



INTERNATIONAL MIRE CONSERVATION GROUP

NEWSLETTER

issue 2001/3, October 2001

The International Mire Conservation Group (IMCG) is an international network of specialists having a particular interest in mire and peatland conservation. The network encompasses a wide spectrum of expertise and interests, from research scientists to consultants, government agency specialists to peatland site managers. It operates largely through e-mail and newsletters, and holds regular workshops and symposia. For more information: consult the IMCG Website: <http://www.imcg.net>

IMCG has an elected Main Board of 15 people (14 since the death of Chairman Ton Damman) from various parts of the world, that has to take decisions between congresses. Of these 15 an elected 5 constitute the IMCG Executive Committee that handles day to day affairs. The Executive Committee consists of a Chairman, a secretary general, a treasurer, and 2 additional members.

Viktor Masing (†), Hugo Sjörs, and Richard Lindsay have been awarded honorary membership of IMCG.

Editorial

Since the appearance of the last Newsletter, important things have happened: IMCG is finally a registered organisation and even has an own bank account. Many people have already registered as official members, but too many have not taken yet this step. Please do so quickly, because we will stop sending the Newsletters to people who refuse to affirm that they want to receive the Newsletter. So contact Jan Sliva (sliva@weihenstephan.de) as soon as possible, write to the secretariat, or surf to the IMCG website.

The last newsletter was also partially distributed by email. That has led to some problems, but we hope that it will work out better this time.

Another important issue for IMCG planning is the preliminary registration for the 2002 IMCG Field Symposium, Conference, and Congress in France (<http://www.imcg.net/docum/france.htm>).

We have received many news items to be included from all over the world. We thank all contributors for the interesting read produced by all together. Our editing has been as rigorous as always and any mistakes are entirely our responsibility. Please keep sending in material on anything happening regarding mires. Also for information or other things, contact us at the IMCG Secretariat. Address updates should be send to Jan Sliva. In the meantime, keep an eye on the IMCG web-site: <http://www.imcg.net>

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IMCG Executive Committee Meeting

Tamsweg, Austria, 5 and 7 August 2001

Parallel to the Tamsweg regionality Workshop (see elsewhere in this Newsletter), an executive committee meeting was held. Next to Hans, Tania and Jan (IMCG-EC), 10 other IMCG members participated in the discussions on the following issues.

Internal Organisation

Philippe has reported that the official registration of IMCG has taken place. Since July 7th 2001 we are an official "association" under French law (see the Official Journal of the French Republic n°27, p. 3051, 2001). July 7th will therefore be the official birth date of the registered association. An IMCG bank account has been opened.

Membership registration is a time consuming activity, but it proceeds very well. Per 1 July IMCG had 148 official members from 40 countries, covering all continents (except Antarctica).

Following a request to be acknowledged as benefactor, the issue of "Criteria for benefactors" was heavily discussed. The question is how a mechanism can be developed to preclude any abuse of the IMCG label. Suggestions made included:

- the potential benefactor must be informed on the main points of the IMCG policy.
- all donations have to be addressed to specific projects
- when referring to the support given to IMCG, the benefactor must refer to the concrete project supported, not to IMCG in general

The secretarial work is running smoothly. Jan will continue the management of the membership list. The web-site is in a very good condition, thanks to the work of Michael Trepel. Resources to support this work are, however, still needed. The Newsletter is coming regularly and in time.

To improve the process of distribution it was suggested to use on-line auto-subscription. Furthermore the mailing list should be cleaned from people who are not interested in receiving the Newsletter anymore. Next to the people that cannot receive the Newsletter via the web, hard copies of the Newsletter have to be distributed among governmental agencies dealing with nature conservation (incl. Ramsar focal points) and national and international offices of the major NGOs.

To provide continuity in the main goals and approaches of the organisation, an IMCG strategy has to be formulated, as a basis for an IMCG Policy Plan 2001 – 2004. The strategy must stress how IMCG as an organisation contributes to mire conservation: by facilitating resources and canalising efforts and potential, that are available all over the world. The strategy should describe how to improve the organisation, how to structure its work, how to get more benefits for conservation and how to keep these benefits. The draft strategy document will be prepared as soon as possible to be able to amply

discuss it in the Main Board and among the other membership. We will publish the text in the Newsletter in time before the Congress in July 2002, France, where it can be adopted.

Preparation of the Congress 2002 includes the initiation of the discussion on the election of the chairman (by Main Board or by all members) and on the targets and strategy of the organisation.

An important aspect of IMCG Congresses is the adoption of resolutions, focussed on specific countries or organisations. To make the resolution preparation process less hectic, we will publish a call for submitting resolutions in the Newsletter (see elsewhere) and stimulate the submission of articles for the next Newsletters on the issues involved.

Under contacts with other organisations it was reported, that no progress had been made with respect to organising our status as an "expert group" of Wetlands International. For the European Habitat Forum a new IMCG representative is sought. It was noted that – in spite of active involvement of IMCG members/representatives in the Ramsar STRP, little feedback with the EC takes place. Furthermore it would be good if information on mire-related discussions in STRP would directly be provided for the Newsletter.

Further cooperation with the Society of Wetland Scientists (of which our Main Board member Barry Warner is currently chairman) was discussed. The great value of close cooperation between the two organisations and the necessity to intensify the contacts were stressed. But we should also take care to keep our own clear profile. As one of the members expressed it: "we have worked so long to bring mires and peatlands in the picture of the world, we should not spoil that by submerging in a larger organisation". In our strategy document, the cooperation with other organisations will further be discussed.

Current issues

Good action was undertaken by IMCG members to influence the eco-labelling process. The intervention also showed the necessity of an inventory of specialists among the IMCG members who could be asked for appropriate expertise for such cases. A questionnaire will be distributed among members (following the proposal that Sake van der Schaaf already made in Quebec) to make an inventory of knowledge, skills, and willingness of members to contribute to necessary IMCG work.

The Ramsar STRP has integrated the comments of Ramsar member countries into a new GAPP document, that will be proposed to COP8 (for the text see <http://www.ecology.uni-kiel.de/~michael/imcg/gapp0106.pdf>).

Wetland International must be stimulated to develop the Ramsar Wise Use Guidelines on short notice. The latest developments can be found on the website of

Ramsar. The STRP has also discussed the Criteria for identification of peatlands as Ramsar sites (see item 10 at http://www.ramsar.org/strp10_minutes.htm)

Michael Steiner was asked to present the results of the IMCG Tamsweg Regionality Workshop to the STRP as a contribution to developing criteria based on regional features.

Projects

As we had already decided before, no proceedings of IMCG conferences will be published longer than 2 years after the concerning event. As the process is in progress we leave it to Richard Lindsay and our Japanese members to publish the proceedings of the Kushiro Conference 1996. Proceedings of the Quebec conference will not be published. For the 2002 Conference in France it should be cleared in advance, whether proceedings will be made.

With respect to the conference in France 2002 it would be good if more concrete topics for the scientific symposium would be formulated. The plans and schedules for the 2004 Conference in South-Africa are already prepared, but the dates are not fixed yet. It was suggested to connect the dates with those of the 2004 IAVS meeting.

Jan is working on an overview of classification information and he will provide a chapter on that issue for the IMCG European Mires Book. He will also integrate the results of the regionality project.

Jan will asked Olivia the list of participants in the Darwin Initiative to invite them to become IMCG members. It was stressed that the national Workshops initiated by Darwin courses have had great results.

It was suggested to publish the IMCG European Mires Book under the responsibility of an editorial board of mire authorities. A list of people to be addressed was made. We will put the text on the web and ask those people to react within a specific period. Publishing cost will be supported by the GPI. We aim at presenting the published book at the 2002 Congress.

The IMCG input into the Global Peat Initiative is currently too little. A GPI Steering Committee meeting could not be attended by our representative Tania, because it was organised on very short notice. Email information was too little to compensate for that. We should look through the list of projects to see where IMCG members' expertise could be relevant. Projects such as a Peatland Web-site should definitely be discussed with IMCG. Tania will distribute the final list of projects in the EC and discuss details with EC members.

No news was available on the UNEP-GEF peat project. Tania will contact Faizal.

A final draft of the Wise Use background document will be posted on the web in autumn for a final round of comments. The Wise Use Statement, resulting from the Wageningen meeting March 2001, was finalized.

Reaction on the IMCG South Africa Resolution

The IMCG Resolution for South Africa, which can be found in the previous IMCG Newsletter, was drawn up in Québec and sent to the relevant authorities in South Africa. Recently, the IMCG Secretariat received a reply from the Office of Environmental Affairs and Tourism Department of the Republic of South Africa. The minister Mr. Moosa expresses his thanks for the Resolution and is encouraged by the high profile the issue of peatland exploitation and protection in South Africa has attracted. The resolution is seen as particularly valuable to the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism as a national focal point for the implementation of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. The Department and others have already successfully used the contents of the resolution to strengthen the recognition given to mires in planning processes and impact assessments. The resolution will provide

further support to raising awareness around the value of peatlands for managing South Africa's scarce water resources and in designating significant peatlands as Ramsar sites, the letter states.

Furthermore, the minister's office is pleased to inform IMCG that several initiatives, either planned or underway, will contribute to giving effect to elements of the resolution. These include the national wetland inventory, draft national biodiversity conservation legislation, which includes provisions for habitat protection, and mechanisms for enhancing cooperation between the government departments responsible for wetland conservation and management.

The Department is eager to showcasing the progress made with regard to mire conservation when IMCG visits South Africa in 2004.

IMCG workshop on peatland regionalty

4th August – 8th August 2001, Tamsweg/Austria

In the Regionality Workshop some 15 IMCG members discussed a global approach to main mire types, their definitions, the principles of subdivision of these types, and the zones and countries in which every type is occurring. The following table presents

the results of the discussions. Any comments are welcomed by Gert Michael Steiner, Institute of Ecology and Conservation Biology of the Vienna University, Althanstr. 14, A-1090 Vienna, Austria. gmst@pflaphy.pph.univie.ac.at

Types	Definition	Principles of subdivision	Zones	Country
Bird Top	guanogenic bog	none	arctic, antarctic	Norway, Canada, Antarctic, Russian Federation
Polygon Mire	frost crack mire	polygon size, polygon geometry, surface morphology, crack type	arctic, subarctic (CAN), tundra (RF), mountains, continental regions?	Norway, Canada, Russian Federation, USA (Alaska), Mongolia
Palsa Mire	permafrost (ice) core mire	size of mounds, morphology, complex morphology, growth	tundra -> taiga (RF), arctic -> boreal (CAN), mountains	Norway, Canada, Russian Federation, Sweden, Finland, Mongolia, China, Japan, France (Kerguelen), Czech Republic
Aapa Mire	minerotrophic sloping patterned mire	size of surface elements, geometry of surface elements, arrangement of surface elements	tundra -> taiga (RF), subarctic -> nemoral (CAN), mountains	Norway, Canada, Russian Federation, Sweden, Finland, Portugal, Austria, Switzerland, Japan, France, Czech Republic, Poland, USA, Argentina, Chile, New Zealand, Australia?
Blanket Bog	mire, only fed by rain, covering the water divide and whole landscapes; minimum size?	highland, lowland	oceanic boreal -> nemoral, mountains	Norway, Canada, Russian Federation, Sweden?, Finland?, Austria?, Switzerland?, France?, Belgium?, Argentina, Chile, New Zealand, Uganda?, Tasmania, Ireland, United Kingdom,
Condensation Bog	mainly fed by condensation water	none	mountains	Switzerland, Austria, Peru
Bog s. str.	mire, only fed by rain, elevated above the surrounding area	micromorphology (plateau, dome etc.), pattern (excentric, concentric etc.), location (slope, saddle, basin etc.)	boreal -> nemoral (CAN), N-taiga -> forest steppe (RF), wet subtropic, tropic, mountains	Europe except Portugal, Malta, Albania, Greece, Moldavia, Hungary; Russian Federation, China, Japan, Mongolia?, Turkey?, Georgia, Armenia?; Australia, Tasmania, Indonesia, Malaysia, Lesoto, South Africa, Canada, USA, Argentina, Chile, Guiana, Surinam
Open Fen	minerotrophic mire without forest cover	chemistry (rich - poor), water source and dynamics, geomorphology, physiognomy (small sedge - tall sedge fen)	all	
Forested Fen	minerotrophic mire with forest cover that contributes to peat formation	see open fen	?	?
Coastal Mire	seawater influenced non forested mire	physiognomy	?	Canada, Russia Federation, Germany, Finland, Poland, Sweden, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, USA, ???
Mangrove Mire	seawater influenced forested mire		tropic, subtropic	?



