

Integrating Water & Wetlands into the NBSAPs

Regional Workshop for the Middle East and North Africa on
Updating National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans: Focus on Targets
and Indicators

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Outline



Introduction : **What** are wetlands?

The Ramsar Convention

What services do wetlands provide?

Why mainstream wetlands into NBSAPS?

Who is involved in wetland biodiversity conservation?

How can 'water' and 'wetlands' be mainstreamed into National Biodiversity Strategies & Action Plans?

What are wetlands?



Any inland or coastal area that contains permanent or seasonal water.

أراضي رطبة أو مناطق رطبة : أي منطقة تحتوي على مياه دائمة أو موسمية ، سواء ان كانت داخلية، بحرية أو ساحلية.



Damaniyat Islands, Oman. (2011)

A coastal wetland and protected area .

Known biodiversity value : outstanding coral biodiversity, highest density of nesting seabirds in the area, largest nesting population of Hawksbill Turtles in the country (CR, **CITES I**, **CMS I &II**), Green Turtle (EN, **CITES I**, **CMS I &II**), Sooty Falcons (NT). Many others.

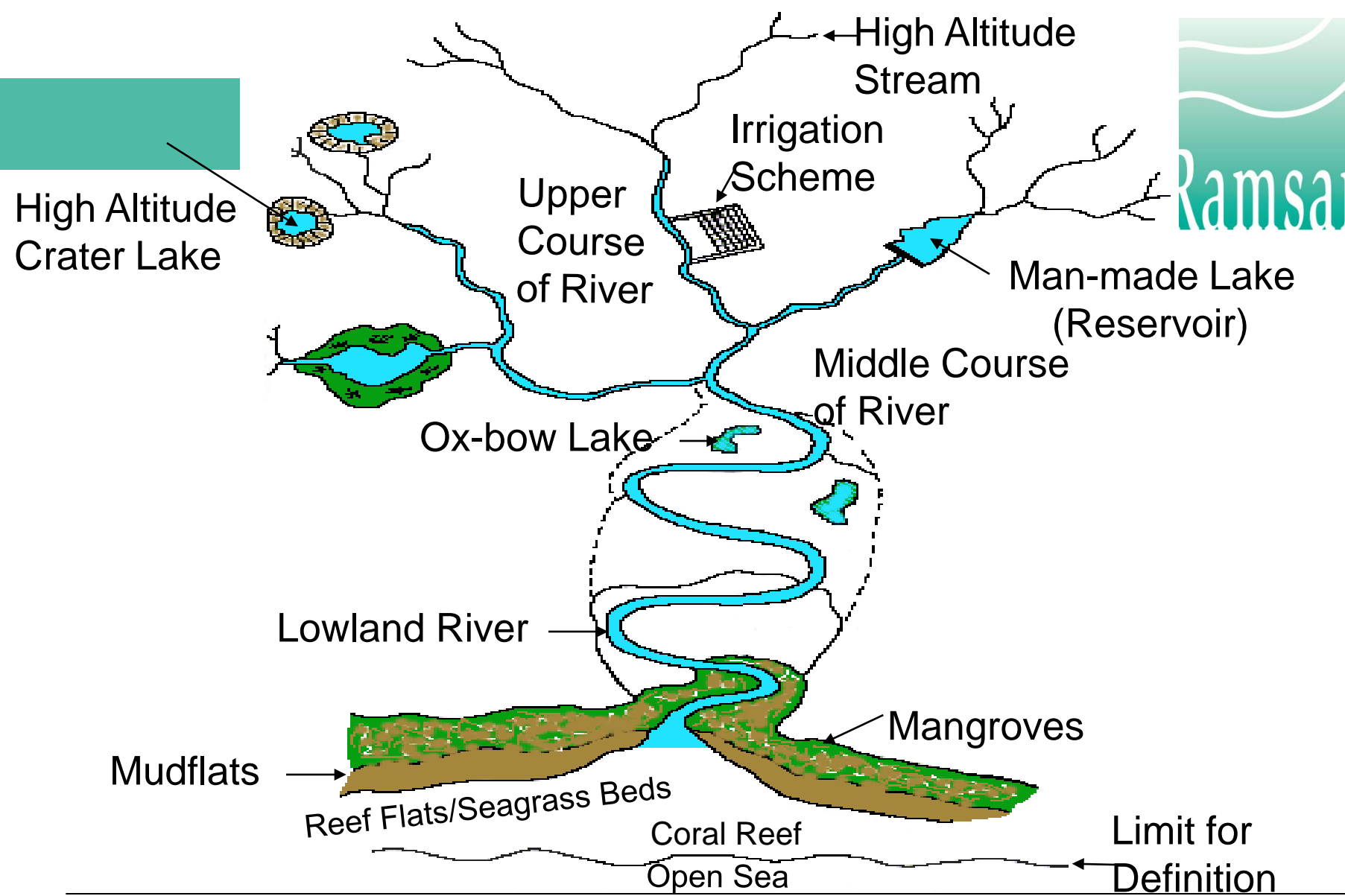
Socio-Economic: fisheries and tourism

Threats : Fishing, pollution, tourism (potential)

Research attention : >40 published research articles

National Conservation attention : National Nature Reserve

International Conservation attention : NONE



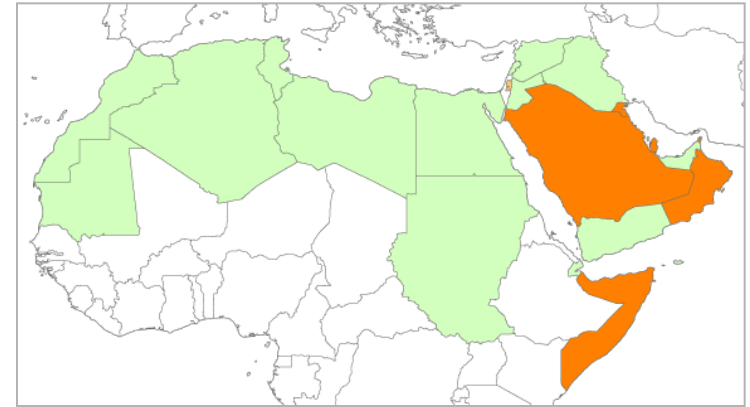
Type of Wetlands Included in the Ramsar Definition:
inland, coastal, man-made



The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands



Mission

The conservation and **wise use** of wetlands through **national actions**, and **international cooperation** as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development.



