

**U.N. CONVENTION ON WETLANDS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE: DESIGNATION OF SOUTH AND EAST COASTAL AREA**

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**Lodged au Greffe on 28th September 1999  
by the Planning and Environment Committee**

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**STATES OF JERSEY**

**STATES GREFFE**

175

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## **PROPOSITION**

### **THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion -**

- (a) to agree that the coastal area to the south and east of the Island of Jersey shown shaded on Map No. 1 attached to the report dated 16th September 1999 of the Planning and Environment Committee, should be designated as a Wetland of International Importance under the terms of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, as amended, (“the Ramsar Convention”), which applies to Jersey; and to authorise the Greffier of the States to sign the said Map;
- (b) to charge the Planning and Environment Committee to prepare a formal application under the terms of the Ramsar Convention for the designation of the area and to request the Bailiff formally to transmit the application to the Home Office through the official channel;
- (c) to charge those Committees of the States with administrative responsibilities for activities taking place in the area to be designated (including the Tourism, Agriculture and Fisheries, Planning and Environment, Harbours and Airport and Public Services Committees) to conduct their activities in that area in compliance with the conservation principles of the Ramsar Convention as outlined in the report of the Planning and Environment Committee dated 16th September 1999 and as described more fully in the Convention reproduced in Appendix 1 of that Report.

### **PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

## REPORT

### 1. Constitution of Ramsar

*Ramsar is a town in Iran where, in 1971, eighteen countries signed a Convention, which by 1999 has been extended to one hundred and thirteen countries.*

*Ramsar is the United Nations Convention on Wetlands of International Importance.*

This Convention was signed by the United Kingdom government in 1973 and the instrument of ratification was deposited with the Director General of UNESCO on 8th January 1976, in accordance with Article 9(3) of the Convention. The Island Development and Agriculture Committees of the day, having taken the advice of the Nature Conservancy Advisory Body, requested the Bailiff to inform the United Kingdom government that the Convention should apply in Jersey. A declaration was also made under paragraph 14 of the final act, to apply the Convention to Jersey. Under the provisions of Article 10(2) the Convention entered into force in Jersey on 5th May 1976. No sites were proposed at that time under the original criteria for designation. Protocols and amendments were agreed and extended to the Bailiwick in 1984 and 1990, when new criteria for sites were established. The Vice-President of the Island Development Committee, in a statement to the States on 11th October 1994, indicated that this had been ratified by the United Kingdom on behalf of the States of Jersey in 1990.

### 2. Purpose of the Convention

The original object of the Convention was to safeguard wetlands that were important for waterfowl. ("Wetland" includes coastal areas out to 6m depth at low water, estuaries, lakes, rivers and marshes.) The scope of the Convention now includes all aspects of wetland conservation and "wise use" of resources, recognising wetlands as ecosystems which are extremely important both for biodiversity conservation and the well-being of human communities. The full text of the Convention is attached at Appendix 1.

To date more than 900 wetlands have been designated. These include such areas as the Baie du Mont Saint Michel, the Wash, Southampton Water and the Severn Estuary. In each of these areas conservation interests and wise-use of resources work hand-in-hand.

### 3. Jersey's obligation under the Convention

Jersey is already committed to designating at least one Ramsar area that meets the criteria for designation laid down by the Convention.

By signing the Convention the Island has already made a commitment to the international community to ensure that our wetland areas are managed wisely. This is described in the Convention as: "*The wise use of wetlands is their sustainable utilisation for the benefit of mankind in a way compatible with the maintenance of the natural properties of the ecosystem*".

(*Sustainable utilisation* is defined in the Convention 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*", and "*Natural properties of the ecosystem*" are also defined as: "*Those physical, chemical and biological components such as soil, water, plants, animals and nutrients, and the interactions between them*".)

This means that those Committees of the States responsible for management of the Island's wetlands are, in fact, already committed individually and collectively to ensure that they comply with the conservation principles of the Ramsar Convention.