Jakarta Statement on the Importance of Tropical Peatlands

The International Symposium on Tropical Peatland held in Jakarta, Indonesia on 22-24 August 2001 endorsed the attached statement at its closing session. For more information contact:

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Jakarta Statement on the Importance of Tropical Peatlands

The importance of peatlands to national economies and the environment was highlighted August 22-23, 2001 at the International Symposium on Tropical Peatlands, entitled Peatlands for People that was attended by over 200 peatland scientists and managers from Indonesia and 10 other nations. Opening statements by the Indonesian Ministers of Research and Technology, Forestry, and Environment outlined their Government's strong commitment to the sustainable use of Indonesia's peatland resources through sound science and wise use. The Ministers welcomed the opportunities generated by this symposium and emphasized the willingness of the Indonesian Government to lead new initiatives with partner agencies in all sectors of peatland management. This symposium was timely and encouraged new initiatives for all tropical peatlands.

A wealth of new research and practical approaches to management of tropical peatland was reported at this Symposium, information that will assist people and governments throughout Southeast Asia and other tropical regions in their understanding and valuing of peatland resources. The results of the Symposium will include a published proceedings and establishment of an international network of tropical peatland science expertise in cooperation with groups such as the Indonesian Peat Association and International Peat Society. The conclusions of the Symposium provide a challenge for planners and decision-makers who now must recognize the limitations in use of tropical peatland resources.

The Symposium:

NOTED that this is a time of new beginnings in Indonesia with the meeting closely following the inauguration of a new national Government;

WELCOMED that countries such as Indonesia now have a broad spectrum of peatland and forest management expertise with many young and enthusiastic researchers and scientists eager to ensure the wise use of peatland resources;

IDENTIFIED regional cooperation on peatland issues as a priority;

WELCOMED the interest of international organizations and other governments in the region supporting new efforts for the mitigation of impacts of past management decisions affecting tropical peatlands, and calling for urgent action to prevent future peat swamp forest fires;

IDENTIFIED the importance of tropical peatlands to global biodiversity, forestry and climate change issues and their critical role in carbon cycling and deposition;

ACKNOWLEDGED that peatland fires have been a major environmental problem in Southeast Asia in recent years, and again this year, resulting in serious regional atmospheric haze effects on people and the environment;

RECOGNIZED that peatland fires have been promoted largely by land use change and logging practices, particularly in Kalimantan and Sumatra;

URGED the Indonesian Government to uphold its commitment to prevent further development on peatland with peat over three metres in thickness;

WELCOMED the role of national and provincial governments as well as local communities in charting a new course for tropical peatlands;

URGED that greater attention be focused on the conservation of peatland biodiversity and carbon stores as well as sustainable use of peatlands, particularly peat swamp forests;

ENCOURAGED STRONGLY investment by international governments and the private sector in the conservation and restoration of tropical peatlands while also PROMOTING wise use and rural sustainable development of these ecosystems;

EMPHASIZED the need for new partnerships, capacity building and application of appropriate technology as key elements of such investment;

DETERMINED that the need for new financial resources to support these peatland initiatives is pressing and vital especially to enable local government authorities to undertake their new devolved responsibilities.

The Penang Statement on Regional Cooperation through Partnerships for the Wise use of Wetlands

The Asian Wetland Symposium 2001 was held in Penang, Malaysia, from 27-30th August 2001 and was jointly organized by Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment, Malaysia, the School of Biological Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Ramsar Center Japan, Wetlands International – Asia Pacific, the AEON Group Environment Foundation and Keidanren Nature Conservation Fund. The Symposium was opened by the Minister of Science, Technology and the Environment, Malaysia, Dato' Seri Law Hieng Ding and was attended by 349 participants from 37 countries.

PREAMBLE

Commending Universiti Sains Malaysia for hosting the Symposium and the joint-organizers for their cooperation and support in holding the Symposium in Penang, Malaysia;

Recognizing the vital role of wetlands in the global ecosystems, their importance to the culture and livelihood of the local people, their role in the maintenance of biodiversity, their function in hydrology and ecology and their critical role in the life cycle of many species;

Promoting the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention), and the framework it provides for the conservation and wise use of wetlands;

Aware of the important role of wetlands to the daily survival of many millions of people in Asia and the range of benefits they provide;

Concerned that wetlands are being degraded and lost and that there are serious, on-going and impending threats to wetlands in the Asian region;

Commending region-wide initiatives such as the Asian Wetland Inventory and Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy: 2001-2005;

Recognizing the need to increase the human and financial resources currently allocated to the conservation and wise use of wetlands in the countries in the Asian region;

Appreciating the importance of cultural heritage, indigenous knowledge and local practices in the wise use of wetland resources, and local people's role in the stewardship of these areas;

Welcoming the promotion of regional linkages, strategic partnerships and good practices in wetland conservation and management;

Conscious of the urgent need to establish new and strengthen on-going regional and international co-operation, linkages and strategic partnerships between governments, international agencies, universities, research institutions, non-governmental organizations, local communities, the private sector and individuals;

Acknowledging the need to involve private sector and regional economic development agencies in integrating the concept of wise use of wetlands in holistic development;

Noting that the cooperation and strategic partnerships for the wise use of wetlands is integral to the implementation of the environmental framework negotiated at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992;

Stressing the need for urgency to increase understanding and sharing of knowledge of wetland functions, values and good management practices;

Determined to conserve and wisely use wetlands for the present and future benefit of humankind;

The Symposium urges governments, international agencies, intergovernmental organizations, local communities, universities, research institutions, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, other relevant bodies, civil society and individuals to:

WORK TOGETHER TO MAINTAIN WETLANDS AND PREVENT FURTHER DEGRADATION AND LOSS, TO ENSURE THEIR WISE USE, AND TO MAINTAIN AND RESTORE WETLAND BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM FUNCTIONS THROUGH REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS TOWARDS THE WISE USE OF WETLANDS IN ASIA.

In order to achieve the said objectives, the Asian Wetland Symposium 2001 recommends that:

1. Regional and international cooperation and strategic partnerships be enhanced to assist countries in the Asian region to exchange knowledge, skills and expertise concerning wise use, conservation, management and restoration of wetlands and their biodiversity.

2. Greater efforts in the Asian region be placed on the preparation of national wetland inventories. Such inventories would be particularly useful to increase understanding of wetlands that support the livelihoods of millions of local people. These include ricefields, floodplains, peat swamps and mangrove ecosystems.
3. Efforts to promote cultural heritage, local practices and knowledge be supported through partnerships. These co-management arrangements will support local and indigenous communities in sustaining wetlands, maintaining biodiversity and avoiding adverse impacts on wetlands.
4. Education, awareness and understanding of wetlands remain a priority for all agencies and institutions charged with the management of wetlands. It is further recommended that the Communication, Education, Public Awareness Program of the Ramsar Convention is adopted. Development of human and institutional capacity is critical.
5. All non-member states in the region accede to the Ramsar Convention.
6. All contracting parties to the Ramsar Convention significantly increase the number of Ramsar sites and ensure effective management of all wetlands.
7. All states in the region adopt a National Wetland Policy and a National Wetland Action Plan;
8. Legislation and legal frameworks play an important role in the conservation and wise use of wetlands, and to this end, priority be given to the development of region-specific guidelines for national legislation consistent with the Ramsar Convention Resolutions, Recommendations and Guidelines, and the principles of international environmental law.
9. The special role of women in the wise use of wetlands be acknowledged and all wetland policies in the region place a high priority on their effective participation.
10. Strategic partnerships and good wetland practices be adopted through integrated river basin management incorporating hydrological, ecological and socio-economic concerns.
11. Developments that may potentially affect wetlands incorporate the views of stakeholders in the full project cycle. Detailed social and environmental impact assessments are considered critical in this process.
12. Governments, regional and international organizations, the private sector, development institutions, NGOs, and other organisations enhance regional linkages and strategic partnerships towards conservation and wise use of wetlands.
13. Governments, regional and international organizations, the private sector, development institutions, and other donors provide significant funds to meet the recommendations outlined above.
14. Urgent actions be taken to address the root causes of the loss of wetlands and their biodiversity. This is to be achieved through establish of protected areas and the better management of wetland ecosystems in the Asian region
15. Further work be undertaken to better understand the linkage between climate change and wetlands and approaches to management and adaptive measures.
16. An Asian Wetland Symposium be convened periodically to review regional progress towards the wise use of wetlands in the Asian region and provide direction for future activities.

The Symposium proposes that the organizers seek the support and assistance of the Government of Malaysia to convey this Statement to Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention in the Asian region, and to the 8th Conference of the Contracting Parties to be held in Valencia, Spain in 2002 and to the World Summit on Sustainable Development to be held in Johannesburg, Republic of South Africa in 2002. Further the recipients of the Statement, participants, organizers and sponsors of this Symposium are urged to do their utmost to realize partnerships in wetland practices to achieve the conservation and wise use of wetlands in the Asian region.

Call for Resolutions

It has become a tradition at the biennial IMCG Congress to adopt a series of resolutions that address current topics in mire conservation world wide. These resolutions are addressed to relevant authorities, e.g. governments and international organisations. Many resolutions have had an important effect on mire conservation in various countries.

On previous congresses, the resolutions have been drawn up by IMCG members present at the Congress in a rather hectic process. In order to improve the making of resolutions to be adopted at the IMCG

Congress in France 2002, we should – as far as possible – prepare them in advance to give ample opportunity for discussion and editing. If you want to submit a resolution for your country or region on the congress, you are, therefore, invited to prepare an article for one of the next two Newsletters to explain, illustrate, and discuss your proposed resolution. You may also choose to prepare a complete draft resolution. For format consult resolutions on the web (<http://www.imcg.net/docum/norway/trondheim.htm>) or in the previous IMCG Newsletter. Contact your IMCG secretariat for support.