Contracting Party 
Non-Contracting Party 

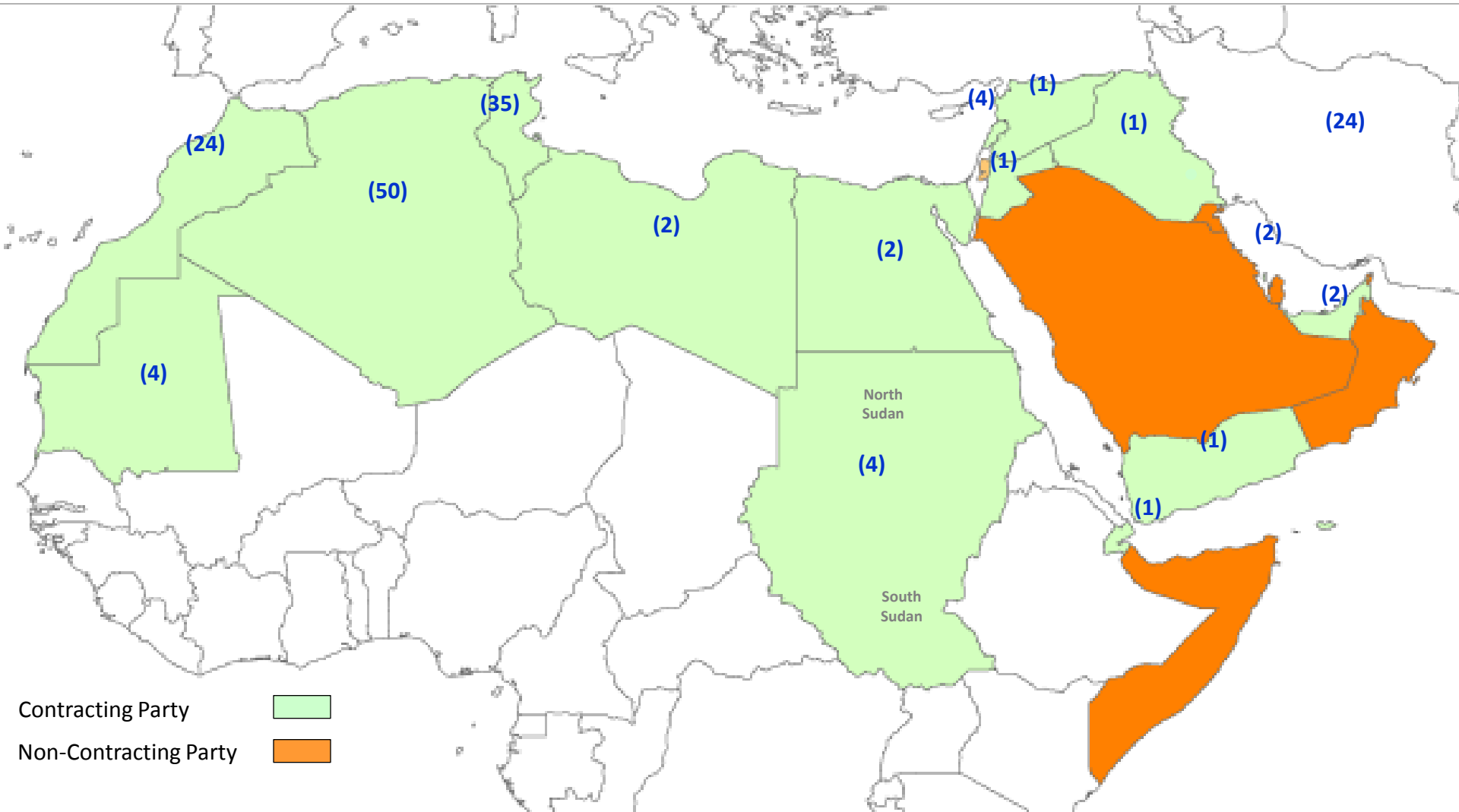
Ramsar working together with CBD and CMS

- CBD Decision III/21 (1996) called on the Ramsar Convention to act as its "lead partner" on wetland-related issues;
- MOU on the implementation of the Strategic Plan on Biodiversity and achievement of the 2020 Aichi Targets.
- [5th joint work plan 2011-2020 . DOC.XI.20](#)
- CMS Memorandum of Understanding (renewed 2011)
- [CMS/Ramsar 2nd Joint Work Plan \(2012-2014\) DOC XI.19](#)

Contracting Parties

- 163 Contracting Parties worldwide;
- 15 Contracting Parties in the Arab world
- 2 soon to be CPs

Ramsar Sites in the Middle East & North Africa



Ramsar sites : Myths an Misconceptions

- Ramsar sites must always be declared national protected areas FALSE
- Ramsar sites must be important for waterfowl FALSE
- Ramsar sites are mostly freshwater inland wetlands FALSE
- A coral reef or a mangrove or a sabkha or a seagrass bed is a wetland TRUE
- A falaj system is a wetland TRUE
- Ramsar sites must have an endangered species FALSE
- Ramsar sites must meet at least one of the 9 criteria TRUE



Oasis de Ouled Saïd Ramsar site 1060 Adrar; Algeria.
 A rare human-made wetland created on the vestiges of a "fossil" wadi consisting of a *fougara*, an ingenious system for the capture and distribution of groundwater.

What services do wetlands provide?