### 4. States' commitments to coastal conservation and the role of the Planning and Environment Committee

The States have made international and local commitments to coastal conservation. The Planning and Environment Committee has been tasked as lead agency by the States to implement the following Conventions, in addition to the Ramsar Convention -

- Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Berne Convention)
- Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn Convention)
- Convention on Biological Diversity

The States has a raft of local policy and legislative measures to move towards the implementation of these commitments and to ensure that Jersey is in line with best international practice.

The States agreed in 1994 to “*achieve environmental standards at least as good as the best of Europe*” and the States’ Environmental Charter was adopted in 1996. This agreed that the Island would “*develop a strategy for the conservation, improvement and enhancement of the coast and countryside including measures to provide for nature conservation and the protection of wildlife habitats, and to protect and enhance public open spaces, and coastal and aquatic environments.*”

Furthermore, in the Strategic Policy Review 1995 “2000 and beyond” the States agreed, inter alia -

- “to conserve and protect the marine environment” ;
- “to protect the Island’s natural ecosystems and conserve their associated flora and fauna”;
- “to ensure compliance with international commitments”.

The Strategic Policy Review 1994 confirmed the role of the Planning and Environment Committee as having “*strategic and co-ordinating responsibility for environmental policies*”. In addition to being the lead agency for the implementation of the Conventions listed above, the Planning and Environment Committee has also been tasked by the States to move ahead to implement local environmental commitments. With regard to coastal conservation, the Planning and Environment Committee were tasked by the States in the Strategic Policy Review 1995 to “produce a coastal zone management strategy in 1996 which will safeguard the marine natural heritage”. The process adopted to implement the Ramsar Convention is part of that ongoing work to move towards a coastal management strategy in collaboration with key stakeholders.

Many of our international commitments can be met by a combination of existing and forthcoming legislation and policy under, e.g. the Island Planning (Jersey) Law 1964 (as amended) and the forthcoming Conservation of Wildlife (Jersey) Law which is currently under review by the Privy Council. Key policies to ensure that the coastal resources are adequately protected and any development proposals are appropriately assessed include -

- **Marine Protection Zone** - Adopted by the States in 1995 under Article 3 of the Island Planning (Jersey) Law 1964. This designates the entire area between the mean high water mark and the outer limits of our territorial waters as having a presumption against all development for whatever purpose in the zone. When considering whether there is justification for overriding the presumption against development in the Marine Protection Zone, it was agreed that special consideration be given for consideration of applications relating to fish farming and aquaculture.
- **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)** - Under Article 6 of the Island Planning (Jersey) Law 1964. This ensures that any development proposal that may threaten or cause significant damage to the environment is subject to a full EIA process to EU standards. This ensures that any decisions are taken in the knowledge of the potential risks to the environment and that all possible measures are taken to ensure that such risks are prevented, reduced or mitigated against. This policy applies to potential developments out to the territorial limit.

In addition, existing legislation relating to fisheries and waste management and forthcoming legislation on pollution ensure there are adequately robust processes in place to protect our coastal environment.

The Island is in a strong position to apply existing and forthcoming legislation to ensure that the terms of the Ramsar Convention are met. No additional legislation or designation is required to meet the terms of the Ramsar Convention. Ramsar sites in the United Kingdom often require additional protective designations to ensure compliance. This is not the case in Jersey, and our laws and policies can ensure that the terms of the Convention are met when they are applied consistently and in an integrated fashion. The designation of a Ramsar area will provide a focus to ensure that Committees apply their powers in such a fashion.

Monitoring, research and education are all already undertaken by the wide range of States and non-governmental organisations actively involved in the management of the Island’s wetlands.

## 5. The Committee’s review

This included scientific review and stakeholder involvement processes working over a period from March 1998 - July 1999.