Latest on the GAPP

The final revision of the GAP document is now being presented to Ramsar Standing Committee in December for transmission to the 8th Conference of Parties (COP8) in Spain in 2002.

The Standing Committee is requested to review the draft Resolution and annexed Guidelines for global action on peatlands, and approve their finalization for consideration by COP8.

Recommendation 7.1 endorsed a Draft Global Action Plan for the Wise Use and Management of Peatlands and recommended the cooperation of Contracting Parties and other interested bodies in further refining the draft and establishing funding for appropriate projects and activities in support of its Implementation Strategy.

Recommendation 7.1 also called upon partners in the Draft Global Action Plan for Peatlands (GAPP) to report on progress with its further development, and to submit a revised Global Action Plan at COP8 for its consideration and possible adoption.

The Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) established an expert Working Group on Peatlands (co-led by Wetlands International, the International Mire Conservation Group, and the International Peat Society) to progress refining the GAPP, and a revised GAPP was presented to the 24th meeting of the Standing Committee in December 1999 and endorsed in principle. Further revisions and restructuring of the GAPP were made by the expert Working Group and the STRP at its 9th meeting in June 2000.

At the request of the STRP, the Bureau undertook an informal consultation on the GAPP with all Contracting Parties in late 2000, and their comments were incorporated into further substantial revisions during STRP10 (June 2001), during which reservations were made as to the extent and nature of the tasks being identified for Contracting Parties, the

Bureau, and others, in particular since it would have been necessary to establish substantial additional resourcing if many of the actions proposed in the GAPP are to be undertaken.

In further discussion between the STRP's expert Working Group and the Bureau, it was determined that the most appropriate style of presentation of the proposed actions on peatlands to Contracting Parties at COP8 would be in the form of Guidelines for global action on peatlands, which include guidance on establishing mechanisms for the implementation of the proposed actions. These Guidelines are annexed to the draft Resolution on the topic. So, instead of an 'Action Plan', the status of 'Guidelines' adopted. It is believed that this softer approach will increase its chances of being adopted.

The STRP Working Group and in particular the International Mire Conservation Group (IMCG), the International Peat Society (IPS), and Wetlands International are to be commended for their hard work in crafting a proposed set of guidelines which form the consensus view of a wide range of organizations involved in the exploitation, management and wise use of peatlands.

In addition to the work of the preparation of these Guidelines for COP8 consideration, IPS and IMCG have been preparing a more comprehensive report providing Global Guidelines for the Wise Use of Mires and Peatlands, as called for in Recommendation 7.1, and it is anticipated that these more detailed management guidelines will be available by the time of COP8.

To view the latest version of the GAP, surf to the IMCG website and click the GAPP link under current issues or go directly to: <http://www.ecology.uni-kiel.de/~michael/imcg/gapsc26.pdf>

First short Report on the 3rd Aquatic Warbler Expedition to W-Siberia

19 June - 4 July 2001 Chelyabinsk, Tyumen' and Omsk Oblasts
by the Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team

On 19 July, two groups left Moscow for the 3rd aquatic warbler expedition. One group of 6 people went to the south (southern Ekaterinburg and northern Chelyabinsk region) to visit the 'Karyakin sites' ('Southern Team'), a second team of 11 people went to the east to Tyumen' to visit the wetlands north of the Tura river. On 25 June both teams met in Tyumen' and went to Tobolsk, from there we visited the huge sedge fen mires between Tobol and Ishim rivers as well as the Jarovskoe mire by helicopter.

Besides the 'Karyakin sites' we were able to visit five large, previously unknown sedge fen mire tracts between Ekaterinburg and Ishim river, out of which three are only accessible by helicopter. This means, that during the 2000 and 2001 expeditions all larger open fen mires of the fen mire belt between Ekaterinburg and Tara (Irtysh) except one (S of Tyumen, not visited because of bad weather) have been investigated by our team! Additionally we visited again the two best sites from 2000, in which Aquatic Warblers were recorded in the previous year. We obtained habitat and vegetation descriptions as well as bird transect counts from all these mires, supported by our two excellent botanists from Belarus. For the first time, high-quality vegetation analyses of most of the visited mires could be prepared (e.g. some very rare plant associations and more than 1000 plant species recorded!). It is now possible to prepare a nearly complete evaluation of W-Siberian fen mires for conservation purposes.

Despite the occurrence of huge areas of superb potential Aquatic Warbler habitats (at least five mires with several hundred to several thousand ha of suitable habitat each within the fen mire belt between Ekaterinburg and Ishim), Aquatic Warbler was not found by our team. Although Sergey Soloviev reported 5-6 singing males at lake Busly in mid-June 2001, these birds could not be found by us anymore on 1/2 July. Another excellent habitat area discovered nearby (8 km NE Lake Busly) was also studied very thoroughly (by sunset and morning visits and mist-netting, also using tape lures), but Aquatic Warbler was absent for sure.

Thus our previous results were confirmed: Despite large suitable sedge fen mires, there exists no larger Aquatic Warbler population in W-Siberia. The actual population is very small and fluctuating, most probably declining, and is actually estimated at somewhere between <50 and 500 singing males. 30-40 years ago, the population must have been much larger and bred up to c. 1000 km further to the east (see skins from Vengerovo district from 1962, records in Shegarka mire at the middle Ob near Tomsk).

We believe, that the species is going to become extinct in W-Siberia in the next future, because a population of such small size and such low

abundance in a distance of several thousands of km from the core population can not be viable.

The reasons for this are thought to be:

- Decline of the core population in the Central-European Polessie (Belarus/NW-Ukraine/E-Poland) for more than 90 % since the 1960s due to habitat destruction.
- Isolation of the W-Siberian breeding area due to nearly complete loss of suitable habitats in European Russia since 1960 (see 1998 Report from Ryazan and Perm Regions).
- Negative changes in the migration and wintering areas (for which we have no clear evidence at the moment) could additionally have been contributed to the population decline, leading to a contraction of the species' range at it's eastern border.

To support several projects on DNA and trace element analyses, feathers from 80 birds were collected in the fen mire belt between Ekaterinburg and Lake Busly.

Transect counts were performed in 7 fen mires, out of which 5 have not been visited before and 2 were already counted during the 2nd W-Siberia expedition. Highlights of the expedition, contributing to the knowledge on distribution range and population size, were (examples):

Asian Dowitcher *Limnodromus semipalmatus*: The observation of 4 birds in the Tura floodplain (flooded crops and meadows) E Borki, NE Tyumen, represents the westernmost record of this species at all and the second record in Omsk and Tyumen Oblasts since 90 years (see LIMICOLA 2/2001).

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*: A small breeding colony of 4 pairs NE Tyumen and a record in the Tobol floodplain S of Tobolsk are north of the known range.

Pallas' Bunting *Emberiza pallasi*: All open fen mires are inhabited up to the Tobol in the west. This moves the western border of the known range further 150 km to the west. Density mostly >10 bp/km², several nests found.

Pallas' Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella certhiola*: a record in Jarovskoe mire (singing male) is far west of the known range.

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus*: Small breeding populations in Jarovskoe (2 bp., nest found) and N Lake Busly (3-4 bp, nest found) are at the northernmost edge of the known range.

Penduline Tit *Remiz pendulinus*: a female and a singing male N of Tyumen are north of the known range.

Breeding records of other species such as Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca* (Busly mire), Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga* (widespread in the whole subtaiga belt between Tobol and Novosibirsk!), Baillon's Crake *Porzana pusilla* (up to the north of Tyumen), Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi* (northern Omsk oblast) are interesting as well.

The Corncrake *Crex crex* is extremely abundant everywhere (in meadows, pastures, steppe grasslands, fen mires, floodplains, forest clearings, lake shores, sometimes also crops, suburbs...) and is estimated by us to be the most numerous crane of the Eurasian

continent. Regarding the broad range and character of occupied habitats there is no evidence, that the species has declined in Siberia during the last decades!

Global warming threatens peatland Carbon stores

Levels of organic carbon dissolved in some UK rivers have risen dramatically. It has been reported that water draining from peaty sites over the past 12 years shows increases of up to 65% in dissolved organic carbon (DOC). This rise of DOC seems best explained by the recent rise in temperature (0.66 °C over the past decade): Decomposition of peat and DOC-release increase with higher temperatures and thus global warming is accelerating carbon leakage from peat to the oceans.

Washed into the oceans, at least some of the carbon is likely to end up as CO₂ in the atmosphere and act as a greenhouse gas. This means there is a positive feedback mechanism that comprises a serious threat not only to climate but to peatlands as well. A release of the carbon stored in the peatlands of the boreal

zone (Canada, Siberia and Scandinavia) would double the amount currently in the atmosphere. IMCG has repeatedly stressed the importance of the carbon stored in the world's peatlands. Whereas the effect of living mires on climate is more or less neutral – they accumulate peat and therewith CO₂ but also release other climate relevant gases – the release of the carbon already stored in peatlands certainly is not. So far, steps have hardly been undertaken to solidify the importance of the peatland carbon store in policies.

Further reading:

Freeman, C., Evans, C.D., Monteith, D.T., Reynolds, B., & Fenner, N. Export of organic carbon from peat soils. *Nature*, 412, 785, (2001).

World Wetlands Day 2002

World Wetlands Day (WWD) 2002 is just around the corner. The theme for the 6th WWD on 2 February 2002 is the same as that of the 8th Conference of Parties (Spain November 2002): “wetlands: water, life and culture”, emphasizing the cultural aspects of wetlands as a tool for their conservation and sustainable use.

On WWD 2002 Government agencies, non-governmental organizations, site managers and citizens are invited to explore cultural issues in their

national and local contexts and seek to make their publics more aware of the cultural as well as the natural values of their wetlands. For more information about the 2002 WWD including awareness material distributed free of charge from the Ramsar Bureau you can visit the Ramsar website accessible at:

http://www.ramsar.org/wwd2002_call_e.htm

VISIT THE IMCG HOMEPAGE AT

<http://www.imcg.net>

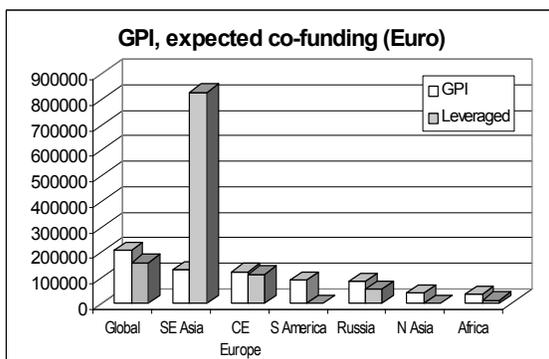
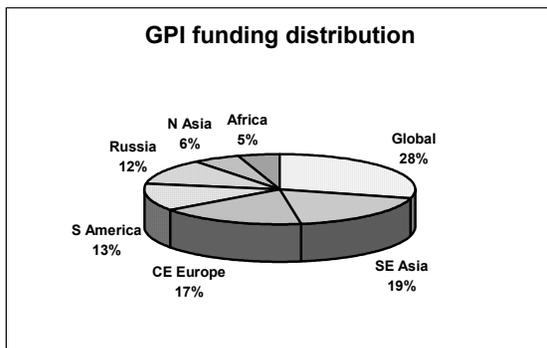
Progress on the Global Peatland Initiative

Marcel Silvius & Herbert Diemont

The Global Peatland Initiative started in April this year with seed funding (Euro 707,000) from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS/DML). The GPI aims at generating and spending over EUR 30 million in six years. The current funding from DGIS is already making a difference.