Ramsar

WATER



AGRICULTURE



FOOD



TOURISM



BIODIVERSITY



Beila Lelwani © Drott Tahir, Algeria

Fus Rucita Noor © North Coast Java, Indonesia

Ather Masood © Wular Lake, India

Heber Jara © Laguna Comancilla, Argentina

Peter Csizsi © Old Lake at Tata, Hungary

+ Climate change adaptation and mitigation

Wetlands: Biodiversity & people



Kerawn lake Lebanon. A human made inland wetland that feeds the agricultural valley of the Bekaa, 2011

Socio-Economic: hydropower, agriculture, reservoir, flood control

Threats : pollution (pesticide-agricultural source, heavy metals of industrial source)

Research attention : > 20 published research articles

National Conservation/Restoration attention : NONE

International Conservation attention : NONE

No water...no sustainability



“Wetlands constitute a resource of great economic, cultural, scientific, and recreational value, the loss of which would be irreparable”
Ramsar Convention text

➤ Ramsar Convention is the first intergovernmental agreement to combine conservation and sustainable use of resources.

Water for life:
Wetlands are natural infrastructures, productive ecosystems, and homes

People

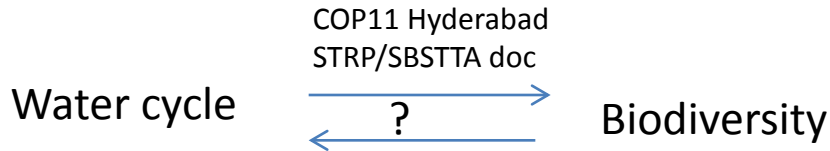
- ❖ Drinking water
- ❖ Irrigation
- ❖ Energy
- ❖ Transport
- ❖ Recreation
- ❖ Food

Biodiversity

- ❖ Endangered species
- ❖ Migratory species
- ❖ Endemic species
- ❖ Sites important for reproduction, feeding, and other critical life stages of animals
- ❖ Sites that are major habitats of a species or a population

Healthy, happy
people + biodiversity
= **Sustainability**

Wetlands: Biodiversity hotspots



•Wetlands are highly productive ecosystems: rich in nutrients, minerals, high primary productivity

Hydrologic processes, varying topographic gradient
 → One wetland can contain a high variety of conditions and habitats → high variety of plant and animal species

ONE WETLAND = MANY HABITATS e.g.

Coastal wetland/Surinam (3)

Stagnant brackish and hypersaline pools

Drying up lagoons

Tidal lagoons

Soft tidal mudflats

High Fiddler-crab zone of tidal mudflats

Firm and tough clay banks

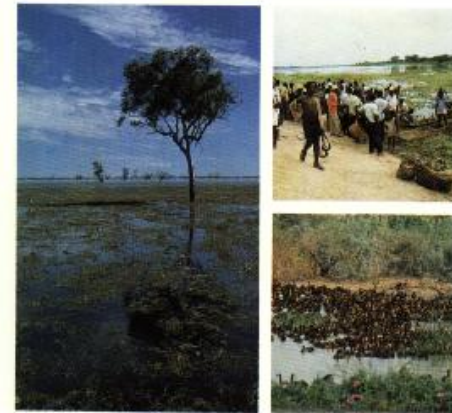
Lower foreshore sandy beach

Back slope sandy beach

Dry firm clay

WETLANDS, BIODIVERSITY AND THE RAMSAR CONVENTION

THE ROLE OF THE CONVENTION ON WETLANDS IN THE CONSERVATION AND WISE USE OF BIODIVERSITY



EDITED BY A.J. HAILS

RAMSAR CONVENTION BUREAU
 MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS,
 INDIA
 1996

Wetlands: biodiversity hotspots



A seasonal stream in Wadi Shawka, Ras Al Khaimah-UAE. (2010) –Inland wetland

Known biodiversity value : endemic *Garra barreimiae shawkahensis* freshwater fish.