The scientific case for designation was examined using the Convention’s criteria for identifying wetlands of international

significance. The criteria are laid out in Appendix 2. The Committee's Environmental Services Unit have collated research material gathered over the last twenty years to identify areas where Jersey's coast meets the criteria. Consultation with the Environmental Adviser, United Kingdom authorities and the Fisheries Team at the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries has identified that an area of coast from St. Helier Harbour around the south and east coasts as far as Gorey Harbour fully meets the Ramsar Criteria.

Having commissioned further scientific research last year, the Planning and Environment Committee appointed Deputy Maurice Dubras to lead a consultative process of interested parties to investigate the case for a submission to the Ramsar Secretariat via the United Kingdom Government which represents our interests in relation to international convention requirements.

The approach adopted locally was based on principles of inclusion, consensus and full public disclosure of information. Initially, more than 100 people representing potentially interested groups were invited to a stakeholder briefing meeting in September 1998. Invitees were asked to take an active role and a Steering Group was formed, its membership drawn from a wide cross-section of representatives from industry, conservation groups, the Crown and States departments. Following the first meetings of the Steering Group, a public meeting was held in February 1999 and additional representatives were invited onto the Steering Group. The enlarged Steering Group now consists of 23 members from the following organisations -

- *The Crown*
- *Agriculture and Fisheries Department*
- *Education Department*
- *Harbours Department*
- *Planning and Environment Department*
- *Public Services Department*
- *Sport, Leisure and Recreation Department*
- *Tourism Department*
- *Jersey Fisherman's Association*
- *Jersey Inshore Fisherman's Association*
- *Jersey Federation of Sea Anglers*
- *La Rocque Boatowner's Association*
- *Jersey Aquaculture Association*
- *Concern*
- *Marine Conservation Society*
- *National Trust for Jersey*
- *Royal Society for the Protection of Birds*
- *Save Our Shoreline*
- *Société Jersiaise*

The Group is chaired by Deputy Maurice Dubras and secretariat services are provided by the Environmental Services Unit.

Over a period of more than eight months the group has met regularly to discuss the implications of designating a Ramsar area, and has reached consensual agreement on the way forward. It is the Steering Group which has examined all the issues in detail and the Steering Group which has made a clear recommendation to the Planning and Environment Committee. A further public meeting was held in July 1999 where the findings of the Steering Group were presented to more than 200 interested people who attended the meeting.

This approach provides a transparent and effective process that helps to build trust between different, potentially conflicting, stakeholders and helps ensure that all major issues are addressed in an appropriate and participatory manner. Genuine concerns, fears and rumours can be dealt with as sensitively and promptly as possible, and there is every opportunity for constructive dialogue between differing viewpoints.

## **6. The proposed area for designation**

Although several significant areas of the Jersey coastline would probably qualify under the Ramsar criteria, members of the Steering Group felt that the first should be a uniquely representative area and, after considerable discussion, the Steering Group agreed at a meeting in April 1999 by consensus to recommend to the Planning and Environment Committee that the area identified on Map No. 1 should be designated as the Island's first Ramsar Wetland of International Importance. The Planning and Environment Committee accepted the Steering Group's recommendation on 8th July 1999, and this is now proposed to the States.

It is also proposed that, as our understanding of adjacent areas of coastline improves, the designated Ramsar area should be reviewed for potential enlargement and further areas which may be identified in the future, elsewhere within the Bailiwick, would be brought forward for designation. It is envisaged that the existing Steering Group or a similar body would be involved in any future proposals.

## **7. Effects of designation**

Concern has been expressed that this designation may prevent traditional uses. The wording of the Convention shows that Ramsar designation does NOT prohibit what can be reasonably seen as “*wise use*”. Traditional practices which do not damage the long-term security of a habitat, such as inshore and low-water fishing, angling, diving, sailing and other low-impact activities are not only allowed but are positively encouraged. The Convention seeks to ensure that wetlands are used wisely for the “*benefit of mankind*”.

Nothing will change in terms of existing, sustainable activities and their management. Traditional activities in the coastal area will not be affected by the designation. There are already sufficient regulations to ensure that the Ramsar “*wise use*” principle is adhered to under local legislation and the States-agreed Marine Protection Zone Policy under the Island Planning (Jersey) Law 1964.

