

# The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and CBD's PoW on Protected Areas

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# What are wetlands...?

Wetlands are ‘water related ecosystems’, that include a broad range of wetland types, ‘from the mountains to the sea’, e.g.

## Inland Wetlands

Snowfields, lakes, marshes, rivers, streams, flooded caves, aquifers, chott, oasis, wadis

## Coastal Wetlands

Sabkhas, mangroves, tidal flats, sea grass beds, coral reefs, estuaries, up to 6m at low tide

## Human-made wetlands:

Rice fields, fish ponds, reservoirs, ditches and canals



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# Wetland ecosystem services

## Natural infrastructures:

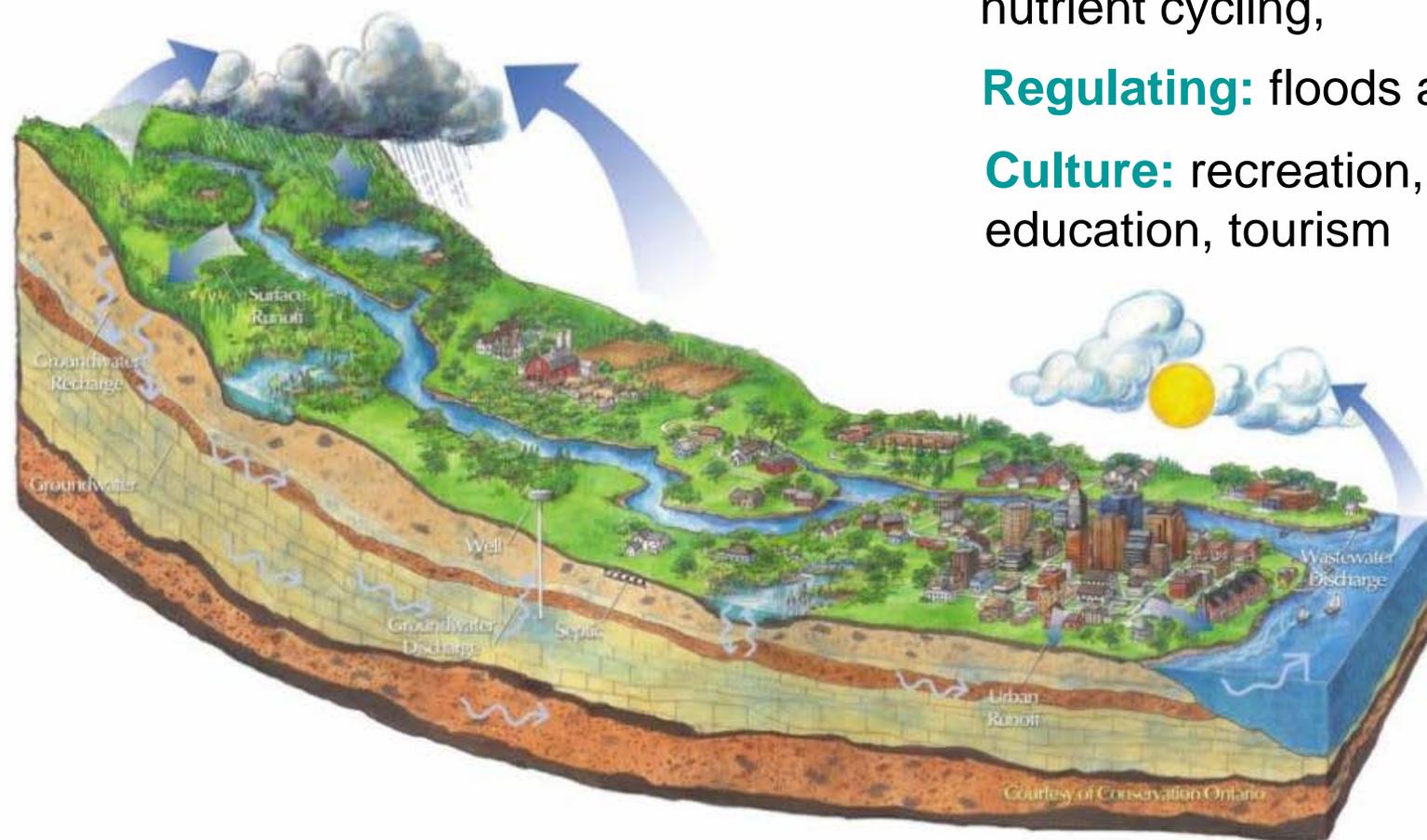
- important part of the water cycle
- stores and delivers water

