was conducted on invertebrates and vertebrates of the site, including a diversity of dragonflies (Insecta,

Odonata), dung beetles (Insecta, Scarabeidae, Scarabeinae), butterflies (Insecta, Lepidoptera) and a diversity and abundance of medium and large mammals, birds, amphibians and reptiles, as well as the ecology of important species in the area, such as *Jabiru mycteria* (Aves, Ciconiidae), *Dolichotis salinicola* (Rodentia, Caviidae) and *Geochelone carbonaria* (Testudines, Testudinidae). As for the vegetation, an emphasis was placed on the regeneration of forest and palm trees.

In this work, three young scientists, seven students, nine local assistants and three park rangers of the Kaa-lyá protected area were involved, who have directly benefited from professional training and personal experience.



Currently a database on the biological biodiversity of the wetland is in place. In some cases, knowledge of certain groups has improved, while in others the results obtained by this project are the first for the area.

Through the project, baseline information was obtained to follow up and monitor the wetland, particularly in biodiversity aspects of the site and changes in vegetation. The information gained will be the basic input to develop a management plan for the site, where zoning of the area will be carried out by assigning use categories ensuring the wetland's recovery and sustainability. In addition, this information will be useful to prepare the second Management Plan for the Kaa-lyá National Park and Integrated Management Area.

The results of this research were presented at the 5th Congress for Local Researchers in Natural Resources in the Park Kaa-lyá del Gran Chaco (2006), and at the 5th National Biology Congress (2007), both held in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

## Lessons learned

The participation of parabiologists trained in survey techniques of flora and fauna, as well as of biology students at the local university, was of great importance during the project.

The biological information obtained complemented the limited existing data and was of great value as a basic input to prepare the justification document for the creation of a private reserve and its management plan, currently in process.

Studies were made possible by inter-institutional agreements between WCS, the Kaa-lyá Foundation and the Museum of Natural History Noel Kempff Mercado, which encouraged the completion of fieldwork and reinforced the link between students of the local university and the Museum.



## CHILE

### Diagnóstico y Monitoreo Participativo del Humedal del Yali (WFF/02/CHI/1)

[Diagnostic and Participatory Monitoring of the Yali Wetland]

Implementing Organization: Municipality of Santo Domingo

Funds approved by the Wetlands for the Future Fund: US\$ 10,000

Ramsar Site

#### Objectives

- Conduct three self-diagnosis workshops with local residents of the wetland.
- Examine the main biological and limnic aspects of the wetland in each locality.
- Conduct a general analysis that integrates social and environmental aspects in lands of the wetland.
- Edit a set of audiovisual materials on rational methods of farming and forestry.
- Conduct five educational workshops to disseminate the findings and recommendations for the wise use of the Yali wetland.

Through the development of this project, the Municipality of Santo Domingo, together with the inhabitants of the Yali Wetland, was able to diagnose the main threats to its integrity, building with them, through surveys, workshops and personal interviews, a baseline of the Yali territory. Historical data were collected on the origin of its inhabitants and the main uses of the surrounding lands. In addition, after making agreements with academic institutions, it was possible to establish the degree of organic pollution of the water bodies, characterize the climate and hydrology, and assess the impact on bodies of water from major economic activities taking place in surrounding areas.

An informative document entitled “Humedales: valores, funciones y amenazas” [Wetlands - its values, functions and threats] was produced, as well as a video on wetlands, particularly the Yali Wetland. The latter has been very well received by local and national authorities and the community, and it has been broadcast repeatedly by the provincial television channel.

Due to the impact of the project and its outreach materials it was possible to contribute to the creation of the Advisory Committee of Yali, established on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2003, to implement the wise use of this wetland. The committee is composed of major provincial and communal authorities, and its members include representatives of neighborhood councils from different wetland communities. This committee holds monthly meetings to discuss the main actions to achieve economic development in harmony with the wetlands and to inform of any problems found and their possible solutions. It is noteworthy that the committee also includes members of the main industrial estates in the area.



#### Lessons learned

This project has achieved an increased contact with people living in the wetland, and they have been of great support to start new activities. On the other hand, it was noted that it is not easy to carry out these types of projects with a municipality where political conflicts and rivalries between officials may hinder or halt the processes to start new activities, and where lengthy bureaucratic procedures must be met to perform any actions.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Lessons learned extracted from the Wetlands for the Future Fund Questionnaire completed by implementers of project WFF/02/CHI/1 in 2006.