The Ramsar designation is essentially international recognition that part of Jersey’s coastline is of international importance, and an acknowledgement by the Island of our responsibilities for sound, forward-thinking environmental management of our most precious natural resources. This recognition will provide a positive focus point for new education, tourism and environmental monitoring initiatives.

Ramsar will make any future cases to reclaim land or develop the area much more difficult. It would be incumbent upon any potential developer to ensure that they could demonstrate that any such development would represent “*wise use*”. The designation by itself would not protect the coastal area from future major development, but it would provide the focal point for the stringent application of existing legislative and policy powers. Once an area has received international recognition, there would be the potential for external scrutiny of such proposals to ensure that the terms of the Convention were being met. In this way the designation provides a valuable “*filter*” to help protect some of our most important natural resources.

## **8. Relationship between Ramsar areas and sites of special interest (SSI)**

There has been much comment about the designation of a Ramsar area being a precursor to the widespread designation of this area, or parts of this area, as an ecological site of special interest under Article 9 of the Island Planning (Jersey) Law 1964, as amended.

For the purposes of the terms of the Ramsar Convention, there is no need to designate an SSI; the existing raft of legislation and policy can meet the terms. Any possible future additional designations will be based on different criteria for different intentions than is envisaged under Ramsar.

The Planning and Environment Committee has made it absolutely clear and unequivocal that no marine SSIs will be designated under the existing Island Planning (Jersey) Law 1964 because there is currently no option for the Committee to exercise discretion as to the activities which may take place in an SSI. The existing Law was drafted with terrestrial sites in mind; here the States would clearly not support digging, removal of organisms and similar damaging activities. Furthermore, it is not legally possible under the current Law to designate Crown property as an SSI.

There must not be any misunderstanding about this. The Committee has firmly and unambiguously stated that any future proposals for marine SSIs, in this or any area of the Island’s coast, are a matter for another day, are not directly linked to this proposal, and will be subject to similar processes of consultation and consensual decision making involving representatives of all stakeholders.

## **9. Resource implications**

There are no significant additional resource implications of designation. The Planning and Environment Committee, which has the States’ instruction to carry out Coastal Zone Management, is already carrying out research and monitoring work as part of a range of coastal and marine projects. This work will continue. There is also on-going work to develop public awareness, tourism and educational facilities in the area which will also continue. Valuable research and monitoring is being undertaken by the Committees of Agriculture and Fisheries, Public Services and Health and Social Services as well as by non-governmental organisations. There will be no need for additional staff to be employed specifically to implement the Ramsar area and no additional revenue expenditure is anticipated.

## **10. Conclusions**

The Committee sees this as an important step forward in meeting international commitments and affording key habitats the recognition and protection they deserve at both the local and international level. The Committee does not see any disadvantages in such a designation. It believes that it has fully responded to legitimate concerns expressed by various stakeholders during the extensive consultation process. It proposes the designation of the area on Map No. 1.

### APPENDICES -

Map No. 1 - Area recommended for designation

Appendix 1 - Ramsar Convention

Appendix 2 - Criteria for Ramsar designation

Appendix 3 - Table indicating Ramsar Criteria met by area in Map No. 1

16th September 1999





**CONVENTION ON WETLANDS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE ESPECIALLY AS WATERFOWL  
HABITAT**

Ramsar, Iran, 2.2.1971  
as amended by the Protocol of 3.12.1982  
and the Amendments of 28.5.1987  
**Certified copy**

Paris, 13 July 1994  
Director, Office of International Standards and Legal Affairs  
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural  
Organization (UNESCO)

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**The Contracting Parties,**

RECOGNIZING the interdependence of Man and his environment;

CONSIDERING the fundamental ecological functions of wetlands as regulators of water regimes and as habitats supporting a characteristic flora and fauna, especially waterfowl;

