



## COMPENDIUM OF CANADA'S ENGAGEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS AND INSTRUMENTS

### *Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar)*

**SUBJECT CATEGORY:**

Biodiversity / Ecosystems

**TYPE OF AGREEMENT / INSTRUMENT:**

Multilateral

**FORM:**

Legally-binding treaty

**STATUS:**

- Signed by Canada June 2, 1983
- Ratified by Canada January 15, 1981
- In force in Canada May 15, 1981
- In force internationally December 21, 1975

**LEAD & PARTNER DEPARTMENTS:**

**Lead:** Environment and Climate Change Canada

**Partner:** Global Affairs Canada

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:****Web Links:**

- [Ramsar Convention](#)
- [History of the Convention](#)
- [Canada Country Profile](#)
- [ECCC website on the Ramsar Convention](#)

**Contacts:**

[ECCC Inquiry Centre](#)

**COMPENDIUM EDITION:**

January 2020

**PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY**

The Ramsar Convention was adopted as the first of the modern global nature conservation conventions and, today, is a highly regarded and active multilateral environmental agreement. The mission of the Ramsar Convention is the wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world. Canada joined the Convention in 1981 and has a long reputation of making constructive inputs to the programs of the Convention, such as policy development, program assessment, peatlands and carbon conservation, grasslands wetland restoration, economic valuation, mitigation issues and other topics.

Canada has designated 37 Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites) under the Convention, including the second largest in the world, Queen Maud Gulf in Nunavut.

**OBJECTIVE**

The objective of the Ramsar Convention is the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world.

**KEY ELEMENTS**

Contracting Parties are required to:

- designate at least one Ramsar site and ensure their effective management;
- work towards the wise use of all their wetlands through national land-use planning, appropriate policies and legislation, management actions, and public education; and,
- cooperate internationally concerning transboundary wetlands, shared wetland systems, shared species, and development projects that may affect wetlands.

**EXPECTED RESULTS**

The wise use of all wetlands including more participative management of wetlands and conservation decisions being made with an awareness of the

importance of the ecosystem services provided by wetlands.

The development and support of an international network of Wetlands of International Importance.

The development of effective partnerships with other conventions, international agencies, and other Parties to the Convention.

## CANADA'S INVOLVEMENT

Canada's involvement in the Ramsar Convention enhances its implementation of the Migratory Birds Convention Act, Species at Risk Act, and Canada Wildlife Act. It is also an important continental tool that supports Canada's implementation of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.

Canadian conservation-based stakeholders work together to designate and effectively manage Ramsar sites, many of which are also designated as Migratory Bird Sanctuaries, National Wildlife Areas, and Provincial and National Parks.

## RESULTS / PROGRESS

### Activities

Canada has a long reputation of making constructive inputs to the operational programs of the Convention, particularly those related to policy development, program assessment, peatlands and carbon

conservation, grasslands and wetlands restoration, economic valuation, mitigation issues and other topics.

Canada works with other Contracting Parties to implement the resolutions adopted at the meetings of the Conference of the Parities.

Canada serves on the Standing Committee as the North American regional representative on a rotating basis with the United States and Mexico. When not serving on Standing Committee, Canada's main participation in the Convention is through the designation of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites).

### Reports

Each triennium, Contracting Parties submit a [National Report](#) measuring their progress against the Ramsar Strategic Plan that is in effect.

### Results

As of October 2019, there are 2,372 Ramsar Sites, covering over 253 million hectares, around the world. Canada's 37 Ramsar Sites cover 13,086,771 hectares and represent all provinces and territories. Canada also has the distinction of being home to the second largest Ramsar site in the world, Queen Maud Gulf (6,278,200 hectares).