The International Law of Migratory Species: The Ramsar Convention

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The framework for international cooperation for wetland conservation, the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar, 1971) is analyzed in this paper.

The necessity of wetland conservation for both biological and hydrological reasons is stressed. In addition to their importance for the conservation of numerous species, especially of waterfowl, fish, herpetofauna, and invertebrates, wetlands provide economic benefits from fisheries, agriculture, water storage, and flood control, as well as tourism and recreation.

Cooperation among countries is essential for wetland conservation, given the international linkages peculiar to these habitats. For example, wetland areas are affected by impacts upon streams and rivers occurring at considerable distances and in many cases beyond national boundaries, transboundary air and water pollution affect the integrity of wetland areas, and much of the wetland fauna are migratory species whose management requires international cooperation.

The present coverage of the convention in 52 contracting parties throughout the world is highlighted, and a general overview of its three main obligations is provided: a general requirement to include wetland conservation considerations within national resources planning; the promotion of the conservation of wetlands through the establishment of nature reserves; and the designation of wetlands for inclusion in a “List of Wetlands of International Importance” for which specific conservation duties apply.

Attention is also given to the steps taken recently by the contracting parties to strengthen the administrative provisions of the convention. Following the amendment of the convention in June 1987, a permanent Secretariat has been established, a financial regime put into place, a Standing Committee created, and increased authority given to the Conference of the Contracting Parties. All of these developments greatly enhance the effectiveness of the Ramsar Convention.

Examples of national experience under the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals are also provided.

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The values perceived by the contracting parties and specific cases of cooperative activities between contracting parties are highlighted. These latter examples include the Netherlands and Mauritania, the United Kingdom and Ghana, the United States and Canada, and Australia and Japan.

The paper concludes with a brief look at the current work program of the Convention Bureau and stresses efforts under way for close cooperation with the Secretariat to the Migratory Species Convention.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention) was the first modern global nature conservation treaty. It fosters cooperation among States for the conservation of a wide variety of natural habitats encompassed by the term "wetlands." In focusing upon the conservation and wise use of wetlands, the Ramsar Convention plays an important role in international law for the conservation of migratory species. Most notably, the habitat of waterfowl is covered by the convention, while habitat important to other migratory species, including fish and reptiles, is also dealt with under the Ramsar Convention. In addressing habitat conservation, the Ramsar Convention provides a crucial counterpart for migratory species conservation to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn, 1979).2

Section II of this paper presents a general overview of the Ramsar Convention and the reasons why wetland conservation is urgently required. Reference is made to the history, structure, and general objectives of the convention. Section III examines the specific provisions of the convention. Recent developments under the Ramsar Convention to provide for a stringent administrative base are described in Section IV. The application of the Ramsar Convention as a conservation tool for migratory species conservation is considered in Section V. Finally, requirements for the future are stressed in Section VI.

II. GENERAL BACKGROUND ON THE RAMSAR CONVENTION

The Importance of Wetlands

Wetlands are among the world’s most productive environments. They provide tremendous economic benefits to mankind through fishery pro-
duction, the maintenance of water tables for agriculture, water storage and flood control, shoreline stabilization, timber production, waste disposal and water purification, and recreational opportunities.

Wetlands also provide critical habitats for waterfowl and other birds, as well as for countless species of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and invertebrates, many of which are threatened with extinction and many of which are also migratory species.

These riches can only be maintained if the ecological processes of wetlands are allowed to continue functioning. Unfortunately, wetlands are among the world’s most threatened habitats due mainly to accelerated drainage, land reclamation, pollution, and overexploitation of wetland species.

The Need for International Cooperation

In most cases, it is not possible for one country alone to take the steps required to conserve wetland habitats and wetland species, and hence cooperation among States is a necessity for effective wetland conservation. The health of wetland habitats is dependent upon the quality and quantity of their water supply. Wetlands are affected by human impacts upon, for example, streams and rivers, which can occur at considerable distance from the wetland area, and in many cases beyond national borders. Wetlands are also seriously degraded by transboundary air and water pollution. Finally, and of greatest relevance to this paper, much of the wetland fauna are migratory species whose conservation and management mandates international cooperation.

