



# The Ramsar Convention



a modern success story  
for nature conservation

by Tobias Salathé  
Ramsar Convention Secretariat  
[www.ramsar.org](http://www.ramsar.org)

Ramsar Site **Cerknica lake** - Slovenia

Investing in your future  
European Union  
European Social Fund  
EAS

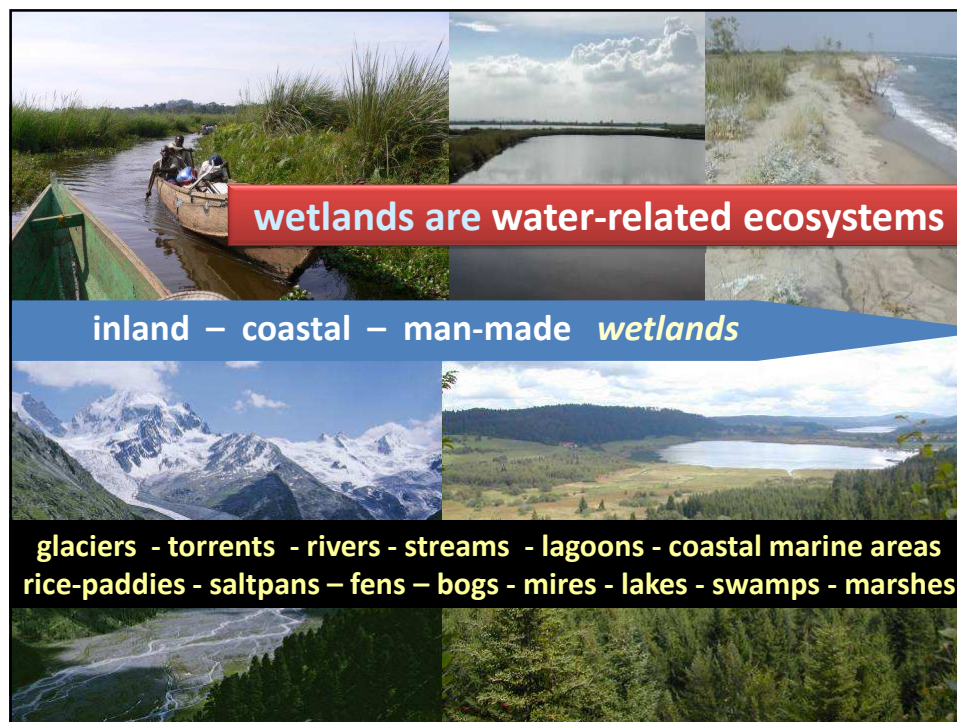


## 1960s : disappearing habitats and dwindling resources

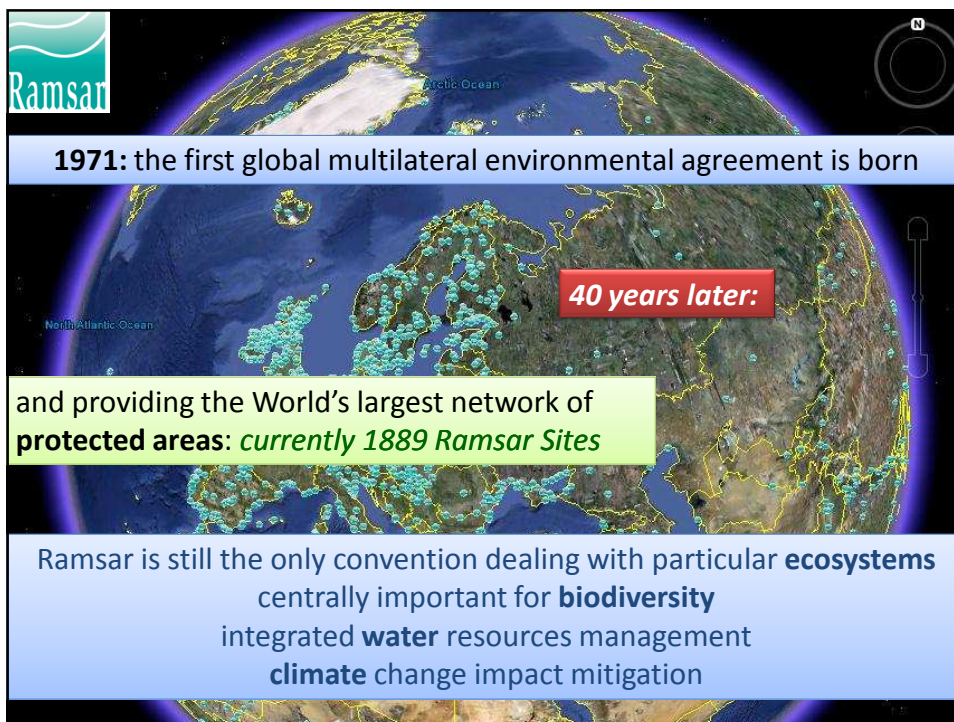
creation of the term « **wetlands** »

concerned ecologists and waterfowl hunters  
focus their attention on water-related ecosystems