**Provisioning:** water, food, biodiversity, and hydroelectricity

**Supporting:** soil formation, nutrient cycling,

**Regulating:** floods and drought

**Culture:** recreation, spiritual, education, tourism



# The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

## Mission

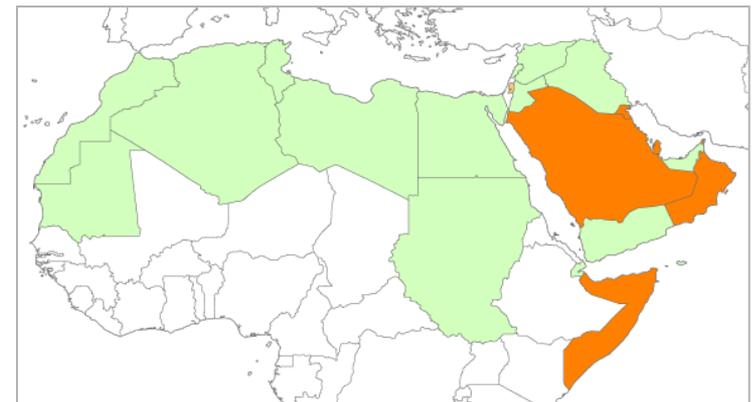
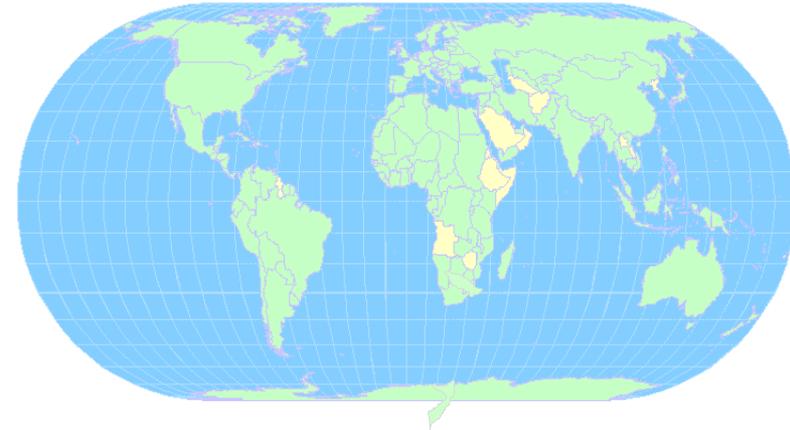
The conservation and wise use of wetlands through national actions, and international cooperation as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development.

## Contracting Parties

- 160 Contracting Parties worldwide;
- 18 Contracting Parties in North Africa and West Asia

## Ramsar and CBD

- 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.



Contracting Party   
Non-Contracting Party 

# The 3 implementation “Pillars”

## 1<sup>st</sup> Pillar: “Wise use” of wetland

‘Wise use’ = the sustainable use of wetlands and their resources for the benefit of humankind

Best practices include:

- National Wetland Inventory;
- Policies and legislation to ensure the wise use of wetlands, e.g. on land-use planning, wetland EIAs, National Wetland Policy, etc.;
- Promote the cross-sectoral recognition of wetland services, e.g. through National Wetland Committee;
- Promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands through the CEPA programme aimed at all sectors of society.



# The 3 implementation “Pillars”

**2<sup>nd</sup> Pillar:** The designation and wise use of **Wetlands of International Importance** (Ramsar Site).

- Identification and Listing of priority wetlands as Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Site);
- Based on 9 criteria relating to sites:
  - containing representative, rare or unique wetland types
  - of international importance for conserving biodiversity
- 2,005 Ramsar Sites worldwide;
- >193 million hectares;
- size: from <1 ha to > 6 million ha;
- Largest ‘protected areas’ network globally.



