

SWS Ramsar Section Meeting

1 June 2016, Corpus Christi, Texas

The SWS Ramsar Section met on 1 June 2016 during the SWS 2016 annual conference in Corpus Christi, Texas.

The following issues and topics were discussed.

1. Report back on issues arising from the 31 May SWS Board meeting relevant to the Ramsar Section

Matthew Simpson (Ramsar Section Vice-chair) and Rob McInnes (Ramsar Section past Chair) participated in the Board meeting. They reported on the following issues:

- a. *Chapter Development Grant*. As currently formulated this new SWS grant mechanism appears to apply only to SWS Chapters and not to SWS Sections. This seems inequitable. An SWS Board Motion will be needed to include the possibility for Sections to apply for the new Chapter Development Grant;
- b. *International Travel Grant*. This is a valuable SWS mechanism for the Ramsar Section, to help the Section bring in international speakers to its Symposia and so help support SWS becoming more international. For the 2016 Ramsar Section symposium, the International Travel Grant supported the participation of one of its speakers. However, with increasing costs of travel and subsistence, the current grant fund can support only very few participants each year. A Board Motion will be needed to increase the International Travel Grant fund so that *inter alia* the Ramsar Section can support more speakers to attend SWS annual meetings.

2. Memorandum of Cooperation between SWS and Ramsar Convention Secretariat

After some confusion over dates, it has been confirmed that the current SWS-Ramsar MoC runs until 2017. Both SWS and the Ramsar Secretariat are keen to renew the MoC. Nick Davidson is currently reviewing and redrafting the MoC, with a view to its text being agreed in early 2017, with signature by the SWS President likely during the SWS business meeting at the 2017 annual conference in Puerto Rico. Such a timing of signing will help increase recognition of the SWS-Ramsar links and the profile of the SWS Ramsar Section.

3. Availability and use of Ramsar Section funds

The Ramsar Section is a small SWS Section, but encouragingly its membership has increased by 37% over the past year. Section funds are currently \$621. Ideas were sought on how these could be spent in the future, and the following suggestions made:

- Develop materials/translate documents etc.;
- Contribute to developing a mobile app for citizen science wetland monitoring reporting;
- Subsidise speaker participation at Ramsar Section symposia;

- Provide Ramsar Section travel support for members to attend other Section/Chapter meetings;
- Partnering with other Chapters/Sections (e.g. Europe, Asia, Restoration) in joint meetings/initiatives;
- Subsidise fees for international Professional Wetland Scientist accreditation applications from international applicants.

4. Designation of further Ramsar Sites in the USA

A request was made for support from Ramsar Section members to the USA (particularly through establishing an SWS Ramsar Section link with the USA National Ramsar Committee) in helping the designation of more wetlands as Ramsar sites (Wetlands of International Importance).

5. Ramsar Section annual symposia and webinar options

For such an international section, it is a regular challenge to organise speakers for an annual Ramsar Section symposium. The option of organising a symposium perhaps at every other SWS annual conference, and developing a series of Section webinars for the intervening years was first raised at the 2015 Section meeting (Providence, Rhode Island). The idea of developing a Ramsar Section webinar series was further discussed, with one suggestion being a webinar on how to fill in the new on-line Ramsar Site designation form.

6. Ramsar Scientific & Technical Review Panel (STRP) work plan 2016-2018

Approval of the STRP work plan by Ramsar's Standing Committee was expected last year, but postponed until the Standing Committee's meeting in mid-June 2016. Once approved, and as in previous cycles, the STRP work plan 2016-2018 will be circulated to all Ramsar Section members to see how they could contribute to different aspects of the work of STRP.

7. Any other business

No issues were raised.

Nick Davidson and Matthew Simpson, Ramsar Section Chairs

Annex: Attendees

Name	Affiliation	Location	E-mail
Andy Herb	Alpine Eco	Denver, USA	andyherb@alpine-eco.com
Rob McInnes	RM Wetlands & Environment	Oxford, UK	rob@rmwe.co.uk
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