## COSTA RICA

### **Apoyo a procesos regionales de gestión ambiental participativa para la implementación de la Resolución VIII.36 (y afines) de Ramsar (WFF/04/CR/1)**

[Support to Regional Processes of Environmental Participatory Management for the Implementation of Ramsar Resolution VIII.36 (and related resolutions)]

Implementing Organization: Foundation for Environmental Participatory Management –Antigua (FUN-GAP – Antigua)

Funds approved by the Wetlands for the Future Fund: US\$ 15,000

#### **Objectives:**

- Strengthen the effective use of Environmental Participatory Management (EPM) to promote sustainable development and to implement agreements of the Ramsar Convention and the Biodiversity Convention.
- Prepare the EPM Action Framework proposal, strengthen local capacity in participatory planning and implement comprehensive management strategies and national environmental policies.
- Ensure the fulfillment of the agreements under the Ramsar Convention (Resolution VIII.36) and related resolutions through the exchange of information on the effective implementation of Environmental Participatory Management as a conservation tool.
- Support the Contracting Parties and Ramsar's Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) in applying Environmental Participatory Management as a conservation tool, as requested in Resolution VIII.36.

This project was developed by FUNGAP-Antigua and is part of an overall strategy that seeks to contribute, through the systematization and generation of information based on practical experience, to strengthening environmental participatory management as an integral part of sustainable development, with particular emphasis on wetlands in the Americas.

In September 2005 an International Seminar entitled “Environmental Participatory Management: Lessons Learned through Experience” was held in Sarapiquí, Costa Rica, with 30 participants. As part of the results, the document “Successful Experiences in Environmental Participatory Management of Wetlands of the Americas” was published.

The distribution of the obtained results through written, electronic and visual means was extensive. In addition, a parallel event on environmental participatory management was held during the IX Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP9) of Ramsar in Kampala, Uganda, to present and discuss the results of the project.

#### **Lessons learned**

An important part of the lessons learned from this project is that wetland conservation is closely linked to progress in reducing poverty in the surrounding communities. This is determined by participatory processes that are effective, inclusive and consolidated over time.

In addition, five areas were identified that determine the success of conservation and development initiatives in wetlands: the institutionalization of participation, appropriate and respectful integration of culture and local traditions, gender and intergenerational issues, coordination within and among institutions, and economic sustainability. Effective results in achieving the wise use of wetlands depend primarily on these areas. Therefore, NGOs, governments, cooperation agencies and local communities must focus their efforts to strengthen each of them.

## COSTA RICA

### **Elaboración del Manual de Procedimientos para el Manejo de Manglares de Costa Rica y su Aplicación en la Capacitación de Funcionarios del Sistema Nacional de Áreas de Conservación de Ministerio de Ambiente y Energía de Costa Rica (WFF/01/CRI/2)**

[Preparation of the Manual of Procedures for the Management of Mangroves of Costa Rica and its Application in the Training of Officials of the National System of Conservation Areas Ministry of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica]

Implementing Organization: Sistema Nacional de Áreas de Conservación (SINAC)

Funds approved by the Wetlands for the Future Fund: US\$ 15,000

#### **Objectives**

- Prepare a handbook of procedures for the management of mangroves in Costa Rica to serve as guide for the managers of conservation areas.
- Provide technical and administrative training to officials of the Sistema Nacional de Áreas de Conservación related to conservation and management of mangrove ecosystems.

Through this project, the Sistema Nacional de Áreas de Conservación (SINAC) has produced the “Manual de procedimientos para el manejo de los manglares de Costa Rica” [A Handbook of Procedures for the Mangrove Management of Costa Rica], which is a technical-administrative tool that will allow officials from the Ministry of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica to make decisions based on criteria established by the authorities responsible for mangrove management, thus preventing subjectivity and decisions that are different for similar cases. The handbook includes technical aspects concerning mangroves, a legal framework, and administrative matters related to mangrove management.

The participatory process led to the preparation of the handbook, together with officials of the Ministry of Environment, researchers and technicians linked to mangrove management. Once the first version of the document had been completed, training workshops were conducted and the validation of the handbook ensued. Sixty people, including researchers, technicians and resource managers of the mangrove ecosystem actively participated in this process through the workshops.