Ramsar Site **Kolkheti**







**1971:** the first global multilateral environmental agreement is born

**40 years later:**

and providing the World's largest network of  
**protected areas: currently 1889 Ramsar Sites**

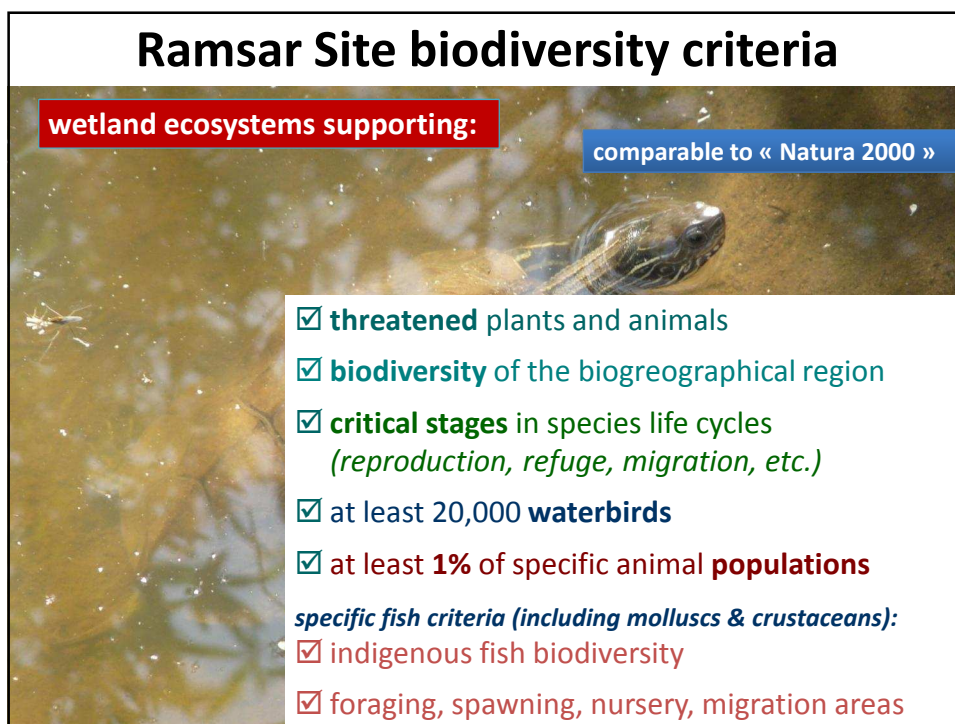
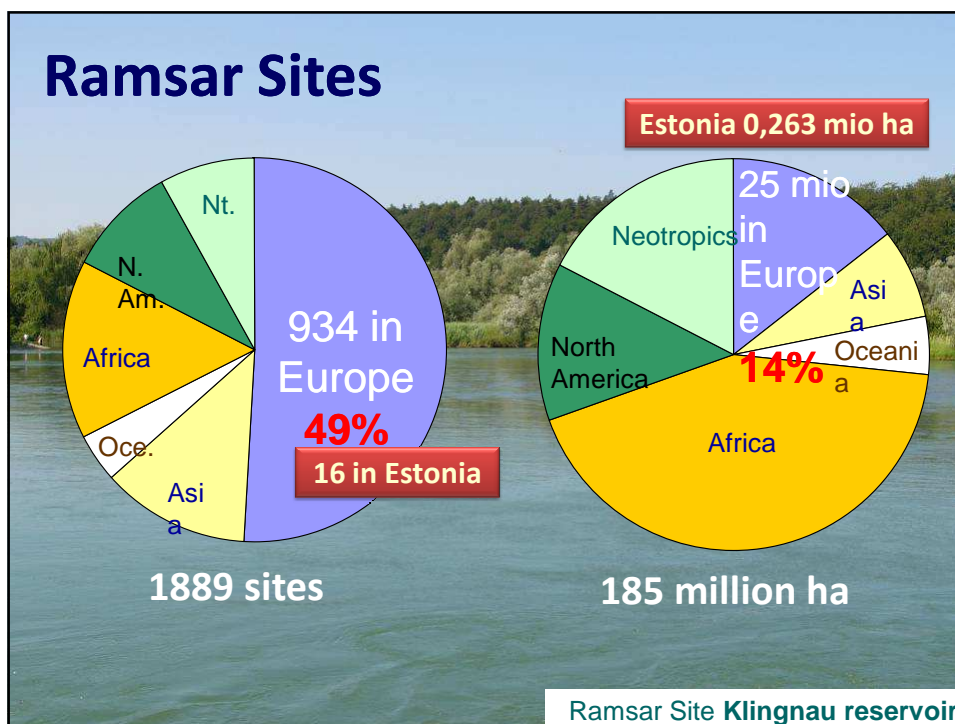
Ramsar is still the only convention dealing with particular **ecosystems**  
centrally important for **biodiversity**  
integrated **water** resources management  
**climate** change impact mitigation