Overview of the Convention

It was against this background that the Ramsar Convention was concluded in 1971 in Iran. As noted above, it was the first modern global nature conservation treaty. It remains the only one which is dedicated to the conservation of selected ecosystem types and to the species dependent upon them. The Ramsar Convention is predicated upon the promotion of international cooperation for nature conservation and as such has avoided the confrontation which has marked certain subsequent international conservation agreements.

The Ramsar Convention was adopted following a series of international conferences and technical meetings in the 1960s. It entered into force in late 1975 upon the deposit of an instrument of ratification by Greece, the seventh State to do so, and, following amendment of certain of its terms, is now undergoing an exciting period of growth. States in both the industrialized and developing worlds are finding that the convention provides considerable benefits for international cooperation. Presently, there
are some 52 contracting parties throughout the world and many more States are expected to join in the near future.\(^3\)

The Secretariat, or Bureau as it is referred to in article 8 of the convention, is provided by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), which has long been assisted by the International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau (IWRB). At the Third Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (Regina, Canada, 1987), steps were taken to formalize this cooperation by establishing an independent Bureau with units based at both IUCN and IWRB premises.

The governing body of the convention, the Conference of the Contracting Parties, meets periodically to review developments under the treaty. The first regular Conference was held in Cagliari, Italy in 1980, the second at Groningen in the Netherlands in 1984, and the third at Regina, Canada in 1987. The fourth meeting is scheduled for Montreux in Switzerland in late June 1990. At the Regina Conference, a Standing Committee of the Parties was established to guide the policy and program of the convention between meetings of the Conference of the Parties.

The broad objectives of the convention are to stem the loss of wetlands and to ensure their conservation in view of their importance for ecological processes as well as for their rich fauna and flora. To meet these objectives, the convention provides for general obligations relating to the conservation of wetlands throughout the territory of the contracting parties and for special obligations pertaining to those wetlands which have been designated for a “List of Wetlands of International Importance.”

**III. SPECIFIC PROVISIONS OF THE RAMSAR CONVENTION**

The convention takes an extremely broad approach in defining “wetlands” to be covered under its ambit. Wetlands are defined as “areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine waters the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six metres.”\(^4\) In addition, the convention provides that wetlands covered “may incorporate riparian and coastal zones adjacent to the wetlands and islands or bodies of marine water deeper than six meters at low tide lying within the wetlands.”\(^5\) As a result of these provisions, the coverage of the convention extends to a wide variety of habitat types including rivers, coastal areas, and even coral reefs!

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3. Contracting Parties include: Algeria, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Gabon, Federal Republic of Germany, German Democratic Republic, Ghana, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Senegal, South Africa, Spain, Surinam, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, Uganda, USSR, UK, USA, Uruguay, Venezuela, Vietnam, Yugoslavia.

4. Ramsar Convention, *supra* note 1, at art. 1 (1).

5. Ramsar Convention, *supra* note 1, at art. 2 (1).
There is a general obligation, as noted above, for the contracting parties to include wetland conservation considerations within their national planning. The convention provides: "The Contracting Parties shall formulate and implement their planning so as to promote . . . as far as possible the wise use of wetlands in their territory." The contracting parties have interpreted this wise use requirement to mean the maintenance of the ecological character of wetlands. Major attention was given to further refining this requirement at the Regina Conference, and will be discussed below.

A second obligation under the convention is the designation of wetlands for inclusion in a "List of Wetlands of International Importance" maintained by the Bureau. Specific conservation duties pertain to the listed sites. At least one site must be designated by each contracting party, with selection based on "international significance in terms of ecology, botany, zoology, limnology or hydrology." Criteria for selection, with greatest relevance to importance for waterfowl, were adopted by the contracting parties at their 1980 Conference and modified at Regina to cover better other wetland values.

6. Ramsar Convention, supra note 1, at art. 3 (1).
8. Ramsar Convention, supra note 1, at art. 2 (4).
9. Ramsar Convention, supra note 1, at art. 2 (2).
10. At the Regina Conference, the following criteria were adopted to assist contracting parties in the identification of wetlands of international importance:

A wetland is suitable for inclusion in the List if it meets any one of the criteria set out below:

1. Criteria for assessing the value of representative or unique wetlands. A wetland should be considered internationally important if it is a particularly good example of a specific type of wetland characteristic of its region.