In response to the announcement of the GPI in April, we have received 38 project proposals. From these, the GPI Steering Committee (IPS, IMCG, Alterra, NC-IUCN, Wetlands International) has selected 25 projects for support under the GPI, and a number of other good projects have been put in the pipeline for possible support from future GPI funding. One of the main aims of the coming months will therefore be further fund raising, to develop long-term and sustained sources of financial support for wise use and conservation of peatlands world wide. The current project portfolio will help us to prove to donors that the GPI - through its networks in the peat and mire community - is able to bring together many useful projects from a great variety of proponents which will make a difference to society and local communities. The projects will, joint under the umbrella of the GPI, be able to bear more weight on the global agendas of relevant conventions and international organisations, than if implemented separately.

The charts below provide a quick overview of the funding distribution and the amount of funding that we hope to leverage in co-funding.



So far GPI money has contributed to several policy development oriented workshops, including the IPS/IMCG workshop in spring this year which resulted in their Joint Statement on Wise Use of Peatlands, thanks to the effort of many including Donal Clarke, Clayton Rubec, Hans Joosten, and Jack Rieley. Some funding went also to the Jakarta Workshop on Tropical Peatlands, which has also resulted in a Statement (see elsewhere in this Newsletter). The GPI is now in the process of identifying projects on wise use and certification with major peat industries in Europe. In February, the GPI hopes to be well presented at the CBD meeting (Convention on Biodiversity) in The Hague. We hope to organise a side-event on the wise use of peatlands, involving the organisations represented in the GPI Steering Committee, as well as many of the organisations which have received funding under the current DGIS funding scheme.

Peatland conservation implementation and restoration projects are starting in Belarus, China, Indonesia, Russia (Siberia), and Thailand, just to mention a few places. Unfortunately we could not yet provide funding for all the proposed and certainly worthwhile projects, such as the Peninsula Mitra in Argentina, Peat Fire Prevention in Malaysia, as well as some other proposals from e.g. China, Czechia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Poland, Slovakia, Vietnam, and various regionally or globally oriented projects. However, we are very happy that we could make a start in Africa thanks to Jan Sliva and Piet-Louis Grundling, and in South America where we are providing support to a major project compiling existing information on the Paramos (high altitude peatlands). Major activities started also in Russia, through a lot of effort by Tatiana Minaeva and Lena Lapshina, including a project that will aim at establishing a nature reserve and Ramsar site in Russia's most extensive peatland in the Tomsk/Novosibirsk region. In Poland activities are underway to assess the problem of abandonment of peatlands, which causes a decrease of biodiversity and an increase of carbon emission in the absence of water control.

Further on the climate and carbon front there is important work in progress by Harri Vasander and his colleagues in Indonesia. Their research is finding that methane emission is very low in tropical forested bogs. The GPI is part-funding this research to ensure that this information will be channelled to the appropriate policy platforms in relation to climate change.

The GPI will also contribute some funding for the IMCG European Mires Book. The latest message from Hans Joosten is that more funding is required, and so further co-funding will have to be found. Hopefully the GPI will be able to help with the additional fund raising, but we hope that our current funding will help to bring this important work a good step further.

The most important thing to do is that you keep sending us project ideas of say one page. Just identify a title, objectives and most importantly some clear deliverables. Please indicate also the funding requirements and possibilities of co-funding. We can

use these project ideas to leverage new funding for the GPI and your projects.

Send your ideas or questions to:

Silvius@wetlands.agro.nl or:

w.h.diemont@alterra.wag-ur.nl

New mire restoration projects supported by the EU LIFE-Nature programme

by Geert Raeymaekers



LIFE-Nature is a financial instrument of the European Union to co-finance nature conservation projects. The programme started in 1992 and focuses on

the conservation of threatened habitat types and species, which are listed in the two nature directives of the EU (the Birds and the Habitats Directives). The overall aim is to support the build-up of a network of protected areas across the European Union (called Natura 2000 Network) or across the accession countries (called the Emerald Network).

In 1999, co-financing became available to several accession countries and for accession countries which have already paid their "entry ticket" to the LIFE-programme. At this moment, these are Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Slovenia, and Rumania. Other accession countries can participate in LIFE-Nature this year, if they pay their entry ticket before the end of October 2001. Contact your local authorities. The next deadline to apply is 31 October 2001, but you should contact your competent authorities for nature conservation to know when the applications have to be submitted at the national level.

Information (inclusive application files) on LIFE-Nature (2000-2004) can be downloaded from the web at

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/nature/home>.

In order to increase your chances, I suggest to not only consult the LIFE-Nature information, but also have a look at the publications. For instance, the publication "Conserving Mires in the European Union. Actions co-financed by LIFE-Nature" gives a review of the LIFE-Nature mire projects between 92 and 98.

Since then, more mire-restoration project have been co-financed by LIFE Nature.

In 1999 and 2000, the European Commission approved the following 22 mire conservation projects. Consult the above mentioned website (go to the LIFE-Nature data base) for complete address (+ tel & fax) of the beneficiary and for a brief description of the project objectives and so on.

- The Wengermoor Project (LIFE99 NAT/A/005916): Beneficiary: Amt der Salzburger Landesregierung, Austria; Contact : Mr. Alexander Prähauser; E-Mail: alexander.praehauser@land-sbg.gv.at ; LIFE Contribution: 822.365,79 € (50,00 %)

- Restoration of wetlands in Belgian Lorraine (LIFE99 NAT/B/006285), Belgium: Beneficiary: Réserves naturelles RNOB ASBL , Contact : Ms. Joëlle Huysecom, E-Mail: rnob.bxl@skynet.be, LIFE Contribution: 372.670,98 € (45,00 %)
- Regeneration of the "Rambower Moor" for protecting bittern (*Botaurus stellaris*) (LIFE99 NAT/D/005936), Germany: Beneficiary: Landesanstalt für Großschutzgebiete, Naturpark/Biosphärenreservat Elbtalau, Contact: Mr. Frank Neuschulz, E-Mail: Roswitha.Nitschke@munrlags.brandenburg.de, LIFE Contribution: 643.256,32 € (50,00 %)
- Prackendorfer and Kulzer Moos (LIFE99 NAT/D/006051), Germany: Beneficiary: Verein zum Schutz wertvoller Landschaftsbestandteile in der Oberpfalz e.V. , Contact: Mr. Peter Hausbeck, E-Mail: - , LIFE Contribution: 255.645,94 € (50,00 %)
- Implementation of Management Plans in Gramos and Radopi Areas, Greece (LIFE99 NAT/GR/006498), Greece: Beneficiary: ARCTUROS, E-Mail: arcturos@the.forthnet.gr, LIFE Contribution: 1.147.335,88 € (60,00 %)
- Actions for the protection of the calcareous bog fens (LIFE99 NAT/GR/006499), Greece: Beneficiary: National Center for Marine Research (NCMR), Contact: Mr. Theodoros Koussouris, E-Mail: Thakis@posidon.ncmr.gr, LIFE Contribution: 651.874,52 € (75,00 %)
- Biodiversity of Iseo peat-bog: conservation and management (LIFE99 NAT/IT/006212), Italy: Beneficiary: Consorzio per la Gestione della Riserva delle Torbiere d'Iseo, Contact: Mr. Carlo Andreis, E-Mail: -, LIFE Contribution: 362.402,97 € (47,00 %)
- Restoration programma of the Fochteloërveen raised bog (LIFE99 NAT/NL/006280), Netherlands: Beneficiary: Vereniging Natuurmonumenten, Contact: Mr. A. Stoker, E-Mail: a.stoker@natuurmonumenten.nl, LIFE Contribution: 1.495.754,43 € (35,00 %)
- Restoration and demonstration project pSCI "De Wieden and De Weerribben" (LIFE99 NAT/NL/006282), Netherlands: Beneficiary: Vereniging Natuurmonumenten, Contact: Mr. A. Stoker, E-Mail: a.stoker@natuurmonumenten.nl, LIFE Contribution: 1.700.000 € (50,00 %)
- Habitats restoration surrounding Tablas de Damiel N.P. (LIFE99 NAT/E/006323), Spain: Beneficiary: Organismo Autonomo Parques Nacionales (Ministerio de Medio Ambiente), España , Contact: Mr. Alberto Ruiz Del Portal, E-Mail: alberto.ruiz@gvsf.mma.es , LIFE Contribution: 1.182.773,79 € (60,00 %)
- Conservation of the Natural Wet Habitat "The Bogs of Satchinez" (LIFE99 NAT/RO/006394): Beneficiary: Environmental Protection Agency Timisoara, Romania, Contact: Mr. Andres Ladislau, E-Mail: root@apm-tm.sorostm.ro, LIFE Contribution: 95.587,29 € (75,00 %)

- Protection of Aapa mires in the county of Norrbotten (LIFE99 NAT/S/006359): Beneficiary: Länsstyrelsen i Norrbottens län, Sweden, Contact: Ms. Anna von Sydow, E-Mail: Anna.vonSydow@bd.lst.se, LIFE Contribution: 727.554,71 € (50,00 %)
 - Restoration and management of the Häädemeeste wetland complex (LIFE00 NAT/EE/007082), Finland: Beneficiary: Estonian Ornithological Society, Contact: Mr. Mati Kose, E-Mail: mati@linnu.tartu.ee, LIFE Contribution: 506.465 € or 75 %
 - Protection and usage of aapa mires with a rich avifauna (LIFE00 NAT/FIN/007060), Finland: Beneficiary: Lapland Regional Environment Centre, Contact Person: Kari Kinnunen, E-Mail: Kari.Kinnunen@vyh.fi, LIFE Contribution: 1.589.314 € (49,20 %)
 - Re-waterlogging of the Hoher Moor (High Bog) (LIFE00 NAT/D/007043), Germany: Beneficiary : Niedersächsisches Umweltministerium, Contact : Ms. Ursula Langendorf , E-Mail: poststelle@mu.land-ni.dbp.de , LIFE Contribution: 644.250 € (50,00 %)
 - Restoration of clear water lakes, mires and swamp forests of the Lake Stechlin (LIFE00 AT/D/007057), Germany: Beneficiary: Landesanstalt für Grossschutzgebiete, Contact: Ms. Wall, E-Mail: karl.decruppe@MUNR-LAGS.Brandenburg.de , LIFE Contribution: 1.147.770 € (60,00 %)
 - Measures to ensure the nature conservation management of Teici Area (LIFE00 NAT/LV/007127), Latvia: Beneficiary: Teici Nature Reserve, Contact : Mr. Juris Jatnieks, E-Mail: teichi@madona.lv, LIFE Contribution in € : 625.447 (75,00 %)
 - Peat bog restoration programme of the Korenburgerveen (LIFE00 NAT/NL/007049), The Netherlands: Beneficiary : Vereniging Natuurmonumenten, Contact : Mr. A. Stoker, E-Mail: a.stoker@natuurmonumenten.nl, LIFE Contribution: 639.688 € (50,00 %)
 - Peatbogs in Triglav National Park (LIFE00 NAT/SLO/007231), Slovenia: Beneficiary : Triglavski Narodni Park, Contact : Mr. Jurij Dobravec, E-Mail: jurij.dobravec@tnp.gov.si, LIFE Contribution in € : 352.650 (75,00 %)
 - SCI Parga-Ladra-Támoga: recovery of bog woodland and dystrophic lake (LIFE00 NAT/E/007330), Spain: Beneficiary : Instituto Lucense de Desarrollo Economico y Social, Contact: Mr. Francisco Cacharro Pardo, E-Mail: inludes@igatel.igape.es , LIFE Contribution: 722.076 € (50,00 %)
 - Restoring active blanket bog of European importance in North Scotland (LIFE00 NAT/UK/007075), United Kingdom: Beneficiary: Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Contact: Mr. Stuart Housden, LIFE Contribution: 2.728.721 € (60,00 %)
 - Restoration of Scottish raised bogs (LIFE00 NAT/UK/007078), United Kindom: Beneficiary: Scottish Wildlife Trust, Contact: Mr. Dan Barlow, E-Mail: dbarlow@swt.org.uk, LIFE Contribution: 1.458.977 € (68,20 %)
- Geert Raeymakers, Ecosystems LTD, B-1050 Brussels. Geert.Raeymaekers@Ecosystems.be)

Peatland Ecology and Efficient Peat Use

Is the title of an IPS Commission I Symposium to be held in Tomsk, Russia, August 21 –25, 2002. The Symposium will be organised by a variety of organisations and institutes, with the support of (a.o.) IMCG.

