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EDITORIAL

"Wetlands as a tool in poverty alleviation", was the slogan used in the celebration of the World Wetlands Day 2006 and clearly reflects the importance of these ecosystems.

Nevertheless, there are nowadays several challenges to overcome in order to achieve its wise use and an ideal conservation state. The Ramsar Convention is the framework of action for governments and civil society towards the protection of biodiversity, goods and values of wetlands at the global level.

As the Ramsar Regional Centre for the Western Hemisphere, CREHO was established in Panama with the objective of promoting the knowledge about the management and wise use of wetlands throughout the Americas, through training, research and the development of impact assessment tools, methodologies and economic assessment, and the establishment of communication mechanisms.

Communication is a key element in our practice, therefore the creation of INFOWETLAND as an information tool offered to the Contracting Parties and other groups interested in wetlands. This initiative entails the production of a quarterly electronic newsletter to promote activities, processes and lessons learned carried out in wetlands in the Americas. The newsletter is a participatory space with an editorial line focused on rescuing and communicating experiences supporting the achievement of our mission.

In this first issue, you will find information about actions in Coquimbo's wetlands in Chile, the declaration of Ramsar sites in Ecuador and Guatemala, a report about the 20th-year celebration of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, besides workshops and courses, among others.

We invite you to join us actively in the development of INFOWETLAND, a space to incentive the generation of a greater exchange of experiences among the diverse groups working in the America's wetlands.

Welcome to the launch of this meeting point.

Rosa Montañez
Executive Director
CREHO



NEWS

WETLANDS AND AWARENESS IN COQUIMBO, CHILE



Hitos de la localidad costera de Torcoy (Chile).
Por Edwin Guila. Práctica para escuelas "Manos al Suroeste".
Foto: Diego Lara O. © 2006

The implementation of the project “Communication, Education and Public Awareness for the Wise Use of the Coastal Wetland System in

Coquimbo”, carried out by the Aquatic Environments Corporation of Chile, (CAACH for its initials in Spanish) has left positive results in the South American country. With the financial support from the Ramsar Convention’s Wetlands for the Future Fund and following up the guidelines of the Convention’s CEPA program, CAACH implemented actions to promote the wise use of local wetlands.

The Coquimbo’s Coastal Wetlands System is located in the IV Region in Chile and is considered one of the 25 key conservation areas in the world based on its

high biodiversity and endemism of vascular plants (Dinerstein *et al* 1995).

The Wetlands System is formed by a network of wet zones that function as centers of high biological diversity and offer a wide range of goods and services to the communities living in this area.

As part of the implementation of the project, two publications were developed: the manual for the Wise Use of the Coastal Wetland System in Coquimbo: “Wetlands can’t wait” and the practical guide for school children: “Hands on Wetlands”. The publications had wide distribution on the local, regional and international level, generating high public incidence.

For more information about the project, visit www.humedalescoquimbo.cl

For more information about Wetlands for the Future Fund, visit http://www.ramsar.org/wff/key_wff_index.htm

Source: Corporación Ambientes Acuáticos de Chile

NEW RAMSAR SITE IN ECUADOR



The Ramsar Convention has recognized the Ñucanchi Turupamba Wetland Complex as Wetland of International Importance on May 2006 (Ramsar site No. 1625). The complex performs an important hydrological function by recharging aquifers, filtering water and regulating the water level of the adjacent peatlands.

The Complex also hosts endangered species such as the CITES Appendix I spectacled bear (*Tremarctos ornatus*) and the Andean condor (*Vultur gryphus*). The site constitutes an important nesting and breeding ground for numerous waterfowl species. A number of water storage areas have been built within the site for water treatment, irrigation and to generate electricity for approximately 1,500,000 people.

For more information, visit www.ramsar.org

**DISCUSSING THE
HIGH-ANDEAN
WETLANDS
STRATEGY IN CHILE**



The first International Financial Planning Meeting of the High-Andean Wetlands Strategy was held in Chile on May 2006. The objective of the meeting was to generate projects and ideas, and to design a fundraising platform to support the medium and long-term implementation of the strategy.

The meeting had the participation of governmental representatives from Chile, Ramsar Convention’s focal points from countries with this type of wetlands, non-governmental organizations and CREHO among others.