2. General criteria for using plants or animals to identify wetlands of importance. A wetland should be considered internationally important if
   (a) it supports an appreciable assemblage of rare, vulnerable or endangered species or subspecies of plant or animal, or an appreciable number of individuals of any one or more of these species; or
   (b) it is of special value for maintaining the genetic and ecological diversity of a region because of the quality and peculiarities of its flora and fauna; or
   (c) it is of special value as the habitat of plants or animals at a critical stage of their biological cycles; or
   (d) it is of special value for its endemic plant or animal species or communities.

3. Specific criteria for using waterfowl to identify wetlands of importance. A wetland should be considered internationally important if
   (a) it regularly supports 20,000 waterfowl; or
   (b) it regularly supports substantial numbers of individuals from particular groups of waterfowl, indicative of wetland values, productivity or diversity; or
   (c) where data on populations are available, it regularly supports 1% of the individuals in a population of one species or subspecies of waterfowl.

Guidelines
A wetland could be considered for selection under Criterion 1 if:
   (a) it is an example of a type rare or unusual in the appropriate biogeographical region; or
   (b) it is a particularly good representative example of a wetland characteristic of the
Finally, contracting parties are obliged to promote the conservation of wetlands in their territory through the establishment of nature reserves. This applies to wetlands whether or not included on the list.\(^{11}\)

Of all the aspects of the convention, the List of Wetlands of International Importance has attracted the most international attention. In practice, the contracting parties have gone far beyond the mandatory designation of only one site; presently some 445 sites covering well over 30,000,000 hectares have been designated for the list. Furthermore, no site has been deleted from the list and replaced by another, despite the possibility that this might be done by a "Contracting Party in its urgent national interest."\(^{12}\) Ramsar listing has become an important conservation tool.

Although most contracting parties have designated wetland sites on the basis of their importance for waterfowl, other faunal and floral interests are being taken into consideration and presently a rather comprehensive selection of major wetland types is included in the Ramsar List, especially for the Western Palearctic region.

The administrative provisions of the convention were not, however, as well prepared as the substantive provisions noted above. In particular, the convention lacked an amendment procedure, it made no provision for the financing of secretariat services, and it contained an unfortunate final language clause which established the English text as the only definitive text, and which therefore presented an obstacle to participation by certain French- and Spanish-speaking States.\(^{13}\)

IV. EFFORTS TO OVERCOME THE ADMINISTRATIVE DEFICIENCIES OF THE CONVENTION

Background

The Third Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties marked a turning point in the history of the Ramsar Convention. After many years of effort by the contracting parties and by IUCN and IWRB, the admin-

\(^{11}\) Ramsar Convention, supra note 1, at art. 4 (1).
\(^{12}\) Ramsar Convention, supra note 1, at art. 4 (2).
Administrative provisions of the convention were strengthened—provisions which were criticized in the World Conservation Strategy in 1980 as follows: "Experience has shown that an international Convention must have a [permanent, secure] secretariat and a financial mechanism to be effective, but the Wetlands Convention lacks both."14

Although this assessment was a bit harsh insofar as the contracting parties were able nonetheless to achieve considerable conservation gains via the Ramsar Convention, it was evident that much more could be done if the administrative problems were solved.

The First Conference of the Parties in 1980 issued the call for necessary convention amendments, and for the immediate provision of voluntary funding to the interim secretariat until such time as an amendment providing for a sound financial base might become operative.15 Contributions were therefore forthcoming from several of the contracting parties. However, due to legal and constitutional impediments to voluntary financing experienced by many other contracting parties, it became clear that adequate financial support and hence administrative continuity could only be ensured following the formal amendment of the convention.

In December 1982, an Extraordinary Conference of the Contracting Parties was held in Paris, wherein a protocol was adopted, providing for the needed amendment procedure and for additional official language versions of the convention in line with United Nations practice.16 This protocol entered into force in October 1986, and thus provided the basis for the convening of an Extraordinary Conference at the time of the Regina Conference to adopt needed administrative amendments to the convention.

