

Wetlands International

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Wetlands International contribution in response to CBD Notification 2019-108 on “Submission of views on possible targets, indicators and baselines for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and peer review of a document on indicators”

Wetlands play a crucial role in connectivity at all scales from site level, through landscape level and river basin to flyway scale. Wetlands are the natural water infrastructure and the water connects local wetlands. In a river basin, water connects wetlands from source to sea, across a gradient of freshwater via brackish to marine wetlands. This chain of connectivity is also crucial for a number of migratory species, e.g. fishes, connecting nurseries with habitats for adult animals.

Yet another scale of connected wetlands is that of flyways, the areas connected by the migration of birds. Networks of wetland sites support large populations of migratory waterbirds. Many of these breed in northern ranges, often even in the Arctic (‘the mother of all flyways’) and migrate south to spend the northern winter in the south.

The connectivity aspect of networks of wetlands asks for special attention where it comes to the conservation, restoration and management of these areas, which goes well beyond just networks of protected areas. So while we support the 30% protected area target for terrestrial areas, these do not sufficiently work for wetlands, where connectivity makes that the healthy status of wetlands can not just be restricted to protected areas as ‘islands’ in a landscape. Therefore we propose an additional target of restoration of 50% of the loss of wetlands that happened over the last 50 years, with a focus on maintaining and restoring connectivity. Prioritising which areas to restore would follow criteria that would include their contribution to connectedness, their biodiversity value and their value to ecosystem functioning.

Measuring progress towards all the targets mentioned in the document requires substantive amounts of data. The gathering of such information through monitoring schemes is often not or not sufficiently funded, in many cases relying on citizen science where even the coordination of these schemes is not properly resourced. Investments in these cost effective (because volunteer based) schemes should be considered a priority, to allow indicators to use the data they produce.