

Global Newsletter – October 2008

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[Ramsar Convention needs to improve resolutions](#)

Wetlands International advocates chances for the proposed resolutions of this week's Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. Many proposed changes demand attention for the link between wetland loss and climate change and for biofuels.

This week, the intergovernmental [Ramsar Convention on Wetlands](#) has its 10th COP in Korea. Many of the draft Resolutions deal with the important issues of these times: climate change, avian influenza and waterbirds, biofuel production. The content of the Resolutions needs though improvement according to Wetlands International.

See the [recommendations to the Contracting Parties](#).

The convention should take a strong stand on the [protection of peatlands](#) to stop their immense carbon dioxide emissions. Globally, the loss of these wetlands accounts to 10 to 15% of all carbon dioxide emissions. Still there is no global policy to reduce or even account these emissions. Other related issues are the recognition of coastal and mountain wetlands as vital ecosystems for people to [adapt to climate change](#). Managing these wetlands in a sustainable way reduces the negative impacts of extreme precipitation, droughts or coastal storms. These wetland values are still not widely recognized. A strong signal from the Ramsar Convention towards development authorities about this value is very important.

A third crucial subject are the negative impacts of parts of the [biofuel production](#) sector on wetlands. Wetlands International calls for exclusion for production of wetlands with a high conservation value and of peatlands.

Purple Herons' trek can be followed online!

Ten [Purple Herons](#) can be monitored from today onwards in their trek to Africa. A project co-financed by Wetlands International equipped these migratory birds with a satellite transmitter, which allows their position to be determined with a ten metre accuracy.

Their migratory behaviour will tell us more about the dangers they face in their journey. That knowledge can be used to improve the Purple Heron's protection.

The flyway of the Purple Heron can be observed [online here](#).

New WI Panama office presents Programme Development Officer

With great pleasure WI announces the appointment of Julio Montes de Oca as its new Programme Development Officer for [Latin America and the Caribbean](#). He is based in the City of Knowledge in Panama City. Julio is responsible for coordinating and leading project and partnership development, as well as fund-raising in Latin America.

His focus will be on activities and projects in the field of [Wetlands and Livelihoods](#), but expanding later to encompass the full range of strategic goals of Wetlands International.

The new Panama office is hosted by the [Ramsar Regional Centre \(CREHO\)](#).



A Memorandum of Understanding with CREHO has been signed further strengthening both parties' compromise in promoting wise use management and conservation of wetlands and their resources, as well as the Ramsar Convention in the region.

Study: Changing weather changes migratory bird behaviour

A study from José Ochoa Quintero (2008) has shown changes in climatic conditions are disturbing migratory water birds. Using the North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO), an atmospheric circulation pattern that affects weather conditions in Europe, the study found waterbird species populations change by the effect of this climatic phenomenon.

José Ochoa Quintero executed his study at Wetlands International Headquarters, finding seventeen species correlating with the NAO index. His research is based on information from the International Waterbird Census (IWC).

The changes in numbers wintering individuals in a particular location are caused by either shifting distribution or altering ecological conditions.

For more information on this study, please contact: [Ward Hagemeijer](#)

Study: Preventing peatland loss is cheapest climate measure

Reducing emissions from tropical peatlands is by far the cheapest way of reducing greenhouse gas emissions; using biofuels is by far the most expensive measure. This concluded UK think tank Policy Exchange, which presented the costs of the most important climate measures in their study '[The Root of the Matter](#)'.

Costs for reducing CO₂ emissions range from 0,1 euro per tonne carbon dioxide for peatlands to maximum 30 euro for forests. The costs for nuclear energy, the use of nuclear energy and especially biofuels are much higher, up to around 600 euro per tonne.

[Wetlands International](#) welcomes the recommendation of the authors to provide much more support to peatland restoration in tropical regions. This is currently a major work field for our organisation.

See: [WI Peatlands and Climate Change Mitigation & \[www.ckpp.org\]\(http://www.ckpp.org\)](#)



[Global Peatland Fund on CNN](#)

In CNN's show 'Business Traveller' the focus was this past July on carbon offsetting initiatives worldwide. Wetlands International CEO Jane Madgwick tells about the recently launched Global Peatland Fund.

Click [here](#) to watch the show and WI website for more information on the [Global Peatland Fund](#).



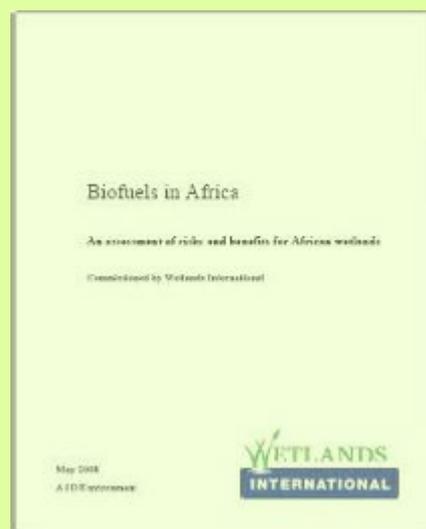
Call for biofuel criteria excluding wetlands

Influenced by a [powerful joint NGO lobby](#) supported by Wetlands International, the Members of the Environmental Committee and later the Industrial Committee of European Parliament voted in favour of stronger sustainability criteria for the EU Renewables Directive dealing with biofuels.

Criteria were demanded for ambitious greenhouse gas savings and exclusion of areas like wetlands with high carbon stocks and/or biodiversity values. The final outcome of the decision-making process is expected before the end of the year.

Wetlands International is relieved at this outcome as our research demonstrated that biofuels are responsible for huge carbon emissions due to peatland conversion and degradation. Furthermore, it showed that biofuel production leads to the loss of many wetlands in Africa, Asia and South America.