Rosa Montañez, CREHO’s Executive Director, said: “The High-Andean Wetlands Strategy is a key initiative for the conservation and rational use of wetlands in the region.

“The support of various groups of stakeholders and the

commitment of the Andean governments makes evident the importance of these wetlands for the regional economy, the biodiversity and the social values”, she added.

The strategy, endorsed by the Ramsar focal points of seven Andean countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela) and Costa Rica, the Ramsar Convention Secretariat, international organizations (IUCN, WWF, Wetlands International, BirdLife International) the Páramo Group, the High Andes Flamingos Conservation Group (GCFA for its initials in Spanish) and CREHO, has the objective of promoting sustainable use and conservation of the high-Andean wetlands through the implementation of a long-term regional management process among the involved countries, in order to maintain the goods and services provided by the wetlands and reduce the existing impacts and threats.

For more information about the strategy, write an email to info@creho.org and/or download the strategy’s document at http://www.wwf.org.co/colombia/biblioteca/publicaciones/los_humedales_altoandinos_es.pdf



Salar del Huastce, Chile.
© CREHO 2006.
Foto: Rosa Montañez.

THE NORTH AMERICAN WATERFOWL MANAGEMENT PLAN MARKS 20 YEARS OF CONSERVATION

The North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) was started in 1986 with the goal of returning waterfowl populations to their 1970s levels by conserving wetland and upland habitats. NAWMP is an international partnership of federal, provincial/state and municipal governments, non-governmental organizations, private companies and many individuals in Canada, the United States and Mexico. This year marks its 20th year of conservation achievements.

The Plan has established regional partnerships (joint ventures) throughout the continent to undertake conservation projects. In Canada there are three



habitat joint ventures (Pacific Coast, Prairie Habitat and Eastern Habitat) and three species joint ventures (Arctic Goose, Black Duck and Sea Duck).

In January 2006, a review was completed for all NAWMP joint

ventures. The recently released *2006 Canadian Habitat Matters Progress Report* outlines progress of work in the Canadian Joint Ventures.

Highlights from 1986-2005 include:

- 5.8 million acres conserved under the habitat joint ventures (Pacific Coast, Prairie Habitat and Eastern Habitat); and,
- 1.2 billion dollars in total contributions from the US and Canada.

For more information, visit <http://www.nawmp.ca/>

Source: Wetkit (www.wetkit.net)

NEW RAMSAR SITE IN GUATEMALA

The Ramsar Convention has recognized the Lachuá ecoregions in Guatemala as



Wetland of International Importance on May 2006 (Ramsar site No. 1623). The Lachuá ecoregion comprises the "Laguna de Lachuá" National Park and its surrounding buffer zone. Among the most representative species reported in this site are the bat (*Thyroptera tricolor*) - only reported here for Guatemala - and a high concentration of mammals such as the cougar (*Puma concolor*), jaguar (*Panthera onca*), Baird's tapir (*Tapirus bairdii*), and various monkeys and reptiles including the well-known boa (*Boa constrictor*).

Fisheries constitute an important resource for the local population. Potential oil exploration and disputes over the allocation of natural resources constitute the greatest threats to the site.

For more information, visit www.ramsar.org



De pie izq a dcha. Elena de Lombardo, Rocío Córdoba, Rosa Montañez, Herbert A. Raffaele, Margarita Astrálaga, Aleida Salazar, John Bowdleg, Sergio Lasso. Sentado: Cesar Funes Abrego.

CAPACITY BUILDING IN WETLANDS MANAGEMENT: A PRIORITY FOR THE AMERICAS

Ramsar CREHO Board of Directors meets in Panama

On May 2, 2006 the annual Board Meeting of the Ramsar Regional Center for Wetland Training and Research in the Western Hemisphere (CREHO for its initials in Spanish) was held in Panama. The meeting's objective was to discuss the Center's development, including its financial sustainability and CREHO's position as leader in capacity building for integrated wetlands management in the Western Hemisphere.

The meeting was attended by Elena de Lombardo (Smithsonian Institute of Tropical Research- Representing Related Institutions Worldwide), Rocío Córdoba (IUCN- Representing International Organization Partners), Herbert A. Raffaele (Representing Contracting Parties in North America- United States), Margarita Astrálaga (Ramsar Secretariat), Aleida Salazar (National Environmental Authority- Panama), John Bowdleg (Representing Contracting Parties in the Caribbean- Bahamas), Sergio Lasso (Representing Contracting Parties in South America- Ecuador), Cesar Funes Abrego (Representing Contracting Parties in Central America- El Salvador) and Rosa Montañez (Executive Director- CREHO).