In the meantime, the contracting parties worked toward the elaboration of the required administrative regime. Discussions on the subject were held at the Second Conference of the Contracting Parties at Groningen, Netherlands, in 1984. Thereafter a Task Force led by the Netherlands developed recommendations for the contracting parties on future Secretariat requirements, the text of necessary convention amendments, fixed Rules of Procedure for meetings of the Conference of the Parties, and the need for a Standing Committee to act on behalf of the parties in between meetings of the Conference.17

15. See Recommendations 1.9 and 1.10 of the First Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, supra note 7, at 73-74; Recommendation 2.2, Proceedings of the Second Conference of the Contracting Parties 68 (May 7–12, 1984) (Groningen, Netherlands); Recommendation 2.4. Id. at 75.
The Extraordinary Conference of the Parties at Regina

Ultimately, on May 28, 1987, an Extraordinary Conference was held at Regina to adopt a series of administrative amendments. Although it took six and a half years to proceed from the identification of the problem to its resolution, activity was constant and, actually, such a development in the field of international law could be considered rapid. The expeditious adoption of these amendments at Regina was accomplished only because of the goodwill of the contracting parties and because of the legal gymnastics of several of the delegates. This was the case because that Conference faced significant problems of a legal nature concerning voting rights, size of the meeting quorum, and provisional application of the amendments. To explain, not all of the contracting parties had as yet accepted the Paris Protocol which provided the basis for the Extraordinary Conference, and hence it was unclear as to whether those contracting parties would be entitled to participate in the Extraordinary Conference. It was argued by some delegations that those contracting parties should not participate. On the other hand, other delegations pointed out that the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, as well as customary international law, argued in favor of the participation in any amendment discussion of all contracting parties to the convention. Since the convention amendments dealt with fundamental matters for the convention and since it was seen to be a necessity for all contracting parties to apply the amendments, for example, to contribute to a convention budget, it was agreed after considerable discussion to avoid any determination on the participation issue by recording the presence of all national delegations and then adopting the amendments by consensus. Thereafter, in the ordinary meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, a resolution was adopted calling for the provisional application of the amendments prior to their entry into force, and this decision was also taken by consensus.

Results of the Third (Ordinary) Meeting of the Conference of the Parties

The following is a brief description of the major accomplishments of the Regina Conference:

Administrative Measures

Convention Amendments

Amendments to the convention were adopted providing for improved organization and increased authority for Conferences of the Contracting

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Parties, including provisions for the adoption of a financial regime based upon mandatory contributions from the contracting parties.

**Secretariat**

Based upon these amendments, the parties decided to establish permanent secretariat arrangements with an independent office created at IUCN headquarters to deal with administrative, diplomatic, and legal matters, assisted by a unit of the Secretariat based at the IWRB with primary responsibility for technical and scientific matters.

**Budget**

A core convention budget for the next triennium totalling 1.2 million dollars was adopted to be funded by contributions from the contracting parties determined by reference to a ratio of payments based upon the United Nations scale of contributions. Furthermore, pledges of additional support were given by non-governmental organizations including WWF-USA and the RSPB. Thereafter, the Secretariat has received in addition considerable voluntary funding and project support from several of the contracting parties and from conservation organizations.

**Standing Committee**

A Standing Committee was formed to serve as an executive body to guide the work of the convention between Conferences of the Contracting Parties. It is comprised of Pakistan (Chairman), Canada (Vice-Chairman), Chile, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Tunisia, Switzerland, and the United States.

**Next Conference of the Parties**

It was decided to hold the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties in 1990 in Switzerland.

**Conservation Matters**

The Conference did not only address administrative requirements; significant time was also devoted to conservation issues as follows:

(i) Workshops: detailed technical workshops were held on the subjects of:
   • Criteria for Identifying Wetlands of International Importance;
   • Migratory Bird Flyway and Reserve Networks;
   • Wise Use of Wetlands; and
   • The Ramsar Convention as a Vehicle for Linking Wetland Conservation and Development.