# The 3 implementation “Pillars”

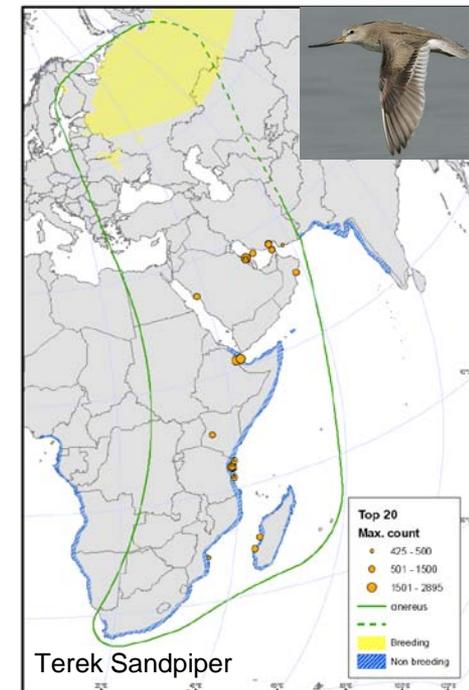
## 3<sup>rd</sup> Pillar: International Cooperation

- Importance of cooperation on shared river basins and transboundary wetlands;
- networks for the protection of migratory species and their wetland habitats, e.g. migratory waterbirds; and
- promote the sharing of information and expertise.

