

The Fifth Meeting of NorBalWet experts - Conclusions

August 25 to 27, 2009 Turku, Finland

Wetland experts from nine countries (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, The Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Sweden and Switzerland), the Ramsar Secretariat and the Wetlands International (WI) participated in the seminar *Networking with wetland managers in Nordic-Baltic countries* organised by Finnish Ministry of the Environment and Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services, Finland within the framework of the Ramsar Regional Nordic-Baltic Wetlands Initiative.

Main themes of the seminar included i) current issues of implementing the Ramsar Convention and cooperation between countries, ii) enhancing cooperation within the NorBalWet region, iii) wetland strategies and iv) wetland restoration and biological diversity. Also wetlands and development aid were discussed. Two field excursions were organised to potential Ramsar sites of Mietoistenlahti Bay and Puurijärvi-Isosuo National Park, where the so far biggest bird wetland restoration project in Finland is currently running.

As a follow up from the seminar the NorBalWet member countries were urged to:

- look for COP10 resolutions, especially Resolution X.1: The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009-2015 and prepare national priorities to be implemented
- improve delivering the Ramsar Convention by designating the required national focal points in line with Resolution X.29: Clarifying the functions of agencies and related bodies implementing the Convention at the national level
- finalize the updating of Ramsar Information Sheets (RIS) for all Ramsar sites within 2009

Member countries were also asked to support:

- looking for how development aid could be used for wetland protection
- cooperation with International Organisations Partners of the Convention including their national offices and regional programmes
- designating of transboundary and Twin Ramsar sites with the aim of further joint management and sharing best practices and experiences
- further development and active update of the NorBalWet website to provide information on countries, relevant restoration projects of different habitat types and national strategies
- enhancing the better use of Ramsar Handbooks, in particular wetland restoration
- further development of CEPA (communication, education, participation and awareness) activities

The participants asked the Coordination Group of the NorBalWet to look further into:

- updating the list of priorities from national COP10 strategies to the regional level
- preparing a vision for the NorBalWet to be communicated during World Wetland Day communication (last half week of August to first half week of September)
- involving more people
- support member countries in implementing above mentioned points