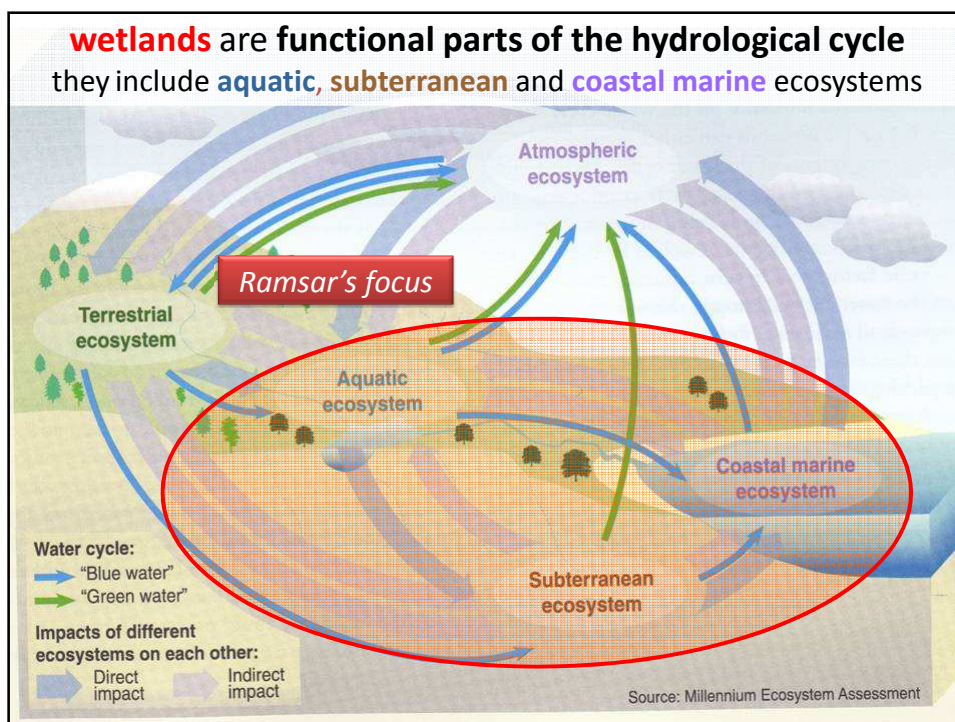
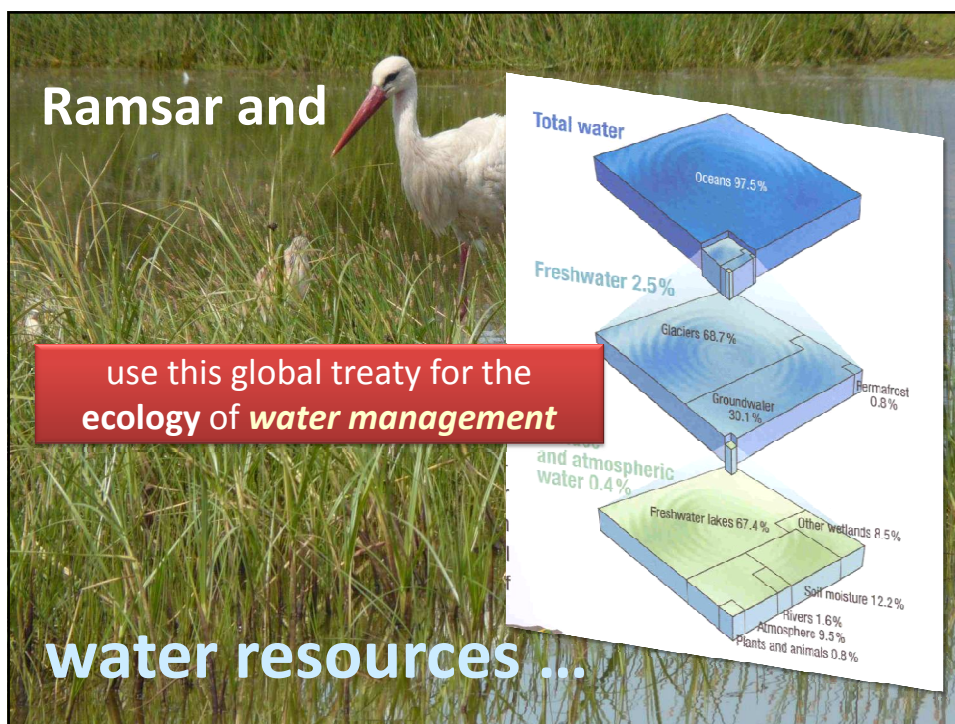
**work based on 3 pillars**