BEING CONVINCED that wetlands constitute a resource of great economic, cultural, scientific, and recreational value, the loss of which would be irreparable;

DESIRING to stem the progressive encroachment on and loss of wetlands now and in the future;

RECOGNIZING that waterfowl in their seasonal migrations may transcend frontiers and so should be regarded as an international resource;

BEING CONFIDENT that the conservation of wetlands and their flora and fauna can be ensured by combining far-sighted national policies with co-ordinated international action;

**Have agreed as follows:**

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**Article 1**

1. For the purpose of this Convention wetlands are 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 water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six metres.
2. For the purpose of this Convention waterfowl are birds ecologically dependent on wetlands.

**Article 2**

1. Each Contracting Party shall designate suitable wetlands within its territory for inclusion in a List of Wetlands of International Importance, hereinafter referred to as "the List" which is maintained by the bureau established under Article 8. The boundaries of each wetland shall be precisely described and also delimited on a map and they may incorporate riparian and coastal zones adjacent to the wetlands, and islands or bodies of marine water deeper than six metres at low tide lying within the wetlands, especially where these have importance as waterfowl habitat.
2. Wetlands should be selected for the List on account of their international significance in terms of ecology, botany, zoology, limnology or hydrology. In the first instance wetlands of international importance to waterfowl at any season should be included.
3. The inclusion of a wetland in the List does not prejudice the exclusive sovereign rights of the Contracting Party in whose territory the wetland is situated.
4. Each Contracting Party shall designate at least one wetland to be included in the List when signing this Convention or when depositing its instrument of ratification or accession, as provided in Article 9.
5. Any Contracting Party shall have the right to add to the List further wetlands situated within its territory, to extend the boundaries of those wetlands already included by it in the List, or, because of its urgent national interests, to delete or restrict the boundaries of wetlands already included by it in the List and shall, at the earliest possible time, inform the organization or government responsible for the continuing bureau duties specified in Article 8 of any such changes.
6. Each Contracting Party shall consider its international responsibilities for the conservation, management and wise use of migratory stocks of waterfowl, both when designating entries for the List and when exercising its right to change entries in the List relating to wetlands within its territory.

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**Article 3**

1. The Contracting Parties shall formulate and implement their planning so as to promote the conservation of the wetlands included in the List, and as far as possible the wise use of wetlands in their territory.
  2. Each Contracting Party shall arrange to be informed at the earliest possible time if the ecological character of any wetland in its territory and included in the List has changed, is changing or is likely to change as the result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference. Information on such changes shall be passed without delay to the organization or government responsible for the continuing bureau duties specified in Article 8.
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#### **Article 4**

1. Each Contracting Party shall promote the conservation of wetlands and waterfowl by establishing nature reserves on wetlands, whether they are included in the List or not, and provide adequately for their wardening.
  2. Where a Contracting Party in its urgent national interest, deletes or restricts the boundaries of a wetland included in the List, it should as far as possible compensate for any loss of wetland resources, and in particular it should create additional nature reserves for waterfowl and for the protection, either in the same area or elsewhere, of an adequate portion of the original habitat.
  3. The Contracting Parties shall encourage research and the exchange of data and publications regarding wetlands and their flora and fauna.
  4. The Contracting Parties shall endeavour through management to increase waterfowl populations on appropriate wetlands.
  5. The Contracting Parties shall promote the training of personnel competent in the fields of wetland research, management and wardening.
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#### **Article 5**

1. The Contracting Parties shall consult with each other about implementing obligations arising from the Convention especially in the case of a wetland extending over the territories of more than one Contracting Party or where a water system is shared by Contracting Parties. They shall at the same time endeavour to coordinate and support present and future policies and regulations concerning the conservation of wetlands and their flora and fauna.
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#### **Article 6**