Potential biodiversity value : habitat for the Arabian Tahr (EN)

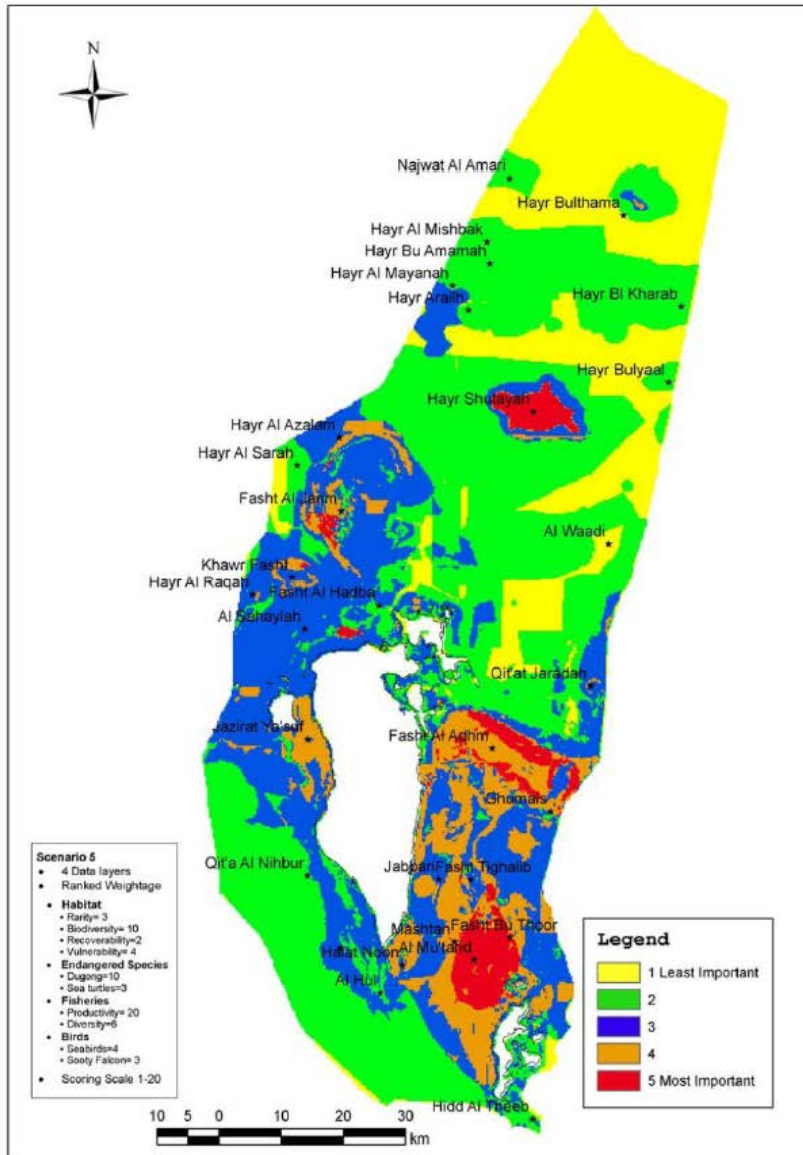
Socio-economic: freshwater source, tourism

Threats : disappearance of streams and water pools due to drought, excessive water pumping for date palms (farms now abandoned), crushers.

Research attention : NONE

National Conservation attention : NONE

International Conservation attention: NONE



Bahrain's 4th National Report on Biodiversity (2011): All priority areas are wetlands

الشكل (7-3): إحدى خرائط الحساسية البيئية التي تم إعدادها بناء على المعايير البيئية بالإضافة إلى المعايير الاقتصادية المتعلقة بالطعام السمكي لتقييم درجة الحساسية البيئية للمناطق البحرية في المياد الإقليمية لمملكة البحرين (BCSR, 2006)

Wetlands in current NBSAPS



“1.7 Designation and conservation of wetlands (Current Situation and Challenges)

*Since wetlands are playing an important role for the entire ecosystem maintenance, registration criteria for **Ramsar wetlands** which focused on the population of water birds at the beginning of the Ramsar Convention has been changed to those **focusing on biodiversity conservation.**”*

Japan 3rd NBSAP, 2008

“Criteria for Selection of Protected Areas”

Coverage of representative ecosystems (as well as of physiographic regions particularly of marine and coastal sites)

*Conservation of key biological sites (including **wetlands**, marine islands, seagrass beds, mangroves and coral reefs)”*