The handbook is practical, informative and simple, and thus it is considered as a useful tool for mangrove managers in Costa Rica and a reference for other Spanish speaking countries.



## MEXICO

### **Formación de personal y capacitación técnica para manejadores de sitios Ramsar (WFF/06/MX/1)**

[Personnel Instruction and Technical Training for Managers of Ramsar Sites]

Implementing Organization: Instituto de Ecología A.C. (INECOL)

Funds approved by the Wetlands for the Future Fund: US\$ 19,613

#### **Objectives**

- Instruct and train personnel in the characterization, monitoring and management of Ramsar sites in Mexico to set the basis for their restoration and/or conservation.
- Create five modular courses to provide information and train managers of Ramsar sites in Mexico.
- Prepare work and consultation materials to extrapolate the training tool to other regions and reach a wider audience both in Mexico and in the American tropics.

With this project, the Instituto de Ecología A.C. has provided instruction and training in techniques for the characterization, monitoring and management of Ramsar sites. Trainees included around 20 students and staff of the Ramsar Administrative Authority in Mexico (CONANP) working in Ramsar sites. This project has laid the groundwork for monitoring, restoration and/or preservation of these sites. Five workshops were conducted during five weeks with a theoretical-practical approach. The topics and course content were the following:

- Vegetation structure and composition: Characterization of the vegetation structure of floodplain forests, *popales*, *tulares*, mangroves and sea grass.
- Fauna: Sampling and identification of aquatic insects, fish, birds, amphibians, reptiles and mammals; development of biological integrity indicators.
- Physical environment: Physical-chemical characterization and analysis of surface, interstitial and underground water quality; monitoring of the hydroperiod; soil characterization; topography measurement.
- Environmental services and restoration: Productivity measurement; establishment of artificial wetlands for water treatment; restoration techniques for mangrove and freshwater wetlands (flows, vegetation, etc.); environmental services and wetland functions.
- Wetlands and society: Using Ramsar handbooks; participatory environmental management; communication of projects; generation of sustainable management projects; local perceptions about wetlands; and conflict management for the use of wetlands.

For the design of the courses an expert workshop was held on various topics about flora and fauna, wetlands, restoration, environmental education and social participation. Eleven technical handbooks were produced, all of which place emphasis on the issues of monitoring the physical environment. These handbooks served as support for the courses and were made available either online as electronic documents or printed in the form of brochures and notebooks. Through this method of distribution, lessons learned in the course have been consolidated by the participants and information is accessible for a larger number of users. Posters were also created to publicize Ramsar sites in Veracruz, wetland types and their functions, and environmental services.

The exchange between teachers has resulted in the creation of common visions to interact more creatively and efficiently to restore an herbaceous wetland in the area. In addition, the development of a book about methodologies influenced teachers to increase efforts and include other issues they considered important. The technical material that was produced through this project will help to improve monitoring and management methods in Mexico and the project could be replicated in other countries in the region.

## Lessons learned

Through the design and comprehensive vision of the course covering environment, flora, fauna and society and through the classes and field workshops, students and many of the teachers gained a different vision on the complexity and importance of wetlands. This provided elements for them to design the management plan and the monitoring that is necessary to understand the wetland's current situation and the changes that should take place in the future.

Moreover, the need for materials (methodological and conceptual) in Spanish has been reinforced. These will support the work of non-academic persons who lack access to information sources in their language.

## E. Academic and Research

These refer to those interventions whose main goals are to obtain and process information without making it readily available to the people in charge, or alternatively only do so through specialized journals and theses. Forum presentations at national and international events and new curricula (e.g., introduction of wetlands subjects into academic programs) are also included.

### ARGENTINA

#### **Publicación de un libro sobre Mar Chiquita y los humedales asociados (WFF/00/ARG/1)**

[Publication of a book on Mar Chiquita and associated wetlands]

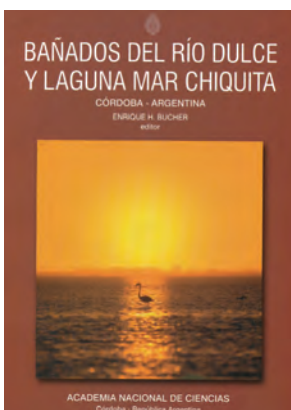
Implementing Organization: Academia Nacional de Ciencias de Argentina

Funds approved by the Wetlands for the Future Fund: US\$ 8,860

Ramsar Site

#### Objectives

- Prepare university level teaching materials on the management and conservation of wetlands ecosystems.
- Produce a book about the ecology, conservation and sustainable management of Lake Mar Chiquita in Córdoba, Argentina.



