



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

The Ramsar Convention

*Presentation to special council of MLIT
Tokyo, 8/12/2004*



From 1971 Ramsar's mission...

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



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Today the Convention is moving towards...

Identifying the key new issue -

- 💧 balancing water for human needs
- 💧 and water for ecological needs.



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Contracting Parties' commitments under the Ramsar Convention

3 “pillars” of action:

- ✓ Wise use of all wetlands
- ✓ Wetlands of International Importance - designation and management
- ✓ International cooperation

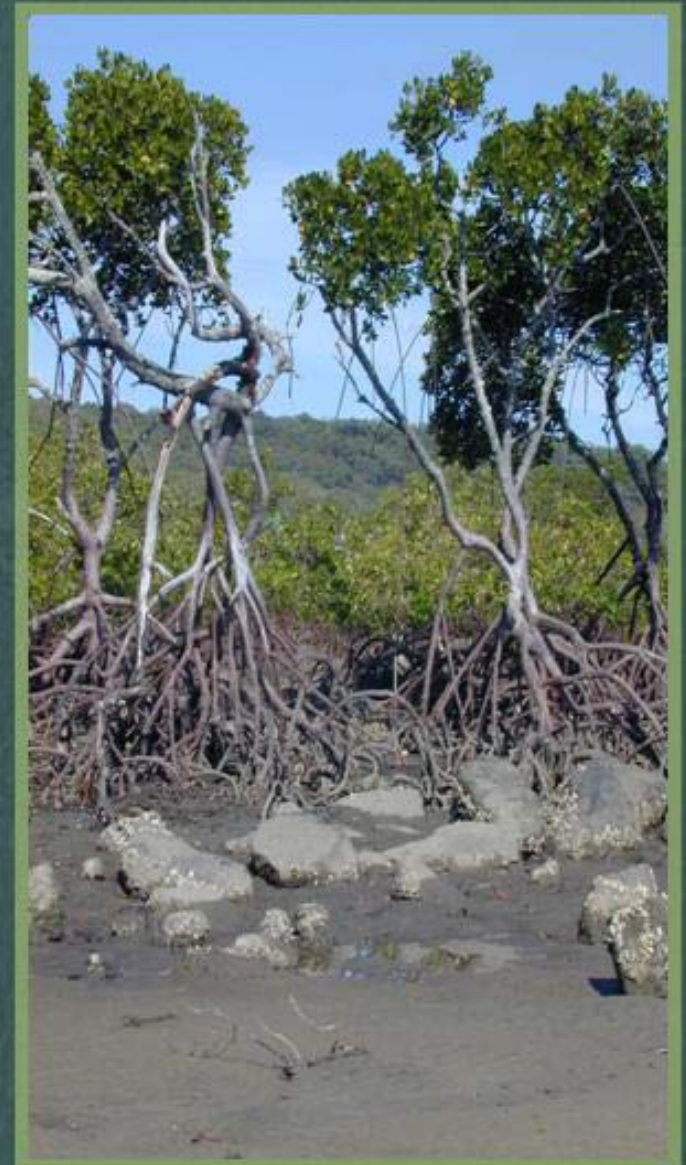


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What sort of sites ?...

- 💧 Natural and human-made
- 💧 inland/freshwater:
 - *marshes, rivers, lakes, reservoirs, rice fields, fish ponds, etc.*
- 💧 coastal/marine
 - *mangroves, lagoons, estuaries, coral reefs, sea grass beds, salinas, etc.*
- 💧 above ground and underground
 - *karst and caves*
- ✗ but not deep oceans



Wetlands have economic values...

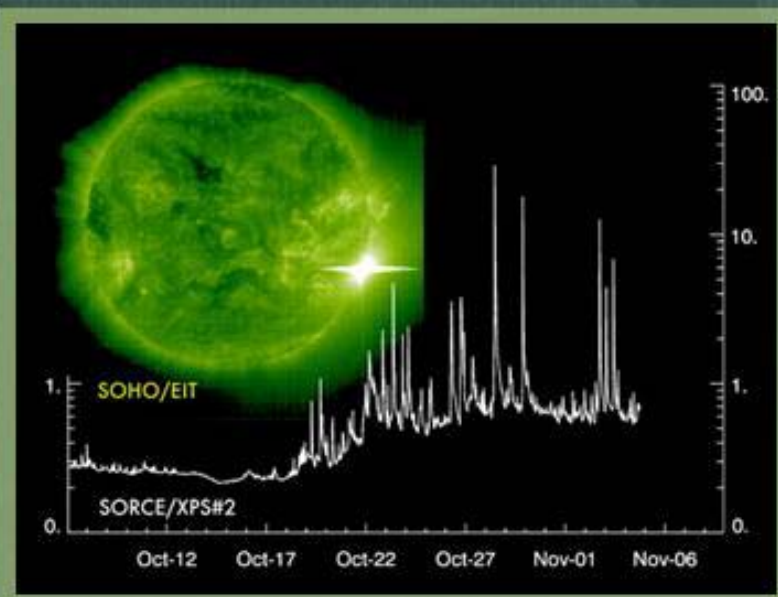


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Global warming... An increasing issue.

- Wetlands also play an important role in understanding, mitigating against and adapting to global warming...



What is the “wise use” of wetlands ?

“... their sustainable utilization for the benefit of humankind in a way compatible with the maintenance of the natural properties of the ecosystem”

(Ramsar COP3, 1987)



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Updated definition of “Wise Use”

“the sustainable use of wetland eco-services for the benefit of human well-being and biological diversity, through implementing an ecosystem approach to maintaining the the combination of the ecological components, processes and (ecosystem) services that characterize wetlands.”



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Wise use includes the concept of *restoration of wetlands*

So that
ecosystem
services
can be
returned,
maintained,
even
enhanced



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But – Isn't' Ramsar only about birds and wetlands, conservation of swamps, marshes, that sort of thing?

What has it to do with restoration or engineers????



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From COP6 in 1996, to COP8 in 2002;

There has been increasing focus on issues beyond wetland conservation for waterfowl.



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At COP8, many new issues...

- Water Allocation,
- the World Commission on Dams
- *Climate change and wetlands:*
- *Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)*
- *cultural values of wetlands*
- *Ground waters*



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From “wetlands for birds” to “water for people” ...

In the future the Convention will address the key issue of how to provide water for people, while ensuring ecosystems also receive water or enable them to continue *to provide ecosystem services*.



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So, we must go beyond saving the Ōji-shigi or even Tanchō, to ensuring there is enough water for food security and better human conditions.

Or rather, ***integrate*** the concerns for the conservation of the birds into the ***broader water agenda.***



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For more information...

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