During the meeting, the Board emphasized the need for wetland conservation and, when development is necessary, the wise use of wetlands through the strengthening of technical capacities of decision makers and wetland managers in the Americas. In addition, the Board also highlighted the key role of CREHO as a driving force in the capacity building processes.

For more information, contact CREHO: info@creho.org

NEW TECHNICAL OFFICER AT CREHO



Maria Rivera is the new Technical Officer at CREHO. Maria has an academic background in Environmental Sciences, holds a Masters degree in Natural Resources Management with emphasis in wildlife management and aquatic resources, and has specific training in wetlands management from the Wetland Advisory and Training Centre-Institute for Inland Water Management and Waste Treatment-RIZA, the International Agriculture Centre in the Netherlands and The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.

Ms. Rivera has experience in wetlands developing and implementing technical issues such as inventory and monitoring of waterfowl. She also has wide experience in the formulation of management plans as well as in the political and legal issues, training courses and deep knowledge about the implementation of the Ramsar Convention.

Before joining CREHO, Ms. Rivera worked in the Ministry of the Environment, Housing and Territorial Development in Colombia for 11 years as professional specialized in wetlands and as technical focal point to the Ramsar Convention.

Ms. Rivera was the north of South America representative in the Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative's Interim Steering Committee.

Currently Ms. Rivera is part of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) of the Ramsar Convention representing the Neotropics.



NEW OCEANS AND COASTS ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY IN MEXICO

The “National Environmental Policy for the Sustainable Development of Mexico’s Oceans and Coasts: Strategies for Conservation and Sustainable Use” is available in www.semarnat.gov

The document contains detailed description of the marine and coastal zones in the country from the policy, legal, economic and social perspectives to establish a strategic framework and a policy for its management. A significant part of Mexico’s Ramsar sites are coastal wetlands and these areas will be benefited by the creation of this policy.

You can download the document in
http://www.semarnat.gob.mx/dgpairs/pdf/oceanos_costas.pdf



Bahía de Huatulco, México. Foto: Carolina Hoyos ©

EVENTS AND COURSES

THE 2006 WORLD WATER WEEK IN STOCKHOLM



The 2006 World Water Week in Stockholm will continue its important role at the nexus of the water, environment, development and poverty reduction fields when it takes place August 20-26 at the Stockholm City Conference Centre.

The week itself has been remodeled, with its increased emphasis on capacity building, partnership building and follow-up on the implementation of international processes and programs in water and development.

In 2006, workshops, seminars and side events will explore three water-related complexes under the overarching World Water Week theme of "Beyond the River – Sharing Benefits and Responsibilities". The response from the international water community, and its interest in being active in the program, has been overwhelming. At press time, around 90 different organizations are on board as convenors or co-convenors of different activities.

For more information visit www.worldwaterweek.org

MANGROVE ACTION DAY

Once again we find ourselves approaching the annual celebration of Mangrove Action Day, which will occur on 26 July.

Join this campaign "Mangroves, Our Natural Heritage," by organizing activities in each one of your countries with the aim of influencing public opinion on the need to protect a highly threatened ecosystem and promote its community management, as well as the right to work for the traditional communities of this ecosystem.



More information: redmanglar@redmanglar.org

Source: Redmanglar Internacional

WETLANDS RESTORATION DIALOGUE 2006

The Wetlands Restoration Dialogue to be held in Fort Lauderdale, September 18-20, 2006, will present key note speakers with expertise in national and international efforts in wetlands restoration providing updates and insights in their particular area of expertise on the progress of wetlands restoration in the United States, and globally.

For more information, contact info@awra.org or visit www.awra.org

SIWI: NEW CAPACITY BUILDING COURSES

In late 2006 and early 2007, The Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) is offering three new capacity building courses, which focus on national, and transboundary water management issues. The courses, conducted together with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and Ramboll Natura AB, provide on-the-ground training geared to decision makers, planners, specialists and managers at different types of levels and organizations. Applications for the courses are now being accepted from the respective course regions.