Through this project, the National Academy of Sciences of Argentina published the book entitled “Baños del Río Dulce y Laguna Mar Chiquita”, after a comprehensive compilation of current knowledge about the Ramsar site Baños del Río Dulce y Laguna Mar Chiquita. This book was the result of the collaboration of 34 authors and it is primarily aimed at synthesizing the existing knowledge on this ecosystem and providing a detailed evaluation of the environmental risk in the region, with particular reference to current projects for water extraction from the rivers feeding Mar Chiquita.

The publication presents a wide range of information, including issues related to the description, conservation and sustainable use of the wetland, as well as historical information, physical and biological descriptions and human interactions with the wetland (past and present). The book contains a wealth of images that provide, along with the text, a comprehensive information guide about the site.

The public presentation of the book took place during March and April 2007 at the headquarters of the National Academy of Sciences in Córdoba, and in Miramar, the largest city within the Ramsar site.

From its wide distribution in schools, museums, libraries and other public institutions in Mar Chiquita, the book also has become a guide and source of regional information, used by many readers. In addition, it may be used in undergraduate and postgraduate courses aimed at the conservation and sustainable management of Laguna Mar Chiquita and neighboring wetlands. Another very important aspect of the publication is the contribution it provides to the management plan of the Ramsar site, because of its comprehensive database covering all aspects required according to recommendations of the Ramsar Convention for the development of management plans.

### Lessons learned

Ramsar sites need informative synthesis books (on a technical level but accessible to the general public). These provide decision-makers, politicians, conservation organizations, teachers and students and the general public a guide and source of comprehensive information. These publications should also include an analysis of the problems and needs for action in priority order. When such books as these are not available, the entire civil society of the region finds it difficult to know, understand and appreciate the importance of the place where they live. Furthermore, the availability of a book of this type greatly facilitates environmental education and involvement of local communities.

Mar Chiquita's experience has shown that the book has been in high demand, and that a well-supported approach to the conservation needs has provided the conceptual framework where citizens (and particularly politicians) may have a holistic and impartial vision of their region. Finally, access to this publication has allowed the site to become much better known and appreciated throughout Argentina.

It is crucial that the significance of Ramsar sites is incorporated into formal education systems, particularly in local populations within sites. For this, we need books and other suitable educational materials to provide the required information. Mar Chiquita's experience shows that before the book appeared, teachers at primary and secondary schools in the region lacked accessible information sources for their classes. The book has also been incorporated into courses for teachers held in the area.

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## VENEZUELA

### **Programa educativo ambiental en humedales de Venezuela: Capacitación para el desarrollo de Proyectos Pedagógicos de Aula (PPAs) y Unidades Didácticas Ambientales (UDAs) (WFF/03/VE/1)**

[Environmental Educational Program in Wetlands in Venezuela: Training for the Development of Pedagogical Classroom Projects (PPA) and Environmental Didactic Units (UDA)]

Implementing Organization: Fundación Laboratorio Ecología Humana

Funds approved by the Wetlands for the Future Fund: US\$ 19,570

#### **Objective**

- Implement a training program for students in the areas of education, biology and social sciences about didactic strategies that support the basic national curriculum. This has the purpose of promoting awareness and education in school communities within Ramsar sites and other Venezuelan wetlands and in areas surrounding wetlands to educate students on the importance and value of these ecosystems.

Through the project “Programa educativo ambiental en humedales de Venezuela: Capacitación para el desarrollo de Proyectos Pedagógicos de Aula (PPAs) y Unidades Didácticas Ambientales” [Environmental educational program on wetlands in Venezuela: Training for the development of Pedagogical Classroom Projects and Environmental Didactic Units], the Foundation Laboratorio Ecología Humana has provided an educational response to ignorance about and inadequate assessment of wetlands in Venezuela. Although at a formal level environment is a central theme in junior high schools, educational interventions on the subject of wetlands are scarce. Thus, teaching strategies need to be developed, such as the Pedagogical Classroom Projects and Environmental Didactic Units. Current university programs in areas related to the wetland issue also cover the topic insufficiently, which means the loss of a valuable opportunity to train future professionals in this specialty. Four wetlands in Venezuela were included in this project: Lago de Valencia, Laguna de Unare and Ramsar sites Laguna de Tacarigua National Park and Cuare Wildlife Refuge.