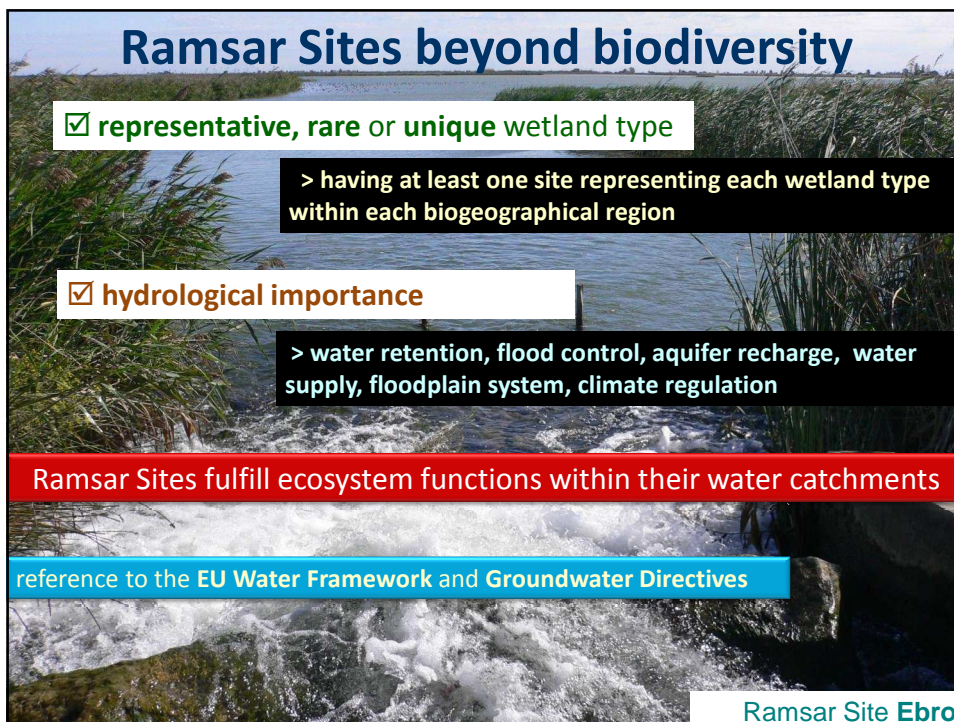
**engagements of the Contracting Parties:**

- Designation of Ramsar Sites** of international importance
- Wise use of all wetlands** in their territory
- International cooperation**  
in shared basins and sites, for shared species and interests









