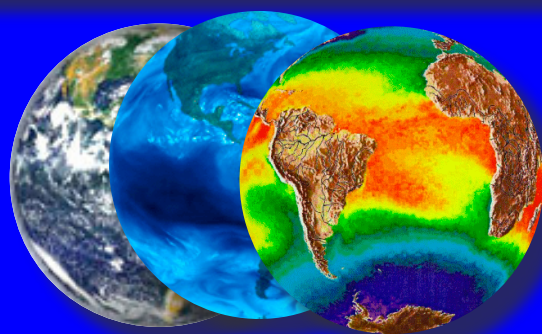




International Conference

**Lagoons and coastal
wetlands
in the global change
context**
**Impacts and
management issues**



Venice, 26-28 April 2004

**First Announcement and
call for papers**





1. BACKGROUND

The definition of wetlands adopted by the Ramsar Convention includes areas *"with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six metres"* which means that most of the coastal zones around the world fall under the definition of wetland. Although coastal wetlands vary considerably in their morphology, community structure and flora, all provide vital services in securing human well-being, particularly through their role in mitigating the impacts of natural hazards, pollution and flooding.

Coastal wetlands are particularly complex ecosystems. They are subjected to a fluctuating physical and chemical environment and have been shown to be ecologically flexible and capable of adapting to changes in climatic conditions. Nevertheless, strong human pressures and inappropriate management practices have significantly reduced the natural adaptability and resilience of many wetland systems. Coastal wetlands have been defined as the most vulnerable ecosystems to direct large-scale impacts of climate change by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

Climate change and particularly sea level rise in combination with other human-induced pressures is likely to become increasingly important as a critical factor in wetland degradation and loss.

Wetlands require mitigation of threats and adaptive habitat management. Effective wetland conservation will depend increasingly on the capacity to integrate global change issues into operational planning. Effective inputs to policy making for managing coastal wetlands thus requires globally networked and scientifically integrated research.

In this context, the Venice Lagoon System is of exceptional scientific interest. It is one of the most important wetland sites in the Mediterranean, with many distinctive environmental features. It is of unique cultural and social significance. Research findings from Venice are relevant to building a general understanding of wetland phenomena, as well as being of importance in understanding specific situations elsewhere in the Adriatic and Mediterranean Seas.



2. CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES

The conference will provide an interdisciplinary forum to share and exchange knowledge and experiences on recent developments in wetland science and global change. The aim is to identify gaps, problems and successes in the integration of global change issues into lagoon and coastal wetland management.

This conference will:

- foster multidisciplinary studies and integrated approaches to coastal wetland conservation;
- be an opportunity to share knowledge on the current functionality and structure of wetlands and to better understand potential feedbacks to the global system;
- provide quantitative information for the economic evaluation of wetlands and cost-benefit analysis to facilitate public authorities' decision making and increase the reliability and efficiency of policy measures;
- promote collaboration and interaction between scientists from different fields, countries and/or wetland areas;
- disseminate results at different levels: scientists, public administrators and policy makers, as well as raising public awareness.

Specific objectives are:

- to improve understanding on wetland-climate interactions and on climate change impacts;
- to foster discussions on coping strategies to deal with climate change impacts;
- to provide case studies of wetlands with differing vulnerabilities to climate change and human-induced stresses and diverse management systems;
- to identify research priorities and information needs;
- to suggest structural and non-structural measures for mitigating impacts, conserving ecosystems and restoring functions

3. WHO SHOULD ATTEND

- Scientists involved in wetland research and management from all over the world and in particular eastern European countries and Mediterranean areas.
- Decision-makers, environmental professionals and representatives of organizations such as FAO, MAB, UNEP, IPCC, World Bank, WWF, etc.
- Representatives of the major UNESCO Environmental Programmes (MAB, IHP, IGBP, CLIVAR).



4. THEMES

The conference covers the following themes:

1. Function and value of lagoon and coastal wetlands

Functions refers to physical, chemical and biological interactions within wetland systems. This session will focus on the main ecological functions associated to lagoons and coastal wetlands and their significance to society. The pivotal role of wetlands in coastal processes, river basin management and sea-climate interactions will be highlighted.