A pedagogical model and 21 pedagogical classroom projects were designed by community teachers, as well as five environmental didactic units on wetlands and their conservation. In addition, 49 university students were trained in the design, execution and assessment of didactic strategies, and 104 members of the educational communities were trained in implementing Pedagogical Classroom Projects and Environmental Didactic Units on the topic of wetlands.

Educational materials include: 1) The book “Educación para la sustentabilidad de los humedales de Venezuela: Una experiencia de capacitación a docentes de Educación Básica y estudiantes universitarios” [Education for the sustainability of wetlands in Venezuela: A training experience for junior high school teachers and university students]; 2) A university handbook entitled “Curso interuniversitario: Educación y gestión para la sustentabilidad de los humedales de Venezuela” [Inter-university course: Education and management for the sustainability of wetlands in Venezuela]; 3) A handbook for teachers entitled “Programa educativo ambiental en humedales de Venezuela: Capacitación para el desarrollo de Proyectos Pedagógicos de Aula” [Environmental educational program on wetlands in Venezuela: Training for the development of Pedagogical Classroom Projects]; and 4) An informative CD including all materials produced during the project. The indirectly benefited population totals approximately 2,880 school students and their families.

As a result of the Project, the course “Educación Ambiental para la sustentabilidad de los humedales de Venezuela” [Environmental education for the sustainability of wetlands in Venezuela] has been incorporated into the curriculum of the Master in Environmental Education of the Pedagogical Institute of Caracas, Universidad Pedagógica Experimental Libertador. The course has the advantage of offering the opportunity to integrate functions of the university (teaching, research and outreach) around major social and environmental issues, such as conservation and sustainable use of wetlands. Furthermore, there is a growing line of research in the area of “Environmental education in wetlands of Venezuela”.



The working method developed has been replicated in other wetlands in Venezuela, in addition to the four wetlands addressed by the project. Work was carried out in Ciénaga Los Olivitos Wildlife Refuge and Fishing Reserve (State of Zulia), Estero de Camaguán Wildlife Reserve (State of Guárico) and Juan Pablo Peñaloza National Park (State of Táchira). In addition, work is starting in the Laguna La Reina wetland (State of Miranda).

## Lessons learned

As a result of the Project, networking between the institutions Universidad Pedagógica Experimental Libertador, Universidad de Carabobo, Universidad Simón Bolívar, El Ministerio del Poder Popular para el Ambiente, Instituto Nacional de Parques Nacionales, as well as junior high school institutions and the Foundation Laboratorio de Ecología Humana (EcoHumana), have been strengthened and integrated in achieving a common goal: the conservation of wetlands in Venezuela.

Didactic Units are publications that have motivated other research groups in developing similar materials for other wetlands, including other protected areas such as El Ávila National Park.

## VENEZUELA

### **Publicación y distribución del Atlas del Agua de la Cuenca del Lago de Valencia y Manual del Monitoreo del Agua (WFF/03/VE/2)**

[Publication and distribution of the Water Atlas of the Lake Valencia Basin and Water Monitoring Handbook]  
Implementing Organization: Fundación Tierra Viva  
Funds approved by the Wetlands for the Future Fund: US\$ 18,500

### **Objectives**

- Prepare the design and printing of the Water Atlas and the Water Monitoring Handbook of Lake Valencia.
- Validate the designed materials with a pilot group of experts and teachers in the Lake Valencia Basin.
- Carry out an event to present and promote the produced educational materials and consolidate the knowledge and conservation of water resources and wetlands in the Lake Valencia Basin.
- Distribute printed materials in schools, public libraries and community and municipal centers.
- Carry out two monitoring activities with a group of pilot institutions and schools that have received the materials to determine the use of the materials by teachers and children.
- Carry out a results presentation reflecting the systematization and experience gained in the process.

Since its inception in 1991, the Foundation Tierra Viva has focused many of its efforts on producing educational materials in response to the needs of teachers and students, and to the local environmental situation. This project is a clear example of these efforts, involving specialists, teachers, national and international institutions and the general community. The project focused on producing educational support materials for teachers in the schools located in the basin, which will contribute to improving the understanding of the sustainable use, protection and adequate management of water and wetlands in the Lake Valencia Basin in the central region of Venezuela.