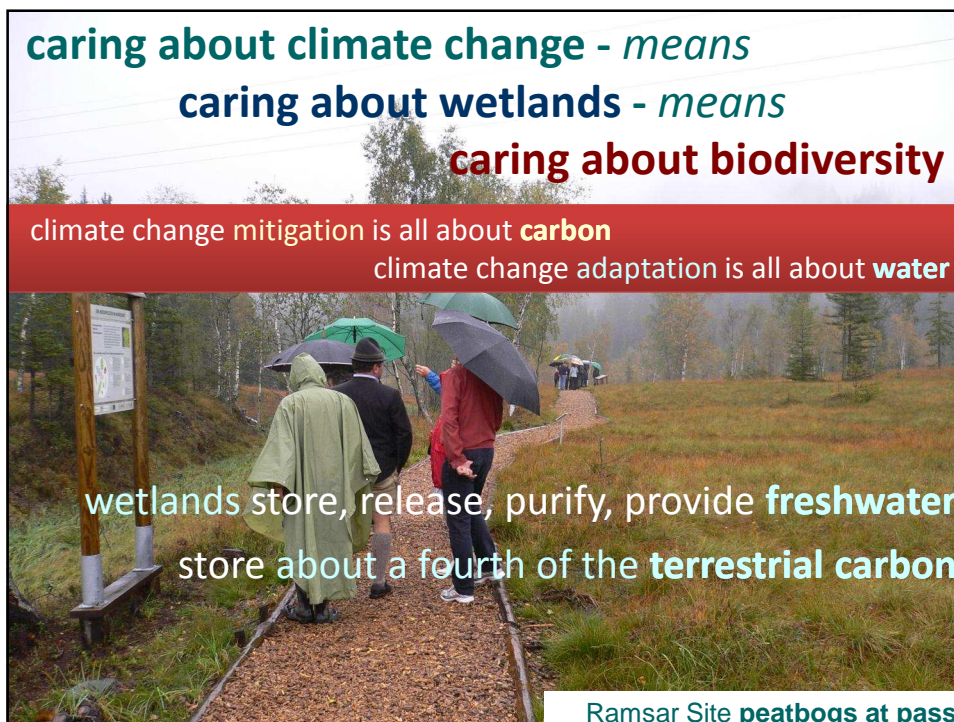
## Ramsar Sites beyond biodiversity

- ☑ **representative, rare or unique** wetland type
  - > having at least one site representing each wetland type within each biogeographical region
- ☑ **hydrological importance**
  - > water retention, flood control, aquifer recharge, water supply, floodplain system, climate regulation

Ramsar Sites fulfill ecosystem functions within their water catchments

reference to the **EU Water Framework** and **Groundwater Directives**

Ramsar Site **Ebro**



## caring about climate change - *means* caring about wetlands - *means* caring about biodiversity

climate change mitigation is all about **carbon**  
climate change adaptation is all about **water**

wetlands store, release, purify, provide **freshwater**  
store about a fourth of the **terrestrial carbon**

Ramsar Site **peatbogs at pass**





## Ramsar's wise use concept

- 🔥 protecting water-related ecosystems for sustainable development
- 🔥 valuing ecosystem services
- 🔥 paying for ecosystem services

reference to UNECE Water Convention

wetland products (fish for tomorrow?)  
recreation, hunting, education and tourism  
storm and flood protection  
sediment and nutrient retention

marine area of Bonifacio –



## Guidance on culture and wetlands

Ramsar covers **man-made** wetlands

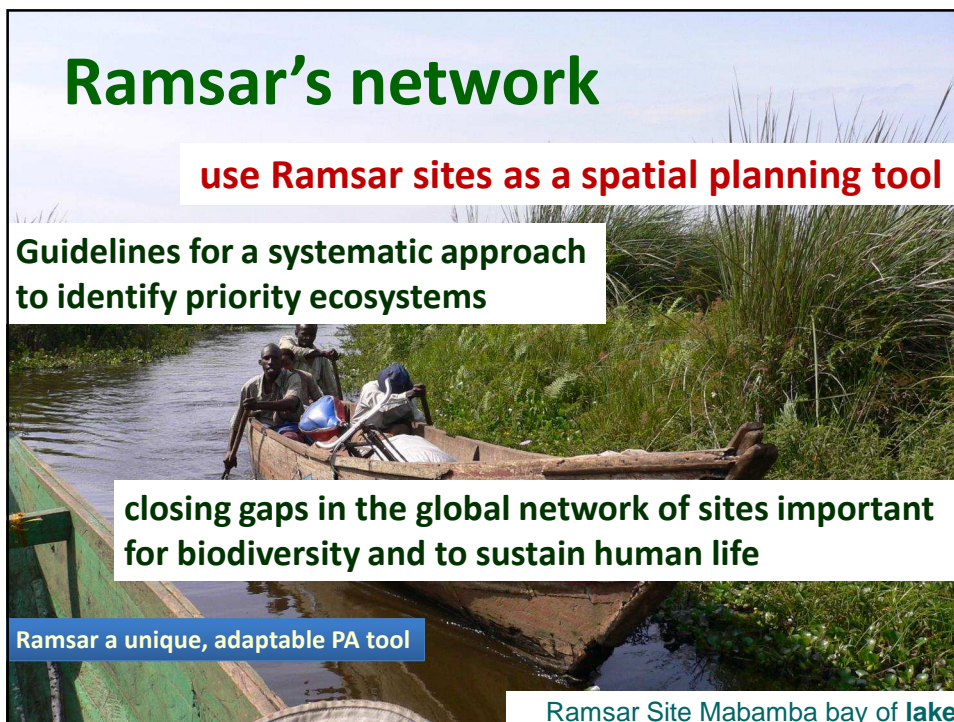
**cultural aspects linked to site management**  
(history, tradition, archeology, beliefs)

