



13th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

**“Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future”
Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 21-29 October 2018**

Resolution XIII.10

Status of Sites in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance

1. RECALLING Article 8.2 of the Convention, on the duties of the Secretariat concerning reporting on the status of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites) for the consideration and recommendations of the Conference of the Contracting Parties on these matters, and Article 6.2.d), concerning the competence of the Conference to make general or specific recommendations to the Contracting Parties regarding the conservation, management and wise use of wetlands;
2. APPRECIATING the designation of 131 new Ramsar Sites by Contracting Parties between 28 August 2014 and 20 June 2018;
3. ALSO APPRECIATING the work done by 32 Contracting Parties that updated the Ramsar Information Sheets (RISs) for 299 Ramsar Sites within their territories during this period, and by 56 Parties that provided updated information on an additional 454 Sites;
4. NOTING that, for 1,592 Ramsar Sites, representing 69% of the 2,314 Sites that had been designated by 20 June 2018, either RISs or adequate maps had not been submitted, or relevant RISs or maps had not been updated for over six years, so that recent information on the status of these Sites was not available;
5. NOTING that changes to Ramsar Site boundaries and areas reported in updated RISs “...*should only occur where the change is so minor that it does not substantially affect the fundamental objectives for which the site was listed, and:*
 - a) *the site boundary has been drawn incorrectly and there has been a genuine error; and/or*
 - b) *the site boundary does not accurately match the description of the boundary as defined in the RIS; and/or*
 - c) *technology allows for a higher resolution and more accurate definition of the site boundary than was available at the time of Listing*” (Resolution VIII.21);
6. NOTING that substantive changes to Ramsar Site boundaries, arising from extensions or restrictions of the area of a Site, should also be reported in updated RISs;
7. CONSIDERING the need for Contracting Parties, as a matter of high priority, to put in place mechanisms “... *to be informed at the earliest possible time, including through reports by national authorities and local and indigenous communities and NGOs, if the ecological character of any wetland in its territory included in the Ramsar List has changed, is changing or is likely to*

change, and to report any such change without delay to the Ramsar Bureau [Secretariat] so as to implement fully Article 3.2 of the Convention” (Resolution VIII.8);

8. EXPRESSING ITS APPRECIATION to those Contracting Parties that have provided “Article 3.2 reports” to the Secretariat about Ramsar Sites where human-induced changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring, or may occur, as listed in Annex 4a of the *Report of the Secretary General pursuant to Article 8.2 on the List of Wetlands of International Importance* (document COP13 Doc.12);
9. NOTING that 59% of the Contracting Parties reported in their National Reports to the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP13) that they had arrangements in place to be informed of negative human-induced changes or likely changes in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites in their territories; but AWARE that fewer than 42% of Parties have submitted reports of all instances of such changes or likely changes;
10. CONCERNED that, as of 20 June 2018, none of the Ramsar Sites included in the Montreux Record had been removed from the Record since COP12;
11. ALSO CONCERNED about the length of time that it has taken to address changes to the ecological character of Ramsar Sites (Article 3.2), the continuing lack of information on the status of many open Article 3.2 files, and the lack of response by some Contracting Parties to address concerns raised by third parties about potential changes to Sites;
12. RECOGNIZING the ongoing development of earth observation tools and projects such as GEO-Wetlands (Group on Earth Observations), the Satellite-based Wetland Observation Service (SWOS), the United Nations Environment Programme Global Resource Information Database (UNEP-GRID) and GlobWet-Africa, and the capacity building put in place by the Secretariat to support Parties in using such tools;
13. NOTING the importance of Ramsar Advisory Missions as a monitoring procedure adopted by Contracting Parties through Recommendation 4.7 (1990), to provide technical assistance for addressing problems and threats to Ramsar Sites that could lead to a change in ecological character; and
14. RECALLING Resolution VIII.13, which requested the development of “*protocols for the electronic submission of RISs, [...] so as to facilitate the supply of data from the information systems of Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Sites Database*”; but AWARE that the online Ramsar Sites Information Service, as developed, still depends on manual input of data and information by Parties; NOTING HOWEVER that database-to-database transfer of data and information is routine for other international reporting; and CONSCIOUS that the utility called for at COP8 and highlighted again at COP11 would greatly enhance the efficiency of the RIS update process;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

15. URGES the Contracting Parties that have not submitted a Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) or a map for all Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites) that they have designated (listed at Annex 3a of the *Report of the Secretary General pursuant to Article 8.2 on the List of Wetlands of International Importance* [document COP13 Doc.12]), to provide such information in advance of the 57th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC57); and INSTRUCTS the Ramsar Secretariat to contact the relevant Contracting Parties to offer any necessary technical support;