(ii) Recommendations
A thorough review was given to the status of wetlands in all regions of the world and Conference recommendations were
passed on a variety of conservation topics including the need for measures to deal with conservation problems facing particular wetlands (for example, Azraq in Jordan), procedures and proposals to increase development assistance to enhance the conservation of wetlands, increased involvement in the convention by developing nations, the need for refined criteria for the selection of wetlands for the Ramsar List, and improved management procedures for wetland conservation and development.

(iii) North America Day
A special day at the Conference was devoted to a review of wetland conservation problems and opportunities in North America. In this connection, the host government of Canada announced the addition of eleven new sites for the Ramsar List, with the United States announcing the addition of two more U.S. sites. Also on the occasion of "North America Day," the Conference was addressed by HRH the Duke of Edinburgh with a call for increased international efforts to help conserve wetlands and wetland species.

A "preliminary proceedings" volume of the ordinary meeting was issued by the Secretariat in autumn 1987, along with the proceedings of the Extraordinary Conference. The full proceedings of the Regina Conference with all scientific papers appeared in early 1989.

V. THE APPLICATION OF THE RAMSAR CONVENTION AS A TOOL FOR WETLAND CONSERVATION

As with all international treaties, the implementation of the Ramsar Convention is a matter for action at the national level. A few extracts from the national reports provided to the Regina Conference demonstrate the range of values countries perceive from being members of the convention.

Values Perceived by the Contracting Parties

Opportunity to Fulfill Existing Agenda

The report from the United States noted that: "The Convention is an appropriate organization for sharing technology related to wetland conservation, management and research and it complements US concerns for wetlands protection in the US, in the Western Hemisphere and throughout the world." 20

The United States went on to state in its report that "the Convention provides an extremely useful tool for flyway states to coordinate and

manage shared migratory resources, to share data on habitats and populations necessary to manage these resources and provide a framework for encouraging the wise use of wetlands in ways compatible with governmental and non-governmental programmes."  

**Prestige Value for Implementing National Programs**

The Danish report for the Regina Conference indicated: "In Denmark there have been only minor problems with implementation of the Convention, probably because the Ramsar Convention has been one of the oldest and most spectacular of the nature conservation conventions that Denmark has ratified."  

**Tool to Promote Conservation Interests Against Other Interests**

The Belgian report stated: "The Ramsar Convention has proven useful as a moral support in the struggle for the protection of our wetlands. Ramsar should be sufficiently powerful to realize a restriction of the agricultural optimalisation politics in areas with mixed nature conservation and agricultural functions."  

**Basis for International Support**

A fourth and final perspective can be seen in the Moroccan report: "Ratification of the Convention enables the Government to concentrate efforts for the protection of certain wetlands and to benefit from financial and technical assistance."  Given these perceived benefits, the question that needs to be posed is: how do the parties actually implement the convention? We have found that in the vast majority of cases implementation is handled through existing national legislation, with greatest emphasis upon the protection of the Ramsar sites in the country concerned. Indeed the overview of National Reports prepared for the Regina Conference noted that "it seems that few, if any, Contracting Parties have adopted detailed, clearly formulated national wetland policies. Nevertheless, many Contracting Parties give details of measures and legislation going well beyond the scope of classic nature conservation which affect wetlands."  

21. *Id.*  
Examples of National Experience

Out of the Regina Conference national reports, we can examine examples of national experience wherein national wetland conservation has been enhanced.

Site-Specific Protection

Because of Ramsar designation, the USSR has given protection to Lake Khanka (portions of which were not previously protected), Denmark has noted that Ramsar Convention designation has facilitated arguments for conservation of particular sites, and Australia has remarked that sites on the Ramsar List generally have greater priority for research and management activities. Perhaps more dramatic has been the litigation in Austria (Hainburg) and Greece (Nestos Delta) where Ramsar designation has been a key factor in providing protection to a specific site.

Trans-border Cooperation

The specific role of the convention to promote border cooperation has also been cited by various contracting parties. For example, the Federal Republic of Germany has reported cooperation with the Netherlands over a Ramsar site near the border between the two countries (Unterer Nieder-rhein) wherein joint efforts are under way for waterfowl conservation.