**links between biological and cultural diversity**

**human activities at wetlands:**  
habitation, resource uses, social & spiritual activities

cooperation with World Heritage

lake Ohrid – Albania-FYR



# Ramsar's network

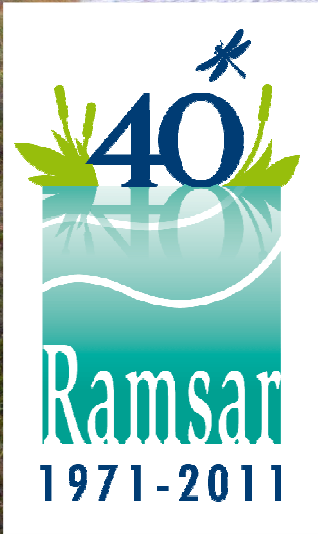
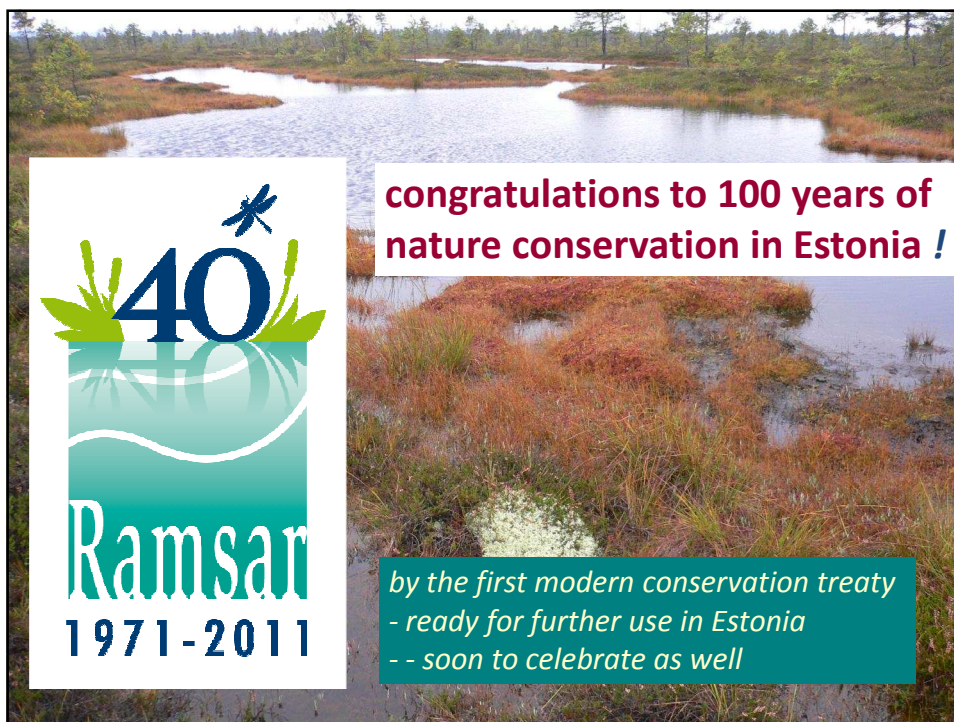
**use Ramsar sites as a spatial planning tool**

**Guidelines for a systematic approach to identify priority ecosystems**

**closing gaps in the global network of sites important for biodiversity and to sustain human life**

Ramsar a unique, adaptable PA tool

Ramsar Site Mabamba bay of lake



**congratulations to 100 years of nature conservation in Estonia !**

*by the first modern conservation treaty  
- ready for further use in Estonia  
- - soon to celebrate as well*