16. REQUESTS the Contracting Parties listed in Annex 3b of the *Report of the Secretary General pursuant to Article 8.2 on the List of Wetlands of International Importance* (document COP13 Doc.12) to update, as a matter of urgency, the RISs for their Ramsar Sites at least once every six years (as urged in Resolution VI.13 on *Submission of information on sites designated for the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance*);
17. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to adopt and apply as appropriate, as part of their management planning for Ramsar Sites and other wetlands, a suitable assessment and monitoring regime, such as that outlined in the Annex to Resolution VI.1 on *Working definitions of ecological character, guidelines for describing and maintaining the ecological character of listed sites, and guidelines for operation of the Montreux Record*, as well as the Convention's *Wetland Risk Assessment Framework* (Resolution VII.10), in order to be able to report change or likely change in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites in accordance with Article 3.2;
18. REQUESTS Contracting Parties with Ramsar Sites for which the Secretariat has received reports of change or likely change in their ecological character (listed in Annexes 4a and 4b of the *Report of the Secretary General pursuant to Article 8.2 on the List of Wetlands of International Importance*, in document COP13 Doc. 12) to submit information to the Secretariat in response to such reports, including, as appropriate, information on steps taken or to be taken to address these changes or likely changes in ecological character, in advance of SC57 and each subsequent Standing Committee meeting until the issue is resolved; and FURTHER REQUESTS the Secretariat to provide technical support to these Parties to address the threats to their Sites, with priority being given to the longer-standing Sites, and to report back at SC57;
19. ENCOURAGES the Contracting Parties to continue to use the Montreux Record questionnaire at Annex 1 of the present Resolution to determine the inclusion or removal of a listed Site in the Montreux Record;
20. DECIDES to remove Ramsar Site 139, Réserve Spéciale de Faune du Ndjaél, from the Montreux Record;
21. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties, when submitting a report in fulfilment of Article 3.2, to consider whether the Site concerned would benefit from listing on the Montreux Record;
22. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to assist Contracting Parties in their actions in response to change or likely change in the ecological character of a Ramsar Site or Sites, for example by providing advice, when requested, on the application of the wise-use principles, or, when relevant, proposing to Parties to add the Site or Sites to the Montreux Record or to invite a Ramsar Advisory Mission;
23. REQUESTS the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to investigate the options and associated costs for working with earth observation organizations, including the Group on Earth Observations (GEOS), Group On Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network (GEOBON), the Biodiversity Observation Network in a Box (BONinaBOX) toolkit and the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), to put such data and monitoring tools at the disposal of Contracting Parties for national wetland inventories or monitoring of changes to Sites;
24. REPEALS Resolution XII.6 on *The status of Sites in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance*, which is replaced by the present Resolution; and

25. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to develop protocols that would allow direct database-to-database transfer of data and information related to the RIS, as previously identified as a need at both COP8 and COP11.

Annex 1

Montreux Record – Questionnaire content

Section 1: Information for assessing possible inclusion of a listed Ramsar Site in the Montreux Record

Nature of the change

1. Name of Site.
2. Ramsar Criteria for listing the Site as internationally important.
3. Summary statement of ecological character description.
4. Ecological components, processes, functions and services of the ecosystems affected by adverse human-induced change / likely change (list relevant code numbers from the ecological character description).
5. Nature and extent of the change / likely change to ecological character (use the threat categories in Appendix F of Resolution XI.8 Annex 2 *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance of the Convention on Wetlands*).
6. Reason(s) for the change / likely change described above.

Management measures in place

1. Date when the latest Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) was submitted.
2. Management strategies and administrative mechanisms in place, if any (national government, decentralized government, community-level, or others).
3. Site management plan or other planning, monitoring or assessment programmes in place at the Site, if any (description of technique(s), objectives, and nature of data and information gathered) – refer to RIS section 5.2.7 (Resolution XI.8 Annex 1, RIS field 34).
4. Assessment procedures in place, if any. (How is the information obtained from the monitoring programme used?)
5. Protection, amelioration and/or restoration measures in place so far or planned, if any.
6. Any other analogous or linked Site intervention processes activated or planned, e.g. under other multilateral environmental agreements.
7. List of attachments provided by the Contracting Party (if applicable).
8. List of attachments provided by the Secretariat (if applicable).

Section 2: Information for assessing possible removal of a listed Site from the Montreux Record

Management measures in place

1. Date when the latest RIS was submitted.
2. Site management plan or other planning, monitoring or assessment programmes in place at the Site, if any (description of technique(s), objectives and nature of data and information gathered (refer to RIS section 5.2.7, Resolution XI.8 Annex 1 RIS field 34).
3. Assessment procedures in place, if any (how is the information obtained from the monitoring programme used).
4. Protection, amelioration and/or restoration measures so far in place or planned, if any.

Assessment for removal of the Ramsar Site from the Montreux Record

1. Success of protection, amelioration and/or maintenance measures (if different from those covered in Section 1 of this questionnaire).
2. Proposed management, monitoring and assessment or other procedures (if different from those in Section 1 of this questionnaire).
3. Extent to which the ecological components, processes, functions and services of the Site's ecosystems have been restored or maintained (provide details).
4. Rationale for removing the Site from the Montreux Record. (Refer to *Guidelines for Operation of the Montreux Record*, the specific issues identified in Section 1 of this questionnaire, and any advice given by the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) or arising from a Ramsar Advisory Mission, where applicable.)
5. Status of any other analogous or linked Site intervention processes, e.g. under other multilateral environmental agreements, and details of how Montreux Record removal will be harmonized with these.
6. Measures that the Contracting Party will implement to maintain the ecological character of the Site with clear indicators for follow up.
7. List of further attachments (if applicable).