Western Siberia is the largest peatland area of the world. More than half of its area is covered with peatlands, in which 30 % of the global peat resources are found.

In many areas of the World, especially in Western Europe, peatlands have been disturbed or eradicated during the last decades. In Siberia the majority of the peatlands (about 10⁶ km²) is still in a natural condition which may account for about 50 % of all not drained peatlands of the World.

The study of peatlands of Western Siberia in former years has basically oriented on the exploration of peat reserves and the industrial use of peat resources. As a consequence many questions with respect to hydrology, hydrochemistry, genesis, biology and ecology of peat-mire systems remain insufficiently resolved. Only some scattered information exists on the stratigraphy of peat reservoirs and on the biodiversity of mires in the region.

All available models of global carbon balance demonstrate an acute deficiency of factual data on West Siberia. The global role of peatlands of the West Siberian region, as huge reserves of fresh water

and carbon, can, however, hardly be overestimated. With respect to its role in the biogeochemical processes on our planet, Western Siberia matches up with the Amazon River basin.

Only a minor part (about 0.2 %) of the peatlands, predominantly in the southern and southeastern parts of West Siberia, is drained for forestry and agriculture. In the last years, however, anthropogenic impact on peat-mire systems has sharply increased in connection with the rapid growth of oil and gas industry. Winning and processing plants are expanding with help of foreign investments. This urgently requires the development of efficient use policy for peatlands that combines economic progress of the region with the protection of significant and unique mire ecosystems in a natural state, based on advanced knowledge of peatland functions and values.

The purpose of the conference is to reveal the main structural and development features of the Siberian peatlands, to estimate their role in the global carbon cycle in view of future climate change, and to discuss the perspectives of efficient use of Siberian peatlands based on recent experiences in the use and protection of peatlands worldwide.

The symposium aims to advance international cooperation with respect to the scientific study of peat-mire ecosystems of West Siberia, to encourage

investments in the peat industry, and to promote the exchange of experiences with respect to the efficient use of peat resources.

Main topics of the Conference:

- Survey and peat stratigraphy of boreal peatlands
- Biodiversity and bioresources of peatlands.
- Hydrology, hydrochemistry and properties of peat soils
- Functioning of peat forming ecosystems and their role in global biochemical processes
- Palaeoecology and climate change
- Main threats and impacts towards peatland natural functions
- Regional models for peatland efficient use
- Peatlands and peat properties and their use

Papers are invited for all topics. They should be submitted no later than 31 January 2002.

Two one-day Field Excursions are planned during the Symposium in addition to the pre- and post-Symposium tours. The participants will have the possibility to visit the main types of natural peat mires and some examples of destroyed peatlands. The peatlands in the Southeast of Western Siberia include a large variety of types and they are rather easily to visit. On the flat watersheds of the southern forest zone of the West Siberian lowland, vast ombrotrophic bogs with ridge-hollow and ridge-pool complexes occur. On river terraces, in ancient ice marginal valleys and in small taiga river valleys, various oligotrophic and minerotrophic open and

wooded "ryams" and swampy forests ("sogras") are found. On the alluvial floodlands of the large rivers eutrophic tussock-sedge reed fens and birch-willow tussocky fens are developed.

Important dates:

- Second circular 31 December 2001.
- Abstract submission deadline 31 January 2002.

The Second circular and the registration forms will be sent to those who will answer this first circular and express their interest in the Symposium and Field Excursions before 15 December 2001.

Registration fee:

Full – 300US\$(before 31 May 2002); 350US\$ (after 1 June 2002); Students –150US\$, (before 31 May 2002); 200US\$ (after 1 June 2002); Accompanied persons – 100US\$. The registration fee covers participation in the Symposium, proceedings and two field excursions.

For more information and registration contact Vladimir Krutikov:

10/3, Akademicheskyy ave., Tomsk 634050, Russia

Tel.: +7-3822-257026 or 259424

Fax: +7 3822 258950

E-mail: krutikov@iom.tsc.ru

Communication and registration via E-mail is welcome.

Request for proposals to the Society of Wetland Scientists' Ramsar Support grant program

The Society of Wetland Scientists (SWS) is soliciting proposals for their Ramsar Support Grant Program, which was established to advance Ramsar Convention objectives, including the selection, designation, management, and networking of Ramsar sites; and the promotion of Ramsar's Wise Use guidelines. Two to four projects are funded each year at a level of US \$5,000 on a competitive basis as reviewed by a 4-member Evaluation Committee. Only applicants working on Ramsar-related activities in countries that are on the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Development Assistance Committee (DAC) List of Aid Recipients are eligible to receive grants under this program, and priority is given to applicants from countries below the threshold for World Bank loan eligibility. (The OECD DAC List of Aid Recipients can be found in the internet at www.oecd.org/dac/htm/daclst2000.htm). Proposals

for which Principal Investigators are not based in a DAC-eligible country or that request a significant portion of funds for international travel or institution overhead typically will not be awarded. SWS will only consider funding projects that will be completed in one calendar year.

Proposals and end products must be in English. Grant guidelines and application forms can be found on the SWS web site at www.sws.org/regional/international/Ramsar.Support.Framework or you can request the guidelines and application form from Eric Gilman Society of Wetland Scientists International Chapter C/o National Audubon Society Living Oceans Program 2718 Napuaa Place Honolulu, HI 96822 USA; E-mail: egilman@lava.net Tel: 808.988.1976 Fax: 808.988.1440.

Applications must be received by 1 November 2001. SWS will announce decisions in December 2001, and will award funds soon thereafter.

Ton Damman Bibliography

Karen Golinski and Adolf Ceska have compiled a bibliography of Ton Damman, the late IMCG Chairman. This bibliography has been published in the BEN – Botanical Electronic News No. 273, published 25 September 2001. This issue can be downloaded from <http://www.ou.edu/cas/botany->

micro/ben/ - here also other issues may be found. You may also contact Karen Golinski, School of Environmental Studies, P.O. Box 1700, University of Victoria, Victoria, B.C. CANADA, V8W 2Y2 golinski@uvic.ca

Regional News

IUCN small grants fund for the purchase of nature

The NC-IUCN administrates since 2001 a Small grants for the Purchase of Nature (SPN), with support of the Netherlands Postcode Lottery. The objective of the SPN is “Support local NGO’s in the purchase of vulnerable nature, with the aim to conserve biodiversity for the long term”. NC-IUCN/SPN cooperates with the Dutch NGOs Natuurmonumenten, European Union for Coastal Conservation and Both Ends, but also with organisations like Rain Forest Concern (www.rainforest.org.uk) and the Arcadia Fund of Flora Fauna International.

The NC-IUCN/Small grants for the Purchase of Nature can support projects in tropical countries and through a co-operation with the EECNET Action Fund (www.eucc.nl) also in Eastern-Europe and CIS-countries. For the latter contact the secretariat of the EECNET Action Fund (email: eaf@eucc.nl).

Local NGOs from tropical countries can present proposals to the SPN secretariat (spn@nciucn.nl). Project proposals should meet the criteria and formats. NGOs from Eastern Europe and CIS countries should contact the secretariat of the EECNET Action Fund (email: eaf@eucc.nl). The SPN will work in close contact with the small grants for Wetlands Programme and Tropical Rainforest Programme of NC-IUCN.

For more information surf to:

<http://www.nciucn.nl/english/funds/fsfunds.htm>
or contact the SPN-secretariat at spn@nciucn.nl.

News from the EU:

Governments condemned over EU habitat rules

Germany, France and Ireland were condemned in the European Court of Justice for failing to propose adequate lists of natural sites for inclusion in the EU's Natura 2000 network.

Using identical language in separate judgements, the court ruled that all three countries' lists had been

"manifestly inadequate, going well beyond the margin of discretion available to member states". The judgements are in line with a recommendation made by the court's legal advisor in May.

The site nominations process was set in train by the EU's 1992 habitats directive, under which member states were required to notify complete lists of sites containing specified habitats or species of European interest by June 1995. The Commission started legal proceedings against the three governments in 1996 alleging a failure to comply, before applying for court rulings in 1998.

Acknowledging that it was receiving more site nominations even as the legal process progressed, the Commission argued nevertheless that it wanted to establish as a point of principle that the three governments had failed to comply with the rules and had abused the freedom for manoeuvre they provide. The rulings' main significance, therefore, is to provide the Commission with a moral victory, while cementing in law the requirement on EU states to nominate all eligible sites, based solely on a scientific assessment and not administrative or political convenience.

In this the judgements follow a court ruling last year which specified that governments could not take economic or social considerations into account when formulating site lists.

Germany, France and Ireland are far from alone in having been nominated sites for Natura 2000 late or only partially. Legal proceedings relating to various aspects of the directive are currently at various stages regarding several other EU countries.

(source : www.environmentdaily.com)

News from the UK:

Peatening Out: an end to peat use in the UK

Peat-based composts should be consigned to history within 10 years, says a new report by the RSPB and English Nature. *Peatening Out* shows how alternatives based on green compost and woody by-products would replace peat and help reduce waste

disposal in landfill sites. This would end the commercial exploitation of some of the UK's top wildlife sites and meet the targets of the Government Biodiversity Action Plan for peat use reduction.

Sufficient alternative materials will be available domestically to replace peat as the UK composting industry develops to meet the requirements of the EU Landfill Directive. New jobs will be created in the composting industry, reversing the increasing reliance on imported peat products.

A gradual dilution of peat based products, such as multi-purpose compost, with green compost and woody materials will provide the easiest transition to a peat-free future. Retail products, which account for two-thirds of the peat use in the UK, provide the best initial opportunities for peat dilution. The extra requirements of professional horticulture products, including running through automated potting processes, require some further development before the industry moves confidently into the peat-free era.

