

Global Citizen Science Wetland Survey 2017

The Global Citizen Science Wetland Survey was initiated by the Society of Wetland Scientists, the World Wetland Network and the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (UK), and aims to get a snapshot of the state of the world's wetlands from the point of view of those that know them close up. We attempted to create a survey tool that allowed participants to record in some detail the state of their wetlands and the pressures that are affecting them. Using an online survey platform (survey monkey) we created a set of questions that covered as broad a range of pressures as possible, whilst asking if these were increasing or decreasing. The survey was replicated as an excel document for those that did not have good enough internet access to do it online, or those that preferred to do in the field.

The survey was distributed through the WWN and SWS networks, and through existing fora such as the Ramsar Forum, Ramsar CEPA forum, and national / regional networks. In all, we received around 600 responses, of which around 541 were usable (once all duplicate or incomplete responses had been removed). We aimed to get 50 responses per Ramsar region, and managed to exceed this in all regions.

Initial analysis showed that the largest group of respondents were NGOs (33.1%) followed by Academics (21.6%), national and local government (20.4%) and the others included local and national government representatives, CSO groups and landowners. Most had known their wetland for fewer than 10 years, but the longest was up to 68 years!

45% of sites were between 100-10,000ha, and 21% from 10,000 to 100,000ha. Overall 7.7% of Ramsar sites were represented (covering 14.4% of total Ramsar site area). More wetlands were described as being in 'good' state (30%) than poor state (24%). Oceania and North America had the most positive picture, whilst Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and Europe had most reports of 'poor' status.

In terms of direction of travel, more wetlands were reported as deteriorating (36%) than improving (21%), with deterioration particularly evident in Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa. Overall, it seems that 'good' current state wetlands are improving, whilst 'poor' wetlands are further deteriorating.

In terms of drivers, there were only three that were reported as being positive, and these included local community awareness, implementation of conservation management measures and tourism. Most drivers were however classed as negative, and the worst were urban/industrial pollution, species introduction (invasives), agricultural run-off, erosion, urban development/infrastructure, and industrial development/infrastructure. All drivers were reported as increasing rather than decreasing, regardless of whether they are positive or negative.

The next step will be to create some scientific publications from these results, which will be published before Ramsar COP13. We will also run a side-event to discuss both the results themselves, but also the methodology used and how it can be improved upon. We hope to re-run the survey every three years, to fit with the cycle of Ramsar COPs.

For more information, please see the [WWN website](#) or contact chris.rostron@wwt.org.uk

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