As part of the project, a forum was conducted on the situation of water resources and wetlands in the Lake Valencia Basin, and two visits were held at schools and institutions who had received the educational materials in order to evaluate their use. The materials were distributed to schools, public libraries and community and municipal centers. Overall, the project met all the expected objectives and exceeded some, including the production of more copies of the materials and the realization of a second forum with key actors of the Lake Valencia Basin for better coverage, dissemination and distribution of materials.

### Lessons learned

For a successful production of educational materials, regardless of their complexity, it is essential to form a good team, conduct a needs assessment of users, and involve specialists and users of the material during its development. Similarly, other key factors for success are the distribution of the materials, as well as supporting and creating strategic alliances (networks of schools, libraries or companies) and promoting the commitment and interest by public and private institutions to reflect on and publicize the different social-environmental situations and needs in the region on which the material is focused.<sup>13</sup>

The Water Atlas of the Lake Valencia Basin is a publication that has been and still is a tool to discover both the wealth and the problems in this region of Venezuela. It concentrates, in one single publication, the geographical, political and environmental data that are useful for formal and informal education processes.

Moreover, the Water Monitoring Handbook has provided tools to teachers and community groups to take concrete actions in schools and communities oriented towards solving problems around the water issue.

## F. Networking

This section includes any initiative aimed at establishing or strengthening linkages between specialized and non-specialized groups. In addition to the usual multi-stakeholder meetings and congresses, this area also includes tools such as e-newsletters, virtual forums and joint (regional) initiatives.

### COLOMBIA

#### **Congreso Mundial de Páramos (WFF/01-2/COL/4)**

[World Congress on Páramos]

Implementing Organization: Conservation International - Colombia

Funds approved by the Wetlands for the Future Fund: US\$ 15,000

#### **Objectives**

- Establish an appropriate scenario to exchange knowledge and experiences on páramo ecosystems.
- Conduct a collective assessment on existing knowledge about páramo ecosystems, the most urgent information needs and strategies to overcome the gaps encountered.
- Gain an integrated view on socio-economic problems in páramo areas.

<sup>13</sup> Lessons learned extracted from the Wetlands for the Future Fund Questionnaire completed by implementers of project WFF/03/VE/2 in 2006.

- Advance a diagnosis and assessment of environmental services that the páramos provide to society and a description of the institutional regulation and management framework.
- Make a joint analysis of the causes and consequences of current problems in the páramos, considering climate, biological, socio-economic and cultural aspects.
- Assess the adaptability and vulnerability of the páramos.
- Identify priority geographic areas where immediate attention is required.
- Develop strategies and action lines aimed at the conservation and sustainable management of the páramo.
- Promote the implementation of specific monitoring systems about climate change impacts on páramo ecosystems.

Conservation International-Colombia, with the support of the Wetlands for the Future Fund, organized the World Congress on Páramos, held in Paipa, Colombia, from 13 to 18 May 2002. Participants included experts on the themes at national and international level and representatives from the business sector, the community, and governmental and non-governmental organizations, both national and international.



Five thematic symposia were conducted, which included lectures and oral presentations, panels and workshops. Congress activities resulted in:

- A statement that established the importance of the páramo as a strategic ecosystem at international, national, regional and local levels.
- A diagnosis of the current situation in páramo ecosystems.
- A Proposed Plan of Action which refers to the main activities to be advanced with a regional approach by the Grupo Páramo Internacional and Working Groups on Páramos in each country at an early stage.
- An Environmental Accounting Strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable Use.
- Lines of Action for the Future, which will be the profiles of specific projects to be developed under the guidance of the strategy identified during the Working Groups.

All information collected and the Declaration and Plan of Action were presented in the Congress Report. Subsequently, in 2002, the Institute of Hydrology, Meteorology and Environmental Studies (IDEAM) published the book *Páramos y Ecosistemas Alto Andinos de Colombia en Condición HotSpot y Global Climatic Tensor*.

## PERU

### **V Jornada Nacional de Ornitología - Santuario Lagunas de Mejía (WFF/02-2/PER/1)**

[5th National Ornithology Conference – Lagunas de Mejía Sanctuary]

Implementing Organization: Instituto Nacional de Recursos Naturales - INRENA

Funds approved by the Wetlands for the Future Fund: US\$ 16,300

#### **Objectives**

- Promote, raise awareness and publicize the importance of ornithology among researchers, bird watchers, users, students and the general public.
- Support the organization of the 5th National Ornithology Conference (V JNO).
- Raise awareness of the value of wetlands as habitat of waterfowl.
- Collect and encourage research in the field of ornithology.