Peaterring Out also proposes an extensive series of nursery trials to enable gardeners and nurserymen gain knowledge and confidence about using the new growing media. The trials will also help fine-tune products for particular applications.

Dr Olly Watts, RSPB Peatlands Policy Officer, said: '*Peaterring Out* shows that we can end peat use in the UK and so end the exploitation of our raised peat bogs. We urge Government and the gardening industry to drive and support this programme and so move to using sustainable, UK-produced composts to grow our plants.'

While *Peaterring Out* focuses on the UK, the aims, principles and broad programme are applicable for all countries where peat use by gardeners and growers is regarded as unsustainable and raises concerns about peatland conservation.

Copies of *Peaterring Out: towards a sustainable UK growing media industry* are available from Dr Olly Watts, RSPB Peatlands Policy Officer, RSPB, The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL, UK

News from Ireland

Commission urged to reject Irish peat burning policy

Irish NGOs claimed that the European Commission should refuse Ireland's request to surcharge consumers to pay for electricity generated from the burning of peat. The Irish Peatland Conservation Council, An Taisce, Friends of the Irish Environment, Earthwatch, Grian, and Voice called for a "fundamental rethink" of Ireland's policy of building new peat-fired electricity generators.

The environmental NGOs emphasised that

- Peat is the most carbon intensive fossil fuel of all, releasing twice as much CO₂ as natural gas.
- Bogs are an ongoing living natural sink for carbon dioxide, absorbing CO₂ and locking it away as they grow. Raised bogs contain 2,000 tonnes of carbon per

hectare, blanket bogs 700 tonnes per hectare and forest only 300 tonnes.

- Draining bogland results in the oxidation of any unused peat, releasing yet more CO₂.
- The EU Advocate General's opinion in the Habitats Directive case against Ireland does not allow bogs to be excluded from protection for economic reasons.

Peat is the most expensive fossil fuel. This is why the Irish government is now seeking approval from the EU to impose a surcharge on electricity users to subsidise three further peat-fired power plants. Without the subsidy the plants would not be financially viable.

The groups have asked the Commission to refuse Ireland's application to impose a Public Service Obligation on the ESB, the National Electricity Supply Company, to purchase a set proportion of its electricity from peat-fired power plants. Their letter points out that the proposal to continue extracting peat for electricity generation is in breach of Ireland's obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Environmental NGOs have lodged planning appeals against the Lanesborough and Shannonbridge proposed stations.

"The government proposal means that consumers will pay to produce electricity in a more polluting fashion. The Commission must refuse Ireland's application to give meaning to the Kyoto Protocol. Saving the bogs means saving the climate", a spokesperson said.

Peatland specialists call for action on midland raised bogs

Ireland's Midland Bogs were the topic of much discussion at a recent conference organised by the Irish Peatland Conservation Council (IPCC). The objective of the conference was to formulate an action plan to ensure the wise use of our midland raised bogs.

Over 100 representatives attended from many different organisations including Bord na Móna, Coillte, Dúchas, Environment and Heritage Service Northern Ireland, Environmental Protection Agency, Teagasc and Environmental NGOs.

The recommendations for the action plan are:

- There should be an integrated future land-use plan published by Bord na Móna for each of the Raised Bogs in their ownership and local communities should be involved in drafting these plans as the bogs are publicly owned.
- Dúchas, the Heritage Service should comply with the EU Habitats Directive and designate further raised bogs as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs).
- A major public awareness campaign should be undertaken by Dúchas so as to inform the public of the significance, importance and value of Ireland's remaining raised bogs and species.
- Steps should be taken to encourage the development of alternative energy sources other than peat. The possibility of Wind energy on

cutaway bogs needs to be given serious consideration.

- The cross sector National Biodiversity Plan should be published without delay and must include action plans to safeguard Ireland's peatland biodiversity.

Peter Foss Chairman of IPCC stated that it is his intention to bring these recommendations to relevant Government Departments for immediate action. He suggested that local communities could make raised bogs an election issue. He added that the issue regarding the future use of the 80,000ha of bogland in Bord na Móna ownership needs to be dealt with in a strategic way to ensure the decisions made will be most beneficial to the long term sustainable development of the midlands. In 20 years these bogs will be out of production so now is the time to be deciding what to do with the vast area of land that will become available. Bord na Móna have not published a detailed after-use plans for any of this resource.

Dr Foss said there is an onus on Ireland to protect remaining Raised Bogs as 51% of the global resource occurs in this country. Dr Foss also thanked Bord na Móna for sponsoring the conference.

Irish News provided by:

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bogs@ipcc.ie <http://www.ipcc.ie>

Strange phenomena in Norway

by Chet van Duzer

About 1 km SE of the lake of Skogvollvatnet, at the mire Skogvollmyra on the island of Andøya, a slab of peat 5.2 m long and 1.8 m wide, has, in an apparently inexplicable manner, torn itself loose from its 'mother peat' and placed itself 4-5 m away. The slab of peat is completely undamaged and is placed with the right side up. The piece has rotated 20-30 degrees compared to the original hole. The hole in the peatland is absolutely even at the bottom, and the angle between the bottom and its walls is 90 degrees. The hole is 30-35 cm deep, and its edges are nicely cut.

From the hole there is a crack running westwards for about 6 m. Close to the hole this crack is somewhat widened, and one side of the crack twists itself 25-30 cm above the other. This twisting decreases as one gets further from the hole. The crack gradually subsides, and it is hard to tell exactly where it ends.

About 12 m NW of the hole there is an arched crack of about 15 m lying with its concave side towards the hole. It is plainest in the middle. Here the side closest to the hole has been twisted upwards about 15 cm. Here also the crack gradually disappears at both ends. There is an open hollow beneath the part which has been twisted upwards, about 30 cm below the surface.

The slab of peat has an area of about 5 m² and this should give a weight of between 1500-1700 kg.

The local theory is that lightning caused a steam explosion in some underground water, but if this were the case, it seems that the slab of peat would be all torn apart. An account of another very similar case appeared in England in 1887, where Thomas G. Benn writes on a "Remarkable Displacement of Earth" in Symons's Monthly Meteorological Magazine 22 (February, 1887, p. 8):

"A rather unusual occurrence took place a few days ago in a grass field near my house. The facts are these. On a dry hill side a piece of turf (with soil adhering to a depth of 5 inches) was lifted bodily out of its position and placed in exactly its original shape at a distance of 8 feet. It is triangular in shape, and its sides are respectively 3 ft., 3 ft. 2 in., and 2 ft. 11 in. There is a large crack in the soil where it has been torn out about a yard long. This occurred during hard frost, when the ground was frozen. There is ample proof that no artificial means were employed, for a thick hoar frost prevailed on the morning of its occurrence, and foot marks would have been readily detected. Can any one suggest a cause?"

Yours truly,

Thos. G. Benn.

Newton Reigny Observatory, Penrith, Jan. 25th

P.S.-- The hill is not steep, and the displaced soil was not thrown downwards, but cross-wise."

Belarus names two new Ramsar sites.

The Government of Belarus has designated two more wetlands for the Ramsar List, effective 10 August 2001.

The Mid-Pripyat State Landscape Zakaznik (90,447 ha, 52°09'N 027°00'E), a State Landscape reserve, comprises a 120-km stretch of the Pripyat river floodplain dominated by alluvial, mainly oak forests, meadows, and fens, used chiefly for haymaking, pasturing, and fishing. The area is a key waterbird nesting and stop-over site, meeting both the 20,000 birds and 1% waterbird criteria for international importance (among others). The river is crucial for the Polesia Lowland region and its groundwater and in the hydrological system of the Dnieper river. Frequent flooding and lack of roads have contributed to a relatively low degree of development. Large numbers of species of flora (725 species recorded) and fauna (36 mammals, 182 birds, 6 reptiles, 10 amphibians, and 37 fish) are found. As one of the earliest settled regions of Belarus, archaeological sites abound, and traditional crafts and folklore have retained much more of their character than elsewhere in Belarus. Recent climate change effects, especially a decrease in winter precipitation, and possible pressure for anti-flooding engineering works may present threats, and water quality has been declining in recent years.

Olmany Mires Zakaznik (94,219 ha, 52°44'N 027°16'E), a National Landscape reserve, is one of Europe's largest natural complexes of bogs and transitional mires. The site is particularly important for nesting and migrating waterbirds and a key nesting site for the globally threatened Spotted Eagle (*Aquila clanga*). The mires play a crucial role in the hydrological regime of the Pripyat river. Large numbers of flora and fauna species are present. The reserve is situated on the nation's largest military aviation training area, but military activities, largely localized, are said not to have caused any degradation of natural communities and by limiting civil development activities have actually helped to preserve the site's natural characteristics. Berry and mushroom collection and recreational fishing are permitted in coordination with military schedules. (source: www.ramsar.org/w.n.belarus_2new.htm)

News from Russia

Mire science in Russia loosing schools.

"Mire science", or "bolotovedeniye" (=mire studying) in Russian, is a traditional branch of Russian geobotany, rooting in the classical works of Engelman (first publication in Russian on mire typology, 1810), Tanfiliev, Kats, Sukatchev, Lavrenko, and others. From the beginning, Russian classical geobotany was separated in such branches like "mire study", "tundra study", "forest study", "meadow study", "steppe study", etc. The background of this approach is a strong scientific tradition to specialise not in the problem, but in the object.

According to this principle, a traditional Russian University education with specialisation in geobotany includes a half or even a full year course with an obligatory exam in all above "branches". That is why the network of "mire scientists" in Russia was established very naturally and developed fast. It was framed as the society of mire scientists, established in the early 70s under the umbrella of the National (All-Union in former USSR) Botanical Society, with its chair at the Komarov Botanical Institute in Leningrad.

The "Mire society", with the tandem of Marina Botch and Victor Masing as heart and brain, became a fast growing and fruitful organisation. Each second year field symposia devoted to current topics were held in different locations – from the Far East to the Western boundaries (Estonia, Lithuania, Belarus) and followed by publications. The last one with the topic "Mire conservation" was held in 1991 in the Tver region. In between, scientific conferences were organized. The last one – on mire classification - was organized in 1989 in Leningrad, proceedings were published three years later.

Supported by such an interest, regional schools based in Universities and Academic Institutes were growing like mushrooms: Khabarovsk, Krasnojarsk,

Novosibirsk, Tomsk, Syktyvkar, Ulianovsk, Gor'ky (Nizhnij Novgorod), Yaroslavl', Voronezh, Tver', Moscow, Novgorod, Leningrad, Petrozavodsk are all cities in the Russian Federation, where "mire schools" were headed by well known mire scientists. A large amount of well organized mire studies were carried out. To generalize the data and make them available would provide western scientists with a lot of knowledge on unknown aspects of mires.

The network went down soon after the USSR collapsed, when science was not as much funded anymore and there was no possibility anymore to travel. The young and middle aged scientists started to look for other job opportunities, a lot of people left to the west, changed specialisation, or even left science. And time had come when we started to loose our teachers: since the end of the 1980s we have lost Kats, Pjavchenko, Bogdanovskaja-Gienef, Tjuremnov, Prozorov, Galkina, Ramenskaja, Lopatin, Botch, Masing.