1. There shall be established a Conference of the Contracting Parties to review and promote the implementation of this Convention. The Bureau referred to in Article 8, paragraph 1, shall convene ordinary meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties at intervals of not more than three years, unless the Conference decides otherwise, and extraordinary meetings at the written requests of at least one third of the Contracting Parties. Each ordinary meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties shall determine the time and venue of the next ordinary meeting.
2. The Conference of the Contracting Parties shall be competent:
  - a. to discuss the implementation of this Convention;
  - b. to discuss additions to and changes in the List;
  - c. to consider information regarding changes in the ecological character of wetlands included in the List provided in accordance with paragraph 2 of Article 3;
  - d. to make general or specific recommendations to the Contracting Parties regarding the conservation, management and wise use of wetlands and their flora and fauna;
  - e. to request relevant international bodies to prepare reports and statistics on matters which are essentially international in character affecting wetlands;
  - f. to adopt other recommendations, or resolutions, to promote the functioning of this Convention.
3. The Contracting Parties shall ensure that those responsible at all levels for wetlands management shall be informed of, and take into consideration, recommendations of such Conferences concerning the conservation, management

and wise use of wetlands and their flora and fauna.

4. The Conference of the Contracting Parties shall adopt rules of procedure for each of its meetings.
  5. The Conference of the Contracting Parties shall establish and keep under review the financial regulations of this Convention. At each of its ordinary meetings, it shall adopt the budget for the next financial period by a two-third majority of Contracting Parties present and voting.
  6. Each Contracting Party shall contribute to the budget according to a scale of contributions adopted by unanimity of the Contracting Parties present and voting at a meeting of the ordinary Conference of the Contracting Parties.
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#### **Article 7**

1. The representatives of the Contracting Parties at such Conferences should include persons who are experts on wetlands or waterfowl by reason of knowledge and experience gained in scientific, administrative or other appropriate capacities.
  2. Each of the Contracting Parties represented at a Conference shall have one vote, recommendations, resolutions and decisions being adopted by a simple majority of the Contracting Parties present and voting, unless otherwise provided for in this Convention.
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#### **Article 8**

1. The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources shall perform the continuing bureau duties under this Convention until such time as another organization or government is appointed by a majority of two-thirds of all Contracting Parties.
  2. The continuing bureau duties shall be, *inter alia*:
    - a. to assist in the convening and organizing of Conferences specified in Article 6;
    - b. to maintain the List of Wetlands of International Importance and to be informed by the Contracting Parties of any additions, extensions, deletions or restrictions concerning wetlands included in the List provided in accordance with paragraph 5 of Article 2;
    - c. to be informed by the Contracting Parties of any changes in the ecological character of wetlands included in the List provided in accordance with paragraph 2 of Article 3;
    - d. to forward notification of any alterations to the List, or changes in character of wetlands included therein, to all Contracting Parties and to arrange for these matters to be discussed at the next Conference;
    - e. to make known to the Contracting Party concerned, the recommendations of the Conferences in respect of such alterations to the List or of changes in the character of wetlands included therein.
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#### **Article 9**

1. This Convention shall remain open for signature indefinitely.
2. Any member of the United Nations or of one of the Specialized Agencies or of the International Atomic Energy Agency or Party to the Statute of the International Court of Justice may become a Party to this Convention by:
  - a. signature without reservation as to ratification;
  - b. signature subject to ratification followed by ratification;
  - c. accession.

3. Ratification or accession shall be effected by the deposit of an instrument of ratification or accession with the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (hereinafter referred to as “the Depositary”).
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#### **Article 10**

1. This Convention shall enter into force four months after seven States have become Parties to this Convention in accordance with paragraph 2 of Article 9.
  2. Thereafter this Convention shall enter into force for each Contracting Party four months after the day of its signature without reservation as to ratification, or its deposit of an instrument of ratification or accession.
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#### **Article 10 bis**