More difficult have been cases related by Iran concerning the diversion of water supplies to a Ramsar site (Lake Hamoun) caused by disturbances across the border in Afghanistan, and the destruction of wetland resources as a result of Iraqi chemical warfare. Nonetheless, it is interesting indeed to see that Iran has raised the application of the convention as a means that might be used to deal with these situations!

Wise Use of Wetlands

Despite the ways in which national legislation has been used to implement site conservation under the Ramsar Convention, and despite some limited progress in transboundary cooperation for wetland conservation under the Ramsar Convention, more innovative legal mechanisms are required to give full effect at national level to the convention. In particular, more must be done to help implement the “wise use” provisions of the convention.

The Regina Conference adopted a resolution which helped to define what is needed in this regard, especially for the adoption of national wetland policies. There is considerable scope for legal innovation in such work.

26. At the Regina Conference, the following Recommendation was adopted on the issue of wise use of wetlands:

Recommendation 3.3: Wise use of wetlands

RECALLING that Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat “formulate and implement their planning
This matter is especially important for developing country parties to the convention. In order to achieve the greatest conservation and develop... so as to promote . . . the wise use of wetlands in their territory”; EMPHASIZING the need to develop a definition of wise use, in order to guide Contracting Parties in their implementation of the Convention; NOTING that Recommendations 1.5 of the First Meeting and 2.3 of the Second Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties referred to the need for national wetland policies in order to promote wise use; TAKING NOTE of the deliberations and conclusions of the Workshop on Wise Use at the present Meeting;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES RECOMMENDS that the Contracting Parties adopt the definition of wise use established by the Conference of the Contracting Parties at its Third Meeting, held at Regina, and included in the Annex to the Regina Recommendations; FURTHER RECOMMENDS that the Contracting Parties give particular attention to the wise use of wetlands by promotion of wetland policies containing elements (a) to (f) from the first part of the Guidelines on wise use included in the Annex to the Regina Recommendations; and FURTHER RECOMMENDS that, while detailed policies are being established, immediate action be taken to stimulate wise use, including actions (a) to (d) from the second part of the Guidelines on wise use included in the Annex to the Regina Recommendations.

Annex to the Regina Recommendations (section on wise use):

"Definition of wise use:
The wise use of wetlands is their sustainable utilization for the benefit of humankind in a way compatible with the maintenance of the natural properties of the ecosystem.”

Sustainable utilization is defined as “human use of a wetland so that it may yield the greatest continuous benefit to present generations while maintaining its potential to meet the needs and aspirations of future generations.”

Natural properties of the ecosystem are defined as “those physical, biological or chemical components, such as soil, water, plants, animals and nutrients, and the interactions between them.”

Guidelines
Wise use involves the promotion of wetland policies containing the following elements:
(a) a national inventory of wetlands;
(b) identification of the benefits and values of these wetlands;
(c) definition of the priorities for each site in accordance with the needs of, and socio-economic conditions in, each country;
(d) proper assessment of environmental impact before development projects are approved, continuing evaluation during the execution of projects, and full implementation of environmental conservation measures which take full account of the recommendations of this process of environmental assessment and evaluation;
(e) use of development funds for projects which permit conservation and sustainable utilization of wetland resources;
(f) regulated utilization of wild fauna and flora, such that these components of the wetland systems are not over-exploited.

When detailed policies are being established, action should be taken on:
(a) interchange of experience and information between countries seeking to elaborate national wetland policies;
(b) training of appropriate staff in the disciplines which will assist in the elaboration of such policies;
(c) pursuit of legislation and policies which will stimulate wetland conservation action, including the amendment as appropriate of existing legislation;
(d) review of traditional techniques of sustainable wetland use, and elaboration of pilot projects which demonstrate wise use of representative national and regional wetland types.
opment benefits from wetland resources for developing countries, the "wise use" provision of the Ramsar Convention is of paramount importance.

**Specific Cases of Cooperation for Migratory Species Conservation**

The contracting parties have brought to the attention of the Bureau numerous cases of cooperation to conserve migratory species. Examples of such cooperation under the Ramsar Convention between developed and developing countries as well as between two developed countries are provided below.