With this project, the National Institute of National Resources (INRENA), through the leadership of the National Sanctuary Lagunas de Mejía and the Institute of Environmental Science and Management of the National University of San Agustín in Arequipa, has encouraged, raised awareness and disseminated the importance of ornithology among researchers, bird watchers, users, students and the general public in the framework of the 5th National Ornithology Conference, which took place from 19 to 24 October 2003 in Arequipa and Mejía (Peru). Participants included 242 professionals and students, both Peruvian and foreign.

During the conference, 96 research papers were submitted. The abstracts have been published in the local scientific journal *Dilloniana*. Activities included 14 lectures, the symposium “Role of Natural Areas Protected by the State in the Conservation of Birds”, and the workshops “Second Workshop on High Andean Flamingos”, “National Workshop on Areas of Importance for the Conservation of Birds” and “Bird Monitoring”. Furthermore, scattered information was systematized and a postgraduate course was conducted.

The Report on the 5th National Ornithology Conference was published in the local journal *Dilloniana*. It includes 12 keynote addresses and 38 scientific papers that were presented at the conference.

With the income generated by the conference and through the initiative of researchers a fund was established for applied research in the field of wetland ornithology. This activity has encouraged research for theses related to wetlands and waterfowl in Peru.

## Effectiveness and Impact of the Fund on the Conservation and Wise Use of Wetlands in the Americas

The Wetlands for the Future initiative is one of the most important financial and operational tools of the Ramsar Convention to support the implementation of the Convention in Latin America and the Caribbean. As of December 2008, the Fund had contributed US\$ 3,365,749 to support actions for the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

The fact that not only governments but also non-governmental organizations and academic institutions can access the Fund has enabled the implementation of a wide variety of activities ranging from support to theses on wetlands, to drawing up management plans, policy development, inventories, waterfowl monitoring, training courses and strengthening of Wetland Committees.

Similarly, as indicated by the study conducted by the Ramsar Secretariat in 2006 and the projects implemented during 2007 and 2008, the Fund has clearly enabled wetland assessment and the implementation of information tools (39.3%), strengthened networks and synergies (39%), raised awareness of wetlands (32%), and built capacity (33%).

As well, activities have contributed to improving wetlands at a local and regional level (60%), and training projects have had a multiplier effect, either replicating the knowledge gained, mobilizing resources or implementing actions in 73% of the cases.

“The Wetlands for the Future initiative has been crucial to Ecuador, to make investigations on site about the ecological characteristics of different types of wetlands; strengthen the control and monitoring of Ramsar sites, with the direct participation of local communities; develop community ecotourism in wetlands; examine and mitigate threats on wetlands; train local communities in wetland restoration and in alternative economic activities; and meet one of the most important commitments of Ramsar’s Contracting Parties, specifically, the discussion of the legislation and institutions related to wetland management nationwide. Furthermore, actions taken include the logistical support to local communities; environmental education targeting school children; organization of events for the exchange of experiences on wetland management at a national level; and changes in the use of natural resources in wetlands by the local communities.”

Sergio Lasso  
Ramsar Focal Point  
Ecuador

If we analyze the impact of the Fund with regard to the objectives of the Convention and the Strategic Plan 2003-2008 with a key result area, it is clear that the Fund has supported, through the focus areas of Training and Capacity Building and Documentation, the General Objective 1. “Wise Use of Wetlands” and its operational objectives 3. *Integration of wetland wise use in sustainable development*, 6. *Local communities, indigenous peoples and cultural values*; 7. *Private sector involvement*; 9. *Communication, education and public awareness* and 20. *Education and training*.

Through the focus area of Wetland Management and Tools, the Fund has contributed mainly to the implementation of General Objective 1. “Wise use of wetlands”, through its Operational Objectives: 1. *Inventory and assessment* and 2. *Policies and legislation, including impact assessment and valuation*. It has also supported the implementation of General Objective 2. “Wetlands of International Importance” and its Operational Objective 11. *Management planning and monitoring of Ramsar sites*.