1. This Convention may be amended at a meeting of the Contracting Parties convened for that purpose in accordance with this article.
  2. Proposals for amendment may be made by any Contracting Party.
  3. The text of any proposed amendment and the reasons for it shall be communicated to the organization or government performing the continuing bureau duties under the Convention (hereinafter referred to as “the Bureau”) and shall promptly be communicated by the Bureau to all Contracting Parties. Any comments on the text by the Contracting Parties shall be communicated to the Bureau within three months of the date on which the amendments were communicated to the Contracting Parties by the Bureau. The Bureau shall, immediately after the last day for submission of comments, communicate to the Contracting Parties all comments submitted by that day.
  4. A meeting of Contracting Parties to consider an amendment communicated in accordance with paragraph 3 shall be convened by the Bureau upon the written request of one third of the Contracting Parties. The Bureau shall consult the Parties concerning the time and venue of the meeting.
  5. Amendments shall be adopted by a two-thirds majority of the Contracting Parties present and voting.
  6. An amendment adopted shall enter into force for the Contracting Parties which have accepted it on the first day of the fourth month following the date on which two thirds of the Contracting Parties have deposited an instrument of acceptance with the Depositary. For each Contracting Party which deposits an instrument of acceptance after the date on which two thirds of the Contracting Parties have deposited an instrument of acceptance, the amendment shall enter into force on the first day of the fourth month following the date of the deposit of its instrument of acceptance.
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#### **Article 11**

1. This Convention shall continue in force for an indefinite period.
  2. Any Contracting Party may denounce this Convention after a period of five years from the date on which it entered into force for that party by giving written notice thereof to the Depositary. Denunciation shall take effect four months after the day on which notice thereof is received by the Depositary.
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#### **Article 12**

1. The Depositary shall inform all States that have signed and acceded to this Convention as soon as possible of:

- a. signatures to the Convention;
  - b. deposits of instruments of ratification of this Convention;
  - c. deposits of instruments of accession to this Convention;
  - d. the date of entry into force of this Convention;
  - e. notifications of denunciation of this Convention.
2. When this Convention has entered into force, the Depositary shall have it registered with the Secretariat of the United Nations in accordance with Article 102 of the Charter.
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IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned, being duly authorized to that effect, have signed this Convention.

DONE at Ramsar this 2nd day of February 1971, in a single original in the English, French, German and Russian languages, all texts being equally authentic\* which shall be deposited with the Depositary which shall send true copies thereof to all Contracting Parties.

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\* Pursuant to the Final Act of the Conference to conclude the Protocol, the Depositary provided the second Conference of the Contracting Parties with official versions of the Convention in the Arabic, Chinese and Spanish languages, prepared in consultation with interested Governments and with the assistance of the Bureau.

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**THE CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFYING WETLANDS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE**

as adopted by the 4th, 6th, and 7th Meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) to guide implementation of Article 2.1 on designation of Ramsar sites

[Note: This is just a simple list of the Criteria themselves out of their explanatory settings. They should properly be used as part of the Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance adopted by COP7, 1999.]

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**Group A of the Criteria. Sites containing representative, rare or unique wetland types**

Criterion 1: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it contains a representative, rare, or unique example of a natural or near-natural wetland type found within the appropriate biogeographic region.

**Group B of the Criteria. Sites of international importance for conserving biological diversity***Criteria based on species and ecological communities*

Criterion 2: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it supports vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered species or threatened ecological communities.

Criterion 3: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it supports populations of plant and/or animal species important for maintaining the biological diversity of a particular biogeographic region.

Criterion 4: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it supports plant and/or animal species at a critical stage in their life cycles, or provides refuge during adverse conditions.

*Specific criteria based on waterbirds*

Criterion 5: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it regularly supports 20,000 or more waterbirds.

Criterion 6: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it regularly supports 1% of the individuals in a population of one species or subspecies of waterbird.

*Specific criteria based on fish*

Criterion 7: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it supports a significant proportion of indigenous fish subspecies, species or families, life-history stages, species interactions and/or populations that are representative of wetland benefits and/or values and thereby contributes to global biological diversity.

Criterion 8: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it is an important source of food for fishes, spawning ground, nursery and/or migration path on which fish stocks, either within the wetland or elsewhere, depend.

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