Unfortunately, we can't compose such a long list of new names in Russian mire science. In 2000, on the initiative of Olivia Bragg, several beautiful Russian "mire ladies" – our only hope – have organised a follow up meeting on the Darwin course. All old mire scientists were invited to give lectures. Not many came. One of the most active and bright teachers during the course was Prof. Konstantin Khmelev from Voronezh.

Last summer, we lost him too. Please find his in memoriam below.

On the memory of Konstantin Khmelov

Russian mire science has again suffered a loss. On the 3rd of July 2001, in Voronezh, prof. Konstantin Philippovitch Khmelev died after a long period of illness. All his life he was attached to the Voronezh University – starting as a student, later as chief of the Botanical Department. The main objects of his investigations were mires – their flora, vegetation and history – on the boundary of their distribution in the forest steppe and steppe zone. Before him this scientific branch had not developed in Voronezh. He was the first to study the influence of neo-tectonic processes on mire development in this zone. Prof. Khmelev had wide contacts with mire specialists all over the Soviet Union and especially in the Ukraine, where similar research was carried out. He was very active in the society of Russian mire scientists, taking part in all meetings, excursions, and workshops. His presentations were always very bright and emotional. He was well known also among hydrobiologists and there was a heated discussion on his "romantic" theory of increasing the diversity of hydrophyllous flora in the area of tectonic cracks. The dissertations of his pupils were always of very high quality and diverse in the range of problems. Under his management the Botanical Department of Voronezh University was well known and very strong.

Konstantin Khmelev was half Russian and half Georgian, maybe this explains his romanticism, emotional status, charm, and fascination which were

so magnetic to others. Until his death prof. Khmelev was actively working, highly productive and highly creative. Now the emptiness is not only in mire science but also in our hearts.

By Anatoly Kuzmichov, translation by T.Minaeva.

In Memoriam: Sergei Valerievich Vasiliev

On 3 October 2001, our friend and colleague Sergey Valerievich Vasiliev (<http://www.nsk.ru/~sv/>) died after a long period of illness, only some weeks after the successful Noyabrsk symposium that he had organised and chaired. Born in 1955 in Novosibirsk, Russia, he spent his life working and studying forests and peatlands mainly in West-Siberia.

Sergey studied Biology at Tomsk State University (1976-1981) and worked at the Central Siberian Botanical Garden (Novosibirsk 1972, 1975) and the Forest Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Siberian branch, Krasnoyarsk, 1975-1997). In 1987 he earned his degree of Candidate of science (Ecology) (the Russian equivalent to the PhD) with the thesis: Forest forming processes in the Middle Ob River flood-plain.



Since 1997 he was Head of the Laboratory of Biogeocoenology in the Institute of Soil Science and Agrochemistry (RAS) in Novosibirsk.

His main interests included forest succession, mire evolution, forest typology, vegetation classification, air space image interpretation, mapping, and human and industrial impact on natural ecosystems. He developed remote sensing methods for application to forest resource research (1976-1992), studied forest succession in the Middle Ob flood plain, and created the classification of forest vegetation in the Ob flood plain. Special attention had the mapping and evaluation of the impact of oil and gas industry on forest and mire ecosystems (1984-1998). In the last decennium he increasingly focussed on the study of mire ecosystems, e.g. by studying peat growth rate changes and paludification rates in West Siberia (1992-1998), and by developing a bog vegetation classification for the North Taiga zone of West Siberia.

In recent years he was the driving force in international research projects on Carbon storage in West Siberian Peatlands. From 18 – 22 August 2001 he organised the International Field Symposium on “West Siberian Peatlands and the Carbon Cycle: Past and Present” for which he also edited the proceedings. He impressed all participants again with his friendliness, involvement, intellectual clearness and scientific authority, in spite of the physical dying he was evidently going through.

Next to an artist (see his homepage <http://www.nsk.ru/~sv/Pictures.htm>) Sergey was author of 70 scientific publications, including three monographs in Russian:

1. Ob river flood-plain on airspace images (with V.N.Sedykh).- Krasnoyarsk, Forest Institut, 1984.
2. Remote studies of landscapes (with A.S.Isaev, I.A.Volkov, V.N.Sedykh).- Novosibirsk, Nauka, 1987.
3. Oil and gas industry impact on forest and bog ecosystems.- Novosibirsk, Nauka, 1998.

The mires and forests of Western Siberia have lost a friend.

Russian CBD National Forum and mires.

On the 4-6 of June the Biodiversity Conservation National Forum was held in Moscow under the umbrella of the Russian Academy of Science and the Ministry of Natural Resources of the RF and with support of the GEF. The main goal of the Forum was the endorsement by the main stakeholders of the National Strategy and Action Plan in Biodiversity Conservation. Document drafts were prepared by a team from the Academy of Science. The concept of the documents was presented one year ago during a workshop, the final version distributed through the GEF-Russia web-site one month before the Forum. The strategy document contains a lot of the strong and typical Russian habit to include as much theory as possible everywhere.

All in all, having the strategy is a good thing and the Action Plan provides a promising background for fundraising. We did our best to: 1) divide mires from wetlands in the conservation planning (both in the brains as in the documents, which was difficult); 2) to include a list of all possible threats to mires to raise awareness; 3) to mention all geographical hot spots as well as the most pressing threats and problems.

The vision statement was presented by Acad. Prof. Stanislav Vompersky, director of Forest Science Institute. There was general acceptance, but unfortunately till now, documents do not exist. Hopefully, we will be back with good news in the next Newsletter.

New Russian Energy Strategy.

Searching here and there in the Internet we were surprised to find on the official site of the Ministry of Energy of the RF (www.gov.ru/main/ministry/isp-vlast47.html) the New Russian Energy Strategy, dated March, 2001 as a document presented by the Government to the Duma. Among other things it contains a direct and clear recommendation to export more gas and oil from regions and replace those sources of energy on local level by renewable fuel of biological origination.

It is mentioned, that nowadays 0,1 % of the total energy supply is by biological fuel and that in 2020 it should be 10 %. It is interesting that it is directly mentioned that the RF should switch to renewable resources not to conserve its non-renewable fuels, but

to export them. Peat remains unmentioned, but it is clear that it cannot only be wood. When explanations were requested from Rostopprom Company – the branch of the Ministry of Energy of the RF, dealing with peat and the IPS focal point in Russia – we were informed that their institute had received the official request from the Government to estimate the peat resources for energy needs, especially in places where power plants were working on peat before. Professor Yampolskij, a well known peat expert

leading the group, recently came with an initiative to cooperate with the conservationists. He and his group are willing – next to their official investigation – to make a full economic analysis of the benefits and losses from use and not use of peatlands for energetic needs. Probably GPI funds will be used for that very urgent study.

Russian news provided by Tatiana Minaeva and Lena Lapshina.

REGISTER

Please fill out the IMCG registration form.

Surf to <http://www.imcg.net> or contact the secretariat.

Many people receiving the Newsletter have meanwhile registered with IMCG. The number of official members is currently (1 July 2001) 148 from 40 countries. Another 10 have indicated their support for IMCG or interest in receiving the Newsletter.

Many others have not yet reacted to our call. Do it now, don't forget it, because we will stop sending Newsletters to people who have not indicated that they want to receive the Newsletter.

New and recent Journals/Newsletters/Books/Reports

Kose, R. (ed.), 2000. The natural history of the Great Dismal Swamp. Madison, Omni Press, 300p.

The great Dismal Swamp is located in eastern Virginia and northeastern North Carolina. This book presents the proceedings of a third Dismal Swamp Symposium held in 1995, after the first in 1911, the second in 1974. The book constitutes a thorough monography on the Dismal Swamp. It includes historical topics and information on the natural history of the region, followed by botanical and zoological chapters. Finally the area is viewed on an integrated and conservation oriented level.

Tuittila, E-S., 2000. Restoring vegetation dynamics in a cut-away peatland. PhD thesis Univ. Helsinki, 80 p.

This thesis describes the study of the vegetation and carbon dynamics of a cut-away peatland one year before and four years after rewetting. The summary of the thesis (38 p) can be downloaded in html and pdf format from:

<http://ethesis.helsinki.fi/julkaisut/mat/ekolo/vk/tuittila/restorin.pdf>

Eurosite/English Nature, 2001. Sphagnum or not? Variations in peat forming vegetation in relation to restored waterlevels. Proceedings 58ème Atelier Eurosite 10-14 October 2000. 40 p. (French and English)

The purpose of the workshop was to facilitate collaboration between peatland managers and scientists across Europe. Besides on UK mires, the report includes chapters on various other sites in Western Europe.

Kellner, E. 2001. Surface energy exchange and hydrology of a poor Sphagnum mire. PhD thesis Univ. Uppsala.

Components of the water and surface energy budgets were quantified over two growing seasons for an open boreal mire. The measurements of fluxes were complemented with data on the spatial variation of water content and temperature in different micro-relief elements (hummocks and hollows). The partitioning of available energy at the surface depended mainly on air temperature and relative humidity. On the scale of the whole mire, the water storage was similar over the central, open areas. On a smaller scale, the presence of a pronounced micro-topography caused a variation of the surface wetness. This was also reflected in the spatial variation of soil temperatures. The heat storage in hummocks was

largely influenced by lateral heat fluxes. There were considerable effects of peat elasticity and approximately 40 % of the changes in water storage was caused by swelling/shrinking of the whole peat mound.

A comprehensive summary of the thesis can be found here: <http://w3.uu.se/fulltext/91-554-5121-7.pdf>

Klaphake, A., Scheumann, W. & R. Schliep, 2001. Biodiversity and International Water Policy: International Agreements and Experiences Related to the Protection of Freshwater Ecosystems. Online Report, 36 p.

As part of the supporting documents for the International Convention on Freshwater, this 36-page report studies an emerging global framework for action, particularly through the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Ramsar Convention, the UNFCCC, and the Convention on International Watercourses. Many other global, regional, and local agreements are also considered. This report can be downloaded as a pdf file at <http://www.water-2001.de/supporting/biodiversity-and-water.pdf>.

Some other interesting documents may also be downloaded from the www.water-2001.de/documents and .../supporting sites.

Stanova, V. (ed.) 2000. Rašeliniská Slovenska (Peatlands of Slovakia), Daphne, Bratislava, 194 p. (in Slovakian)

This book presents a survey of the current state of knowledge, protection and biodiversity of peatlands in Slovakia. The first general part describes the overall distribution of peatlands, threats, characteristics, and classification. The second part has a regional focus and features articles on the peatlands of the various Slovak regions. The annex includes a glossary as well as a German, English and Russian list of words with Slovak translation.

Price 120,- Kc. For more information write to: daphne@changenet.sk

Kosov, V.I. & V.V. Panov, 2001. Peat mire systems in the ecosphere (technosphere integrating with biogeosphere). Tver, TSTU, 188 p. (in Russian)

After a general overview of the geography and natural functions of mires, the book continues with a chapter on chronology and trends in mire investigations. It then proceeds with a chapter on mires as technosystems, i.e. as culturally used objects, followed by a chapter on mires as biogeosystems and on mires as technobiogeosystems, i.e. as natural systems (re-)created by man.