The courses include:

- Integrated Transboundary Water Resources Management for the MENA Region
- Integrated Transboundary Water Resources Management for the Lake Victoria Region
- Integrated Water Resources Management

For more information about each of these courses, including application forms, visit www.sivi.org.

ONLINE COURSES IN WETLAND MANAGEMENT

The next starting date of the online courses in Wetland Management is September 1, 2006. The courses are jointly offered by UNESCO-IHE and the Partnership of Water Education and Research (PoWER).

The courses are based upon training material used in various formats, settings and regions and were successfully offered in online form in 2005. They are targeted at professionals who do not have the time to take a course abroad lasting several weeks, who like

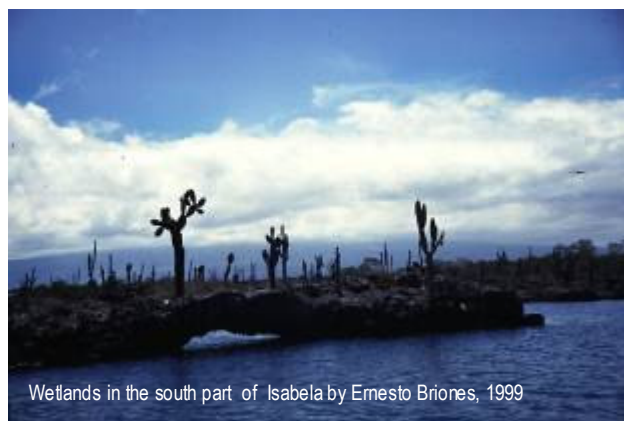
to combine education with daily work and have the possibility to directly apply acquired knowledge and skills.

For more information about the course, visit <http://www.unesco-ihe.org/education/ilearning.htm>

I NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM OF ECUADORIAN WETLANDS

The Symposium is being held in the city of Loja, Ecuador, on July 24 to 28, 2006. The objective of the event is to integrate scientific and technical information relevant to the conservation and rational use of Ecuadorian wetlands. Experts from International organizations such as IUCN-Sur, BirdLife International, and Wetlands International are participating in the event.

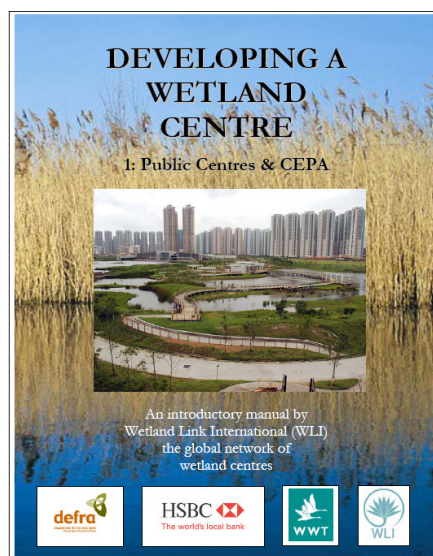
For more information, send an email to paramos@arcoiris.org.ec



Wetlands in the south part of Isabela by Ernesto Briones, 1999

COLLABORATION

WETLAND LINK INTERNATIONAL (WLI) – A GLOBAL NETWORK OF WETLAND CENTRES



Wetland Link International (WLI) is a global network of wetland centres for those engaged in CEPA (communication, education and public awareness for wetlands). The initiative aims to share ideas, resources and expertise about CEPA and wetland centres through a website (www.wli.org.uk), e-group, publications and planned training courses.

WLI has 300 members in 64 countries including 33 from eight countries in Central and South America, one in the Caribbean, and 34 in two North American countries.

WLI has just published online the manual *Developing a Wetland Centre*, freely downloadable from WLI's website in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Chinese

WLI will be working with the Ramsar Regional Center for Training and Research on Wetlands in the Western Hemisphere (CREHO, for its initials in Spanish) to facilitate the implementation of CEPA in the region.

WLI Membership is free. Please contact the Coordinator, Mr. Malcolm Whitehead, at the Wildfowl & Wetland Trust (WWT) London Wetland Centre, UK – Malcolm.whitehead@wwt.org.uk, for details.

WLI is a programme of the UK's based conservation NGO, The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust and is supported by HSBC Bank plc.

Source: WLI

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The call for articles for the newsletter's second issue will be published in August and the leading topic will be focused on the HIGH-ANDEAN wetlands. We will provide more information in the coming weeks.