

# Networking

# Australia to host World Parks Congress

“When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world”.

These words from the Scottish born naturalist, John Muir, a man hailed as the father of National Parks in the United States, aptly captures the importance of the upcoming IUCN World Parks Congress.

Conserving the earth's most valuable natural places and promoting nature's solutions to global challenges is the focus of the Congress taking place in Sydney from 12–19 November.

The world's 200 000 protected areas, covering 14 per cent of land and nearly three per cent of oceans, conserve threatened wildlife, boost our food, water and climate security and help people reconnect with nature. In an era where we face an untold biodiversity extinction crisis, grapple with the effects of climate change and a burgeoning human population, an expanded connected network of well managed conservation areas is the most robust proven solution to confronting global problems.

The role of our national and global protected area network shouldn't be underestimated. Did you know that:

- one third of the 105 world's largest cities, including Sydney, derive drinking water from protected areas
- protected areas conserve populations of wild species, pollinators, and crop wild relatives safeguarding species and populations vital for food security and agriculture
- protected areas contribute to health by protecting intact ecosystems and supplies of medicinal plants and genetic material for pharmaceuticals.

With its theme, “People, Parks, Planet: Inspiring Solutions”, the Congress will bring together 160 countries and global experts from organisations including UNESCO, the United Nations Environment Program and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. It will also involve many different sectors, community groups, agencies, industries and of course the future custodians of the planet—our youth.

Topic areas being covered will include nature's role in human health and wellbeing, responding to climate change, reconciling development challenges and respecting Indigenous knowledge and culture.

Registrations for this once in a decade event are now open.

More information about the IUCN World Parks Congress can be found at:

[www.worldparkscongress.org.au](http://www.worldparkscongress.org.au)



IUCN  
WORLD PARKS CONGRESS  
SYDNEY 2014

*Parks, people, planet: inspiring solutions*  
[www.worldparkscongress.org](http://www.worldparkscongress.org)

# Australian and World Wetland Network news

Louise Duff, Manager Hunter Region, WetlandCare Australia

The Australian Wetland Network (AWN), established in 1994, is a national network of Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) involved in conservation and wise use of wetlands. It provides 30 member organisations across Australia with the opportunity to contribute to policy development, share knowledge and coordinate World Wetland Day activities.

AWN is administered through a Secretariat hosted by WetlandCare Australia.

In 2013, AWN received funds from the NSW Environmental Trust to prepare a Strategic Plan 2013–2015. One of our strategic objectives is to facilitate NGO participation in national Ramsar reporting and the Ramsar triennial Conference of Contracting Parties.

To this end, we recently coordinated member contributions for Australia's National Report to the Ramsar Convention Secretariat in the lead-up to the 12th Conference of Contracting Parties (COP12), to be held in Uruguay in June 2015.

The submissions from our members had some common themes. We agreed that being a signatory to the Ramsar Convention has raised awareness of wetland values in Australia, and helped protect wetlands through international listing.

Members identified the need for more wetlands to be designated as Ramsar sites, additional resources for managing Ramsar-listed wetlands and dedicated funds for managing and monitoring of all wetlands. Members also saw value in creating a greater understanding of the benefits wetland conservation has on migratory birds and agriculture.

Unlike other multi-lateral environmental agreements, the Ramsar Convention was established by NGOs and is hosted by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). AWN recognises that NGOs make a significant contribution to wetland advocacy, rehabilitation, education and research, and our members look forward to being involved in Ramsar COP12.

WetlandCare Australia is also the Oceania representative for the World Wetland Network (WWN). They have two projects currently underway. Firstly, the WWN organise the Wetland Globe Awards, which calls on NGOs around the world to identify and vote for both outstanding wetlands that are well managed, and wetlands threatened by negative impacts. The Wetland Globe Awards will be launched later this year and announced at Ramsar COP12. WWN's second project is an online tool to support NGOs in their efforts to have local wetlands added to the Ramsar list.

To find out more about the AWN or the WWN, please contact the Secretary, Louise Duff, WetlandCare Australia, via email [louiseduff@wetlandcare.com.au](mailto:louiseduff@wetlandcare.com.au) or telephone 02 49511425.



*Louise Duff, WetlandCare Australia, is the Australian Secretary for the Australian Wetland Network and Oceania representative for the World Wetland Network (© Copyright, Verity Robson)*