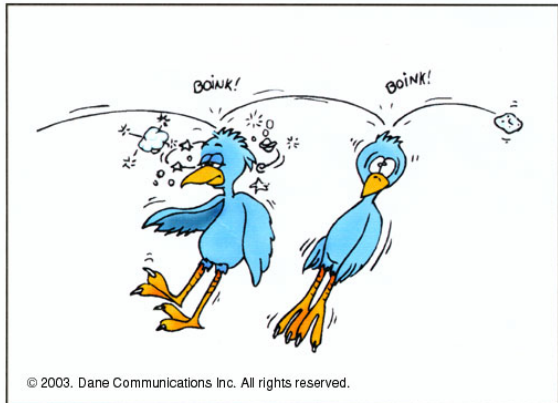
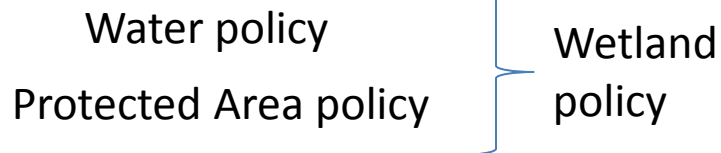
State of Qatar NBSAP- 2004

***“Goal:** Identify, establish and develop a comprehensive National Integrated Protected Areas System for Yemen (NIPASY), which will include the terrestrial, **wetland** and marine environments to strengthen community livelihood”*

Yemen NBSAP 2005

Why mainstream Wetlands & Water into NBSAPS?

Many NBSAPS already mention Protected Area strategy



As **Ramsar CP**, you have committed to the Wise use of wetlands (Article 3)

As a **CBD CP**, you have committed to develop national strategies to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity (Article 6)

As a **CMS CP**, you have committed to protect migratory species from being endangered (Article 2)

Integrating commitments into ONE NBSAP → improved setting of priorities, produces a guiding document that can be used as a basis for national policy and action across different sectors



Did you know? By Implementing the Ramsar Convention Strategy and Principles in your country, you achieve 19 out of the 20 Aichi Targets (please see handout table)



The mandate for mainstreaming wetlands in NBSAPs

Paramount importance of water as an ecosystem service was recognized in Decision X/28 on inland water biodiversity, CBD COP 10, 2010 and in the new “Strategic Plan for Biodiversity”

Action 1.5 By the end of 2012, all Arab countries to have signed the Ramsar Convention, established national strategies and action plans for wetlands in their countries

Muscat Action Plan, 2010

“ii) developing and implementing National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and National Wetland Policies in a consistent and mutually supportive way;

[Ramsar Resolution XI.6 welcoming the 5th joint CBD/Ramsar workplan DOC XI.20](#)

13. Invite Ramsar National Focal Points to enhance cooperation with the Focal Points for biodiversity related MEA’s, namely CBD, CMS, CITES and WHC, particularly during the revision process of the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) as policy instruments, and using the NBSAPs as an umbrella framework to implement the new Biodiversity Strategic plan 2011-2020 and Aichii targets, and specifically enhancing synergies and developing actions under targets 11 and 14 relevant to water and wetlands of the Ramsar Convention

Workshop on Wetlands in West Asia, Fujairah-UAE, May 2011

Who works on wetlands + biodiversity?

Ramsar

Central and local government departments : to join forces, form wetland committees, share strategies, have coordinated workplans.

National, provincial, site level



Wetland Committees & Working groups



specific stakeholder group(s), e.g. business sector for issues & projects

Non-Government: Private sector, Tourism sector, NGOs, Academia: consult experts, researchers, involve communities, enhance public awareness, raise funds.



جمعية البيئة العمانية
Environment Society of Oman



On the international level: where do we see wetlands & water?

Aichi Biodiversity Targets

Target 14: By 2020, *ecosystems that provide essential services, including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded....*



Life in harmony, into the future

Green Economy Report (2011)

Key message 5: Accelerated investment in *water-dependent ecosystems*, in water infrastructure and in water management can be expected to expedite the transition to a green economy.



