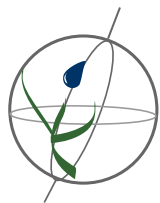


Map Description

Wetlands are vital ecosystems that help sustain the waterways, which provide our food and drinking water. Yet today wetlands continue to be degraded, drained and replaced by other land uses all over the world. The Convention on Wetlands (signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971) ensures that important wetlands in all continents are protected, and, when this is the case, used wisely by the local communities that depend on them. Ramsar sites are wetlands with “international significance in terms of ecology, botany, zoology, limnology or hydrology.”

The Ramsar Convention is an intergovernmental treaty with 135 member States, which have so far designated 1,235 wetland sites, totaling 106.6 million hectares, for inclusion in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance. The Convention’s mission is “the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local, regional and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world” (Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008).

When a country becomes a party to the Convention, it agrees to designate at least one wetland for inclusion in the Ramsar List and to ensure its conservation. At any time, Contracting Parties may designate additional wetlands for the List or extend the boundaries of those already included.



This map shows the number of Wetlands of International Importance, or Ramsar sites, by basin. The basins with the greatest number of Ramsar sites include the Danube, with 65 sites; the Rhine-Maas basin, with 22; the Niger, with 15; the Amur, Murray-Darling, Elbe and the Paraguay subbasin, with 11 Ramsar sites each; and the Po River basin, with 9. It is important to highlight that there are 36 basins and sub-basins that only have one designated Ramsar site, and 65 basins and sub-basins that have no Ramsar sites.

Mapping Details

The information on each listed site is included in the Ramsar Database maintained by Wetlands International under contract with the Ramsar Convention. Wetlands International compiles the database using the official information submitted by each country about its Ramsar sites. Spatial accuracy of the coordinates varies from one site to another. For this map, Ramsar sites were mapped using the coordinates provided in the database and were later aggregated by river basin using a geographic information system.

Map Projection

Robinson

Sources

Ramsar's Strategic Plan 2003-2008. Ramsar COP8 Resolution VIII.25. (http://www.ramsar.org/key_res_viii_index_e.htm)

Ramsar COP 8 Information papers. 2002. Eighth Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP) held in Valencia, Spain, 18 to 26 November 2002. (http://www.ramsar.org/cop8_docs_index_e.htm)

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands Website, available on-line at: <http://www.ramsar.org/>. Viewed January 30, 2003.