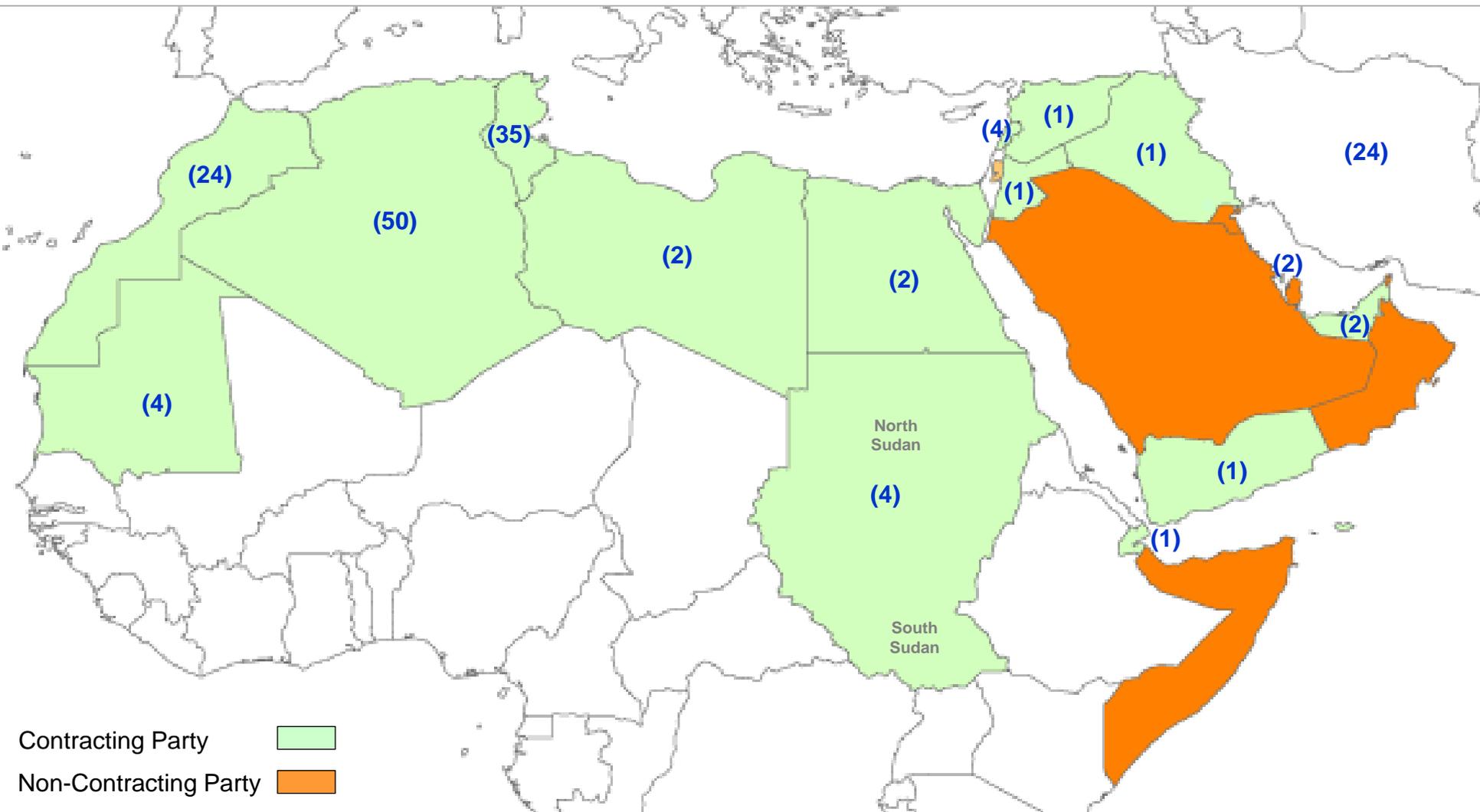
## Ramsar Regional Initiatives

### Regional Programmes

- Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative (MedWet)
- Nile River Basin Initiative (NileWet)



# Ramsar Sites in North Africa and West Asia



# Benefits of Ramsar Site designation

## Benefits

Surveys conducted by the World Bank, WWF, academics and the Ramsar Secretariat, have shown that the conservation status of wetlands Listed as Ramsar sites have improved.

This is because of:

- increased awareness about the importance of the sites,
- increase participation by local stakeholders in conservation,
- greater support for protection of the site and surrounding (buffer) areas,
- increased conservation funding (both domestic and international), and
- promotion of scientific research and ecotourism.



# Wise use of Ramsar Sites

## Best practices

- Prepare Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) to provide baseline information about the site. Updated every six years;
- Establish a broad-based site management committee involving relevant stakeholders to assist in the decision making process;
- Development of a site management plan;
- Management, restoration and monitoring of the site;
- Implement CEPA programme, and establish wetland/visitor centre.



## Pillar 2: Lists of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites)

### Conservation and wise use of Ramsar Sites

- Article 3,2 Reporting: Contracting Parties should inform the Secretariat as soon as possible if the ecological character of any Ramsar Site ‘has changed, is changing or is likely to change as the result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference.’
- Montreux Record: Record of Ramsar Sites “where changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring or are likely to occur.”
- Ramsar Advisory Mission: Mechanism where at the Contracting Party’s request, the Secretariat will organize a team of experts to visit a site to to provide assistance to address the problems or threats facing Ramsar Sites.



# Wetlands as a cross-cutting issue



**Climate change:** Role of wetlands in mitigation (carbon storage) and adaptation (wetland management)



**Rio+20 emerging issues:** Water resources, and coastal and marine ecosystems



**Green Economy:** The management of, and investment in, water related ecosystems is essential to address water security for both people and ecosystems in terms of water scarcity, the over-abundance of water (floods) and its quality.

**Millennium Development Goals:** *Target 7:* Help to ensure environmental sustainability.



**Aichi Targets:** Not only Target 11 on protected areas but many others on natural habitats, health, livelihoods etc.

# Opportunities from the wise use of wetlands

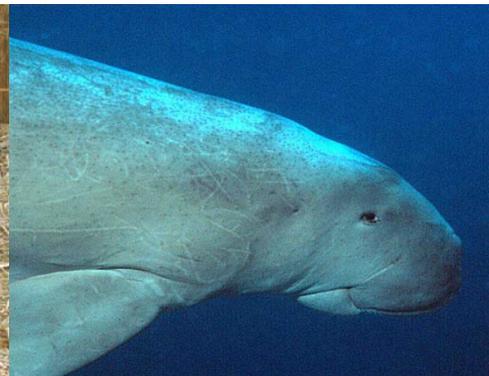
Wetlands are 'water related ecosystems':

- Are an important part of our natural infrastructure;
- Plays a vital role in the storage and delivery of water, and;
- Provide a range of ecosystem services, e.g. biodiversity, ecosystem-based mitigation and adaptation to climate change etc.

The designation of priority wetlands as Ramsar Sites will ensure the conservation and wise use of the site and its resources.

## Ramsar COP11

- (Bucharest, Romania (6-13 July 2012))
- [http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-cops-cop11/main/ramsar/1-31-58-500\\_4000\\_0](http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-cops-cop11/main/ramsar/1-31-58-500_4000_0)





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Thank You