Czerwiński, A., A. Kołos & B. Matowicka, 2000. Przemiany siedlisk i roślinności torfowisk uroczyska Stare Biele w puszczy Knyszyńskiej. Białystok, Polytechnika Białostocka, 225 p. + map. (in Polish)

This monograph describes the habitat and peatland vegetation changes in the Stare Biele range in the Knyszyn forest. This range covers only 256 ha and is surrounded by moraines, kames and sanders. Therewith it is an isolated complex and it has remained largely unchanged. The monograph includes floristic and faunistic studies and palaeo- and actuo-ecological studies.

Swarts, F.A. (ed.) 2000. The Pantanal. St. Paul, Paragon House. 301 p.

Monograph on one of the largest wetland areas in the world; the word peat is not mentioned in any of the 30 chapters on preservation, economic development, international involvement, lessons learned from other systems, and the dynamics between economic development and environmental preservation. The book consists of selected papers and addresses from the world conference on preservation and sustainable development in the Pantanal, held in 1999.

Vasiliev, S.V., A.A. Titlyanova & A.A. Velichko, 2001. West Siberian peatlands and Carbon cycle: past and present. Novosibirsk, OOO Agentstvo Sinprint. 250 p. (partly Russian)

Proceedings of an international field symposium held in Noyabrsk, August 2001. Topics covered include:

- Peatlands and climate history and contemporary dynamics
- Vegetation productivity, carbon emission and carbon budget
- Peatland vegetation, peat soils and mire types
- Mire conservation and anthropogenic factors of contemporary development of peatlands

For more information contact Andrej Velichko: paleo@glasnet.ru

Jukema, J., T. Piersma, J.B. Hulscher, E.J. Bunscoeke, A. Koolhaas & A. Veenstra, 2001. Goudplevieren en Wilsterflappers: eeuwenoude fascinatie voor trekvogels. Fryske Akademy, Ljouwert/KNNV Utrecht, 272 p. (in Dutch)

Detailed monograph on Golden Plovers and the people who caught them: the Wilsterflappers. In the last decennia these wilsterflappers have been working for science, whereas they used to eat and sell the birds. This book presents the results of the scientific research, but also draws interesting conclusions based on interviews with old wilsterflappers with some

spectacular results. Firstly, these people report regular catches of distinct small and dark plovers, usually after several days of frost, when the normal Eurasian Golden Plovers had left the grasslands and people were skating on canals and lakes. The oral history, backed up by published sightings and a few museum skins, indicates the extinction of a population of Pacific Golden Plovers that migrated to the southwest and wintered in European temperate regions, while the great majority migrated to the south-southeast and wintered in the Australian subtropics. Their special life-history features may have made them a distinct subspecies.

Secondly, stories suggest that Slender Billed Curlews may have been regular winter visitors of the Zuiderzee area before endikement in 1932. Accounts tell of Slender Billed Curlews shot for consumption.

For more information: info@knnvuitgeverij.nl

IPCC, 2001. Bogs and Fens of Ireland Conservation Plan 2005

Bogs and fens are an extensive natural resource in Ireland. They originally covered 1.35 million hectares of the country. The destruction of Ireland's peatlands by afforestation, turf cutting, industrial peat extraction and reclamation has resulted in an 82% loss of these valuable wetlands.

In the Bogs & Fens of Ireland Conservation Plan 2005 the Irish Peatland Conservation Council, a non governmental organisation, is presenting a blueprint for the development of a national strategy for the protection of a representative sample of bogs and fens in Ireland.

The IPCC's strategy outlines actions to ensure that all bogs and fens of nature conservation importance are protected; that planning permission is prevented for activities that threaten to damage conservation sites; that Government fund better management and rehabilitation of peatland Natural Heritage Areas and that an outreach education programme focusing on the value of peatlands to all sectors in society if developed.

IPCC is calling on three Government departments, in particular the Department of the Environment, Public Enterprise and Arts, Heritage Gaeltacht and the Islands to take a more proactive role towards the protection of bogs in Ireland and give a firm undertaking that they will play their part in protecting bogs here.

This conservation plan includes:

- Detailed information on 914 bogs and fens of conservation importance in the Republic and Northern Ireland
- Location maps of Irish peatland habitats and threatened species
- Actions required to tackle 23 issues affecting the future of Ireland's peatland heritage
- Three chapters explaining the characteristics, conservation and extent of fens, raised bogs and blanket bogs in Ireland

- as well as a Glossary of 90 technical terms and bibliography of peatland publications

You can order your copy of the plan for € 25.39 plus P&P from the IPCC, 119 chapel Street, Dublin 1. For further information contact info@ipcc.ie

Caledonian Shanks Centre for Waste Management, 2000. A regional analysis of the peat and waste derived product markets – a synopsis on behalf of the REMADE programme. Report, 13 p.

The Peat Industry in Britain is facing a dilemma as a result of pleas for the reduction in the amounts of peat extracted from lowland raised bogs, with the Peat Campaign Consortium calling for a phased reduction, of peat usage, to zero by 2005. On the other hand, the UK is facing a waste mountain and without urgent action the amount of waste we produce will double over the next 20 years.

The EC Landfill Directive has set targets for the reduction of biodegradable municipal waste being disposed of to landfill over the next two decades. One obvious solution is to use the composted organic waste as an alternative to peat based products. In an ideal situation peat producers would use their existing influences to market these products either as they exist or by combining them with peat through a process known as 'peat dilution'. This would satisfy legislative requirements and help calm environmental concerns for our peat lands.

This study aims to quantify and monitor changes to the pattern of supply and consumption of peat and alternative materials used as a soil improvers and growing media by professional growers, local authorities, landscapers and amateur gardeners. In addition an analysis of the composting industry, as it exists in the UK in general and Scotland in particular is presented. Problems associated with the progression of this sector are examined in detail from the point of view of recent legislation and the work of conservation groups to reduce the amount of peat extracted annually in the UK

The report can be downloaded from:
http://www.remade.org.uk/documents/organic_doc/peat_report.pdf

Emerald network Newsletter. WWF–European Policy Office

The emerald Network Newsletter will appear three times yearly. It is designed to inform all actors involved in the establishment of the Emerald Network of the Bern Convention.

The Emerald Network is the common operative tool for the protection of habitats under the Bern Convention, reaching from Turkey to Iceland and from Ukraine to Morocco. In June 1989, in response to an increasing demand for habitat protection, the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention launched the idea of establishing a pan-European network of protected habitats. The Emerald Network was, thus, born. In practice, however, development of the Emerald Network now involves the designation at national level of Areas of Special Conservation Interest (ASCIs).

The Bulletin will focus on recent activities and opportunities arising for the development of the Emerald Network. It will be sent out electronically on a quarterly basis, with the second edition available in November 2001 and the third edition due in March 2002.

For all documents and information on the Emerald Network:

Helene Bouguessa, Council of Europe, F – 67075, Strasbourg, France
Helene.Bouguessa@coe.int
<http://www.nature.coe.int>

For subscription to the Newsletter:

WWF–European Policy Office;
Tel.: +32 2 743 88 13
Fax: +32 2 743 88 19
sjen@wwfepo.org

IMCG now an official organisation

IMCG is now officially registered as an "association" under the French law at the "Prefecture du Nord, Lille, France" under number 1587, as has been published in the Official Journal of the French Republic n°27, p. 3051, 2001, dated July 7th. The latter date will therefore be the official birth date of the IMCG as registered association. A bank account has been opened with the "Caisse Régionale de Credit Agricole Mutuel du Nord", account title: Ass. International Mire Conservation, account number: FR35 16306 00007 0000517099P 97, BIC: AGRIFRPP863

Don't hesitate to donate money to IMCG!

UPCOMING EVENTS

See for additional and up-to-date information: <http://www.imcg.net/imcgdia.htm>

IPS Workshop: Peat in Horticulture

Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 30 October 2001

Theme: Peat and its alternatives in growing media.

See previous Newsletter or contact:

wimtonnis@home.nl

IV international symposium on sustainable development in the andes

Mérida, Venezuela, 25 November - 2 December 2001

Includes the paramos ecosystems that partly consist of peatlands.

Please visit the website for information:

<http://www.forest.ula.ve/ama-merida2001>

6th Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity

the Hague, The Netherlands, 8-19 April 2002

The agenda items for the COP6 are already fixed and focus on alien species, forests ecosystems, benefit sharing, national reporting and means to support implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans.

For more information: <http://www.biodiv.org/>

2nd International Conference on the ecology and conservation of floodplains and lowland mires in the Polesie region

Minsk, Belarus, 22-26 May 2002

The following issues will be addressed:

- implementation of the first conference's resolution
- environment-friendly nature use in Polesie
- international cooperation for biodiversity conservation in Polesie
- role of mires in climate change mitigation
- prospects of mire restoration in Belarus
- integrated biodiversity conservation and wetland management in the Pripyat river floodplain
- the Polesie region as "Important Bird Area"
- action plans for key fen sites in Belarusian Polesie

For more information: dimago@mail.ru

IMCG Biennial Symposium, Congress & Conference

France, 10-22 July 2002

For detailed information and registration form, see the previous IMCG Newsletter or visit:

<http://www.imcg.net/docum/france.htm>

Peatland Ecology and Efficient Peat Use

Tomsk, Russian, August 21 -25, 2002

For details: see elsewhere in this Newsletter

VIII INTECOL Congress: Ecology in a changing World

Seoul, Korea, 11-18 August 2002

See previous Newsletter of contact:

farina@intecol.org

<http://www.intecol.org>

3rd European Conference on Restoration Ecology

Budapest, Hungary, 25-31 August, 2002

"Challenges of the new millennium - our joint responsibility"

For more information:

<http://www.altagrabusiness.hu/confer3.html>

The Third international Symposium on the Biology of Sphagnum

Norway and Sweden, 13-23 August 2002

The symposium includes a 9 day fieldtrip from Uppsala, Sweden to Trondheim, Norway taking us across several vegetation zones and a diversity of mires from the hyper-oceanic coastal Trøndelag to alpine and subcontinental sites in Sweden.

The Symposium and Fieldtrip are arranged by Uppsala University and The Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) on behalf of the International Association of Bryologists (IAB).

For further information and pre-registration, please visit our website:

<http://www.vm.ntnu.no/sphagnum2002>

International Symposium on Wetlands

Nanjing, China, 07-12 September 2002

The objective of this symposium is to:

- present new research on wetland ecology and management;
- transfer the current state-of-knowledge regarding the structure and function of forested wetlands, based on North American and European understandings, to Asian scientists and resource managers;
- to present current research on China's wetland resources;
- to stimulate forested wetlands research in Asia as a means to enhance environmental quality and societal values derived from the resource,
- to promote Nanjing Forestry University as a center for wetland research in Asia, and - to prepare a published volume from the symposium proceedings a conference website will be available soon.

For more information contact: Carl C. Trettin trettinc@cofc.edu

3rd World Water Forum

Kyoto, Japan, 16-23 March 2003,

The Forum will encompass three major elements: the Forum itself, a ministerial conference and a water fair/festival consisted of a series of water related events.

For more information:

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URL: <http://www.water-forum3.com>