2. Driving forces, climate change impacts and feedbacks:

Wetlands already face critical problems due to increasing natural and human-induced stresses. Climate change is likely to severely affect coastal wetlands through variations in mean sea level, precipitation patterns, hydrodynamics, river flows, sediment inputs, water salinity, water temperature, and the frequency and magnitude of extreme events.

Papers are invited which contribute to an improved understanding of lagoon and wetland processes and dynamics, and of how climate, policy and socio-economic pressures drive changes in coastal wetlands ecosystems. Wetland feedbacks on climate will also be considered.

3. Indicators and indexes, risk assessment, monitoring strategies and techniques:

This theme will focus on the definition of relevant indicators and indexes to detect and monitor changes in lagoon and coastal wetland systems. This includes consideration of scale from local to global. Better indicators and indices are needed to better understand wetland current status, degradation and future trends and to support appropriate management decisions to prevent accelerating wetland loss.

4. Adaptation, mitigation strategies and sustainable use:

Probably the main challenge for contemporary wetland management is the definition of adequate adaptation measures and mitigation strategies to global change and their integration in a broad scheme of wetlands rational use and planning. This theme will explore the key processes controlling wetland responses and wetland elevation and some effective adaptation strategies to cope with climate change. Restoration techniques, conservation policies and socio-economic issues such as adaptive capacities within societies and institutions should also be considered.



5. CALL FOR PAPERS

The Organizing Committee invites abstracts on the conference themes. Every contribution is subjected to the approval of the International Scientific Committee.

Participants intending to present a paper are requested to send a 1-2 page(s) abstract in English as e-mail attachment (*.doc or *.rtf file) to the Conference Secretariat (venezia@corila.it) according to the submission guidelines.

Authors will receive timely notification of the acceptance of their abstracts. A book of abstracts will be distributed at the conference and the conference proceedings will be published.

GUIDELINES FOR ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

The abstract should be a brief summary of the paper and should include an introductory sentence stating its purpose. A brief description of the work involved and a statement of any conclusions to be drawn from the work should be included.

1. RESPONSIBILITY: *Authors have full responsibility for any statements submitted.*

2. CHANGES: *Once the abstract has been accepted, corrections cannot be made*

3. TITLE: *Times New Roman, 16, Bold. Keep brief, indicating the nature of the investigation.*

4. AUTHORS: *The abstract should include full address (incl. phone, fax and e-mail) of the corresponding author.*

- *Name, Surname: Times New Roman, Small Capital, 12, Normal*
- *Institution affiliations and address: Times New Roman, 12, Italic.*
- *If no institution is involved, list city and state.*

5. TEXT: *Page size A4, font Times New Roman, 12, Normal, justified, single spacing, margins 2.5 cm*

6. REFERENCES: *Times New Roman, 11, Normal, justified, single spacing.*



6. IMPORTANT DEADLINES

Receipt of abstracts

23 January 2004

Author notification of accepted abstracts

27 February 2004

Deadline for early registration

26 March 2004

7. REGISTRATION FEE

The fee is 210 Euro.

The fee includes the participation to the workshop, conference bag, book of abstracts, coffee breaks, lunches and the social dinner.

8. CONFERENCE VENUE

Venice is easily accessible by plane (Marco Polo Venice International Airport), by train (Venezia S. Lucia railway station) and by car.

The conference will be held in the **UNESCO-ROSTE office** (Palazzo Zorzi, Castello 4930, 30122 Venice) located in the centre of Venice, and not far from Piazza San Marco.

9. SECRETARIAT

CORILA

Consortium for Coordination of
Research Activities Concerning the
Venice Lagoon System

Palazzo Franchetti,
S. Marco 2847
30124 Venice - Italy
Tel + 39.041.2402511
Fax + 39.041.2402512



www.corila.it/coastwetchange
venezia@corila.it