As for the focus area of Research and Academic Activities, the Fund has favored mainly the General Objective 3. “International Cooperation” and the Operational Objectives: 12. *Management of shared water resources, wetlands and wetland species*, and 14. *Sharing of expertise and information*.

“For Brazil, the Wetlands for the Future Fund is essential and represents an important stimulus in the implementation of the Ramsar Convention, for its quick and easy access, the effective analysis by examiners and, above all, the priority given to smaller projects to leverage larger projects (seed money). These projects serve mainly to create a knowledge network regarding areas of Sites of International Importance recognized by the Convention, covering the concepts of conservation and wise use of wetlands, as well as outreach activities and dissemination of concepts, principles and Convention guidelines in the country. We highlight the recent opportunity of having funds for strengthening the National Wetlands Committee. As of 2008, 17 projects totaling approximately US\$ 280,000 have been funded in Brazil.”

Ana Paula Prates and María Raquel de Carvalho  
Management of Aquatic Biodiversity and Fishery Resources  
Secretariat of Biodiversity and Forests  
Ministry of Environment  
Brazil

“The Wetlands for the Future Fund is an initiative that has been strongly used by organizations in Argentina. Every year the Department of Environment and Sustainable Development of the Nation, authority for implementing the Convention at a national level in Argentina, performs dissemination activities, encouraging governmental, academic and non-governmental organizations to submit projects that promote training, communication and wise use of wetlands in Argentina. Support is also provided to those who request it with regard to the preparation of projects in order to comply with the guidelines for submission.

Since 1995, more than 50 projects in Argentina have received funding from this initiative. This has enabled direct financial support to institutions that are conducting activities on wetlands, providing access to local organizations that in many cases have been strengthened and have achieved results with a high local impact. Many projects have been developed through partnerships between civil society organizations and local authorities with direct responsibility for the management of wetlands and Ramsar sites.

Hundreds of people in different parts of Argentina have enhanced their knowledge of the importance of wetlands and the benefits they provide to society. Recipients of training activities have been largely technicians of local administrations and members of local communities associated with wetlands. A significant amount of technical and outreach materials have been prepared, published and distributed, which has contributed to easing the pressure on these ecosystems.

Our experience confirms that this initiative is very useful and it is important that Ramsar authorities in the different countries actively promote its use by national organizations involved in management, training and sharing of information on wetlands and their resources.”

Oscar H. Padín  
National Director for Environmental Management and Biodiversity Conservation  
Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development  
Chief of Cabinet of Ministers of the Nation  
Argentina

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## Conclusions

Currently wetlands in the Neotropics and Mexico show different degrees of deterioration and threats in different development proposals, and conflicts between conservation and development are still present. The challenge that this represents both to the Convention's Contracting Parties and their implementing agencies and for the Secretariat is to reconcile different interests and achieve the wise use of wetlands.

Undoubtedly the Wetlands for the Future Fund, since its inception in 1996, has been a management tool that has supported the implementation of the Ramsar Convention in Latin America and the Caribbean and, therefore, its contribution to supporting the implementation of the wise use of wetlands is invaluable. The Fund has proven that in order to generate actions that impact the wetland management, especially at local and regional levels in countries of the region when there are no great resources, the definition of concrete targets and the participation of all direct stakeholders are key elements.

As mentioned in the report of 2006, the Fund has been identified by governments, NGOs, scientists and other key actors as a useful tool for capacity building through the exchange of information, empowerment of local communities and public involvement at local, regional and national levels.

The Ramsar Secretariat, as manager of the Fund, will continue to implement the necessary mechanisms to enable its efficient use by beneficiaries in financial, operational and technical terms.

Under the new Convention's Strategic Plan 2009-2015, the Fund represents a great opportunity for recipient countries to continue making use of this instrument in order to support implementation of the Convention, especially the objectives of wise use, institutional capacities, Wetlands of International Importance, and international cooperation. Only in this way the regional impact achieved to date will continue.

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Proposals, progress reports, final and technical reports, and materials from the projects financed by the Wetlands for the Future Fund presented in this publication.







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CONVENTION ON WETLANDS  
CONVENTION SUR LES ZONES HUMIDES  
CONVENCIÓN SOBRE LOS HUMEDALES

(Ramsar, Iran, 1971)



The Ramsar Convention Secretariat  
Rue Mauverney 28  
CH-1196 Gland  
Switzerland