The Future We Want (Rio + 20)

122. We recognize the *key role that ecosystems play in maintaining water quantity and quality* and support actions within the respective national boundaries to protect and sustainably manage these ecosystems.

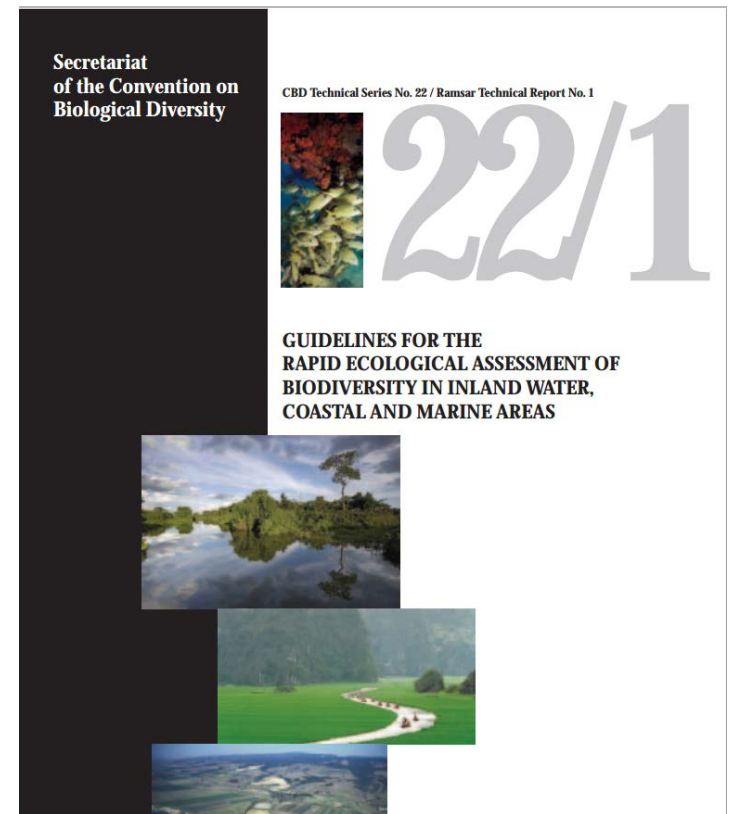


- Wetlands should always be *part of*:
 - National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (CBD)***
 - Water resource management plans***
 - Agriculture, forest, coastal and marine policies***
 - Socio-economic development strategies***
 - Land use planning strategies***

How to mainstream 'water' and 'wetlands' into NBSAPs?



1. Include representatives from agencies/ministries responsible for water management, protected area management & wetland management (e.g.Ramsar NFPs part of the NBSAP steering committee)
2. Identify priority areas for assessment : wetlands are clear priority sites especially in arid regions (e.g.carry out national wetland inventory)
3. Carry out basic assessments (→ the results of this basic assessment can be used to designate the area as a Ramsar site and give a wetland an international status.)
4. Identify targets, indicators for monitoring (→Ramsar site number can be an indicator)
5. Develop multi-stakeholder action plan



How to mainstream 'water' and 'wetlands' into NBSAPs?



- ✓ **CONTACT & COLLABORATE:** Participation of different convention focal points (CBD, CMS, CITES, Ramsar, etc..) in drafting strategies and action plans
- ✓ In your NBSAP, **RECOGNIZE IMPORTANT LINKAGE** between water and wetlands, between wetlands & biodiversity: wetlands play a critical role as a natural infrastructure that stores and delivers water, and are biodiversity hotspots
- ✓ Identify where **ONE** policy or action can answer to **SEVERAL** international commitments → workshop exercise

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"Our left hand doesn't know what our right hand is doing, so we're only interviewing ambidextrous candidates."

- ✓ **WORK TOGETHER:** Synergising different MEAs in your country = different ministries, departments working together to coordinate workplans & decisions

- Please contact me if you wish to receive any of the below documents available in English or Arabic or for any further information:
- Ramsar Manual
- COP11 Resolutions
- Muscat Action Plan
- Ramsar handbooks