**North-South Cooperation for Migratory Species Conservation**

The Netherlands and Mauritania can be said to be "linked" ecologically due to the millions of migratory birds which rely upon the Dutch Wadden Sea as a breeding and feeding area and the Mauritanian Banc d'Arguin as a wintering site. In recognition of this linkage, authorities in the two countries have been working very closely together on development assistance projects to conserve the Banc d'Arguin and other Mauritanian wetlands. A national wetland survey has been undertaken pursuant to this cooperation and is being followed by specific management efforts within the framework of the Ramsar Convention. An example may be seen in cooperation in the patrolling of the Banc d'Arguin National Park, a Ramsar site covering over a million hectares, which is one of the world's most important sites for shorebirds (over three million birds in winter) and acts as a nursery for fish—Mauritania's most important natural resource. The park is situated in an extremely isolated area, partly desert, partly mud-flat, partly open sea. The park administration has drawn up a five-year plan which places its major emphasis on patrolling the area to prevent illegal fishing and disturbance of nesting waterfowl. It is understood that a sea-going vessel will be provided by the Netherlands to act both as a fishery patrol vessel and as a research base.

North-South cooperation under the Ramsar Convention for migratory species can also be seen in the case of activities by the United Kingdom and Ghana. Urged by the United Kingdom Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, these two contracting parties have entered into a cooperative agreement for the conservation of wetland areas required for the management of the Roseatte Tern (Sterne dougallis), an endangered migratory species which is dependent upon wetland habitat in the United Kingdom and in Ghana during its migration cycle. As in the Netherlands-Mauritania example, cooperation between the United Kingdom and Ghana involves support from the North to help identify conservation requirements in the South and then to contribute to needed management programs.
Cooperation between Developed Countries for Migratory Species Conservation

There are also many examples of developed country contracting parties working together pursuant to the Ramsar Convention to help conserve migratory species. Perhaps the most dramatic example of this is the North American Waterfowl Management Plan established by the United States and Canada in May 1986.27 This plan, which involves both public and private participation, is designed to provide the basis for a major change in national policy for wetland conservation in the two countries. The plan provides a formal statement of intent to conserve large areas of wetland, especially for waterfowl in Canada. For instance, in Canada, the plan identifies an additional 1.46 million hectares for the protection and improvement of habitat important for ducks. The cost of land acquisition and management requirements to implement this plan in both the United States and Canada has been placed at 1.5 billion U.S. dollars.

A second example may be seen in a cooperative program for migratory bird conservation between two contracting parties in Oceania: Australia and Japan. Based upon a bilateral treaty28 and upon the Ramsar Convention, Australia and Japan have been able to take stringent measures to protect migratory birds and their wetland habitat. In a federal State such as Australia, participation in such treaties greatly facilitates coordinated national conservation action.

VI. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE FUTURE

The Ramsar Bureau is now embarking upon a detailed workplan of activities which includes:

- Promotion of wetland conservation activities in contracting parties through assistance in developing management techniques (special focus upon Mediterranean and Sahelian countries);
- Promotion of development assistance for wetland conservation;
- Establishment of a wetland data base;
- Development of refined criteria for identification of "Wetlands of International Importance," including more detailed reference to species other than waterfowl;
- Promotion of the convention among non-party States (notably South-East Asian, East African and Central American States);
- Development of convention documentation (e.g. launching of a newsletter, convention brochure and scientific documentation); and
- Production of convention logo, letterhead, promotional material, site diplomas, and plaques.

In addition, efforts are under way to enhance working arrangements with the Secretariats of other international conventions. In particular, close cooperation with the Secretariat of the Migratory Species Convention is being pursued, given the obvious linkages between the two conventions. The question of formal cooperation was raised upon the occasion of the Second Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Migratory Species Convention in October 1988 and the fifth meeting of the Ramsar Standing Committee held immediately thereafter.

The Ramsar Convention, after several years of difficulties, now faces a bright future. To undertake the important work of promoting international cooperation for wetland conservation and the conservation of migratory species, the Ramsar Bureau will be seeking the involvement of conservationists from both governmental and non-governmental organizations. Much will need to be done in the period leading up to the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, scheduled for 1990.

The Bureau would welcome any inquiries about current and future efforts to promote the convention:

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