See also "US Wetland of international importance" 1987. 4US006

Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands

As approved by Rec.C.4.7 of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, Montreux, Switzerland - July 1990

NOTE: Please read the accompanying guidelines before attempting to complete this form. An example of a completed data sheet is also included.

Completed sheets should be returned to: T.A. Jones, Ramsar Database, IWRB, Slimbridge, Gloucester GL2 7BX, England

1. Country: United States of America **2. Date:** 1992 **3. Ref:** office use only US006

4. Name and address of compiler:

US FWS

5. Name of wetland: Chesapeake Bay Estuarine Complex