Read our report [Biofuels in Africa](#) or see [our work on biofuels](#).



New short film on Water Use of the Inner Niger Delta



As part of the [Wetlands and Poverty Reduction Project](#) (WPRP), Wetlands International has released the new video "Better use of the water of the [Inner Niger Delta](#) in a changing climate".

The new video is released on a DVD with two other short films on wetlands in Africa, being:

"[Zambia & Malawi](#): From degradation to sustainable agriculture in seasonal wetlands" and "Solving conflicts about the scarce water resources in [Southern Kenya](#)".

Available from WI Headquarters and all three short films are to be viewed at www.wetlands.org.

UN Climate Convention and wetlands

Wetlands International is for some years very active in advocating for including peatland emissions in UN climate policies. Emissions from degraded peatlands account for 10 to 15% of all global carbon dioxide emissions. However, they are not accounted and as a result are totally ignored.

HQ attended the [climate talks in Accra, Ghana](#) (20-27 August) to raise the issue of peatland degradation and restoration within current climate negotiations. On the agenda was, amongst others, the proposed 'REDD' policy to reduce emissions from deforestation and degradation.

The aim was to get tropical peatlands addressed under this policy. This will lead to attention for peatland restoration and conservation activities. Another goal was to ensure that developed countries ([Annex I](#)) must account for the greenhouse gas emissions that result from peatland degradation under a post-Kyoto Protocol (2012) climate regime. This would result in an important incentive to reduce degrading activities in developed countries with large peatland areas.

Wetlands International will again be [present at this summit](#). The negotiations will continue at the 14th Conference of Parties taking place in Poznan, Poland in December 2008 (see announcements).

WI presence at African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) Meeting in Madagascar

The WI delegation contributed to the fourth Meeting of the Parties to the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement ([AEWA MoP4](#)) in Antananarivo, Madagascar. The team presented the progress of the [Wings Over Wetlands](#) (WOW) project, held two side-events, and rallied members' support for the [International Waterbird Census](#) (IWC).

The two side-events were held on the WOW project and the IWC, whose data were compiled by Wetlands International into the 4th edition of the Conservation Status Review for [AEWA](#). After discussion, a new resolution on the improvement of knowledge on the status of waterbirds and on factors causing their decline was adopted (AEWA Res. 4.2).



The WI team also participated in the formulation of other resolutions on related topics, such as Avian Influenza, and provided technical support at discussions on many Single Species Action Plans.

Finally, Wetlands International colleague Abdoulaye Ndiaye (photo: centre) was elected as Vice Chair of the Meeting, and undertook this difficult and exacting role with great skill and diplomacy.

For more information: Wetlands International - IWC & www.unep-aewa.org/

New WI publications:

- [Wetlands International Annual Review 2007](#)
- [Healthy Wetlands, Healthy People: Report on the Shoaxing City Symposium](#)
- [Invisible Connections: Why migratory birds need the Yellow Sea](#)
- [Questions & Answers: Facts about Peatland Degradation in Southeast Asia in a Global Perspective](#)
- [Best Practice Guidelines on Restoration of Mangroves in Tsunami Affected Areas](#)
- [Good Practices and Lessons Learned in Integrating Ecosystem Conservation and Poverty Reduction Objectives in Wetlands](#)

Available at:
www.wetlands.org

Announcements:

6th Annual Roundtable of the RSPO & 5th Annual General Assembly of Members Bali, Indonesia (18-20 Nov.)

Our Malaysia office will be present at [Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil](#) (RSPO) meeting in Bali. Aim is to support the RSPO in attaining sustainable palm oil production, to plead for additional criteria for GHG emissions and exclusion of the use of peatlands.

Moreover, it must be made clear that we, as a member organisation, do not support the currently proposed criteria.

WI at the UN Framework Conference on Climate Change [\(UNFCCC\) COP13](#) Poznań, Poland (1-12 December)

Following-up on our advocacy in Accra, Wetlands International will be present at the COP 13 with the mission of including tropical peatlands emissions into a new post-Kyoto Protocol climate regime.

Moreover, our team will demonstrate the capacity of wetlands to reduce the impacts of climate change.

The meeting comes midway between COP 13 in Bali, which saw the launch of negotiations on strengthened international action on climate change, and [COP 15 Copenhagen](#) (end of 2009), at which the negotiations are set to conclude.

New Wetlands International Global website is live!

Wetlands International proudly presents the new and integrated global web system, headed by the global website of our organisation www.wetlands.org and various subsites.

The new web system provides you with a lot of information about our work in general, our dozens of projects and hundreds of publications.

All this information is presented in a user-friendly way, varying from clickable maps with our projects to search selections for all our work by topic, region or type of activities on www.wetlands.org.

For more information on all the topics of this Global Newsletter, please visit: www.wetlands.org.

Two side-events at [Ramsar COP10 in Changwon, Korea](#) (Oct. 29 – Nov. 4)

Wetlands International and WWF are jointly organizing two side-events at the Ramsar Conference of Parties 10 (Oct. 28 - Nov. 4) at Changwon, Korea,

The objectives of these side-events are supporting informed discussions and passage of resolutions on wetland policies at the Ramsar conference. Also, the publication 'Invisible Connections: why migrating shorebirds need the Yellow Sea' will be presented.

The two side-events are:

1. **Climate Change Policies and Wetlands Conservation: Conflicts and Synergies**
29 October 2008 (13.15 – 14.45 hrs.)
2. **Biofuels, Agriculture and Wetlands**
30 October 2008 (13.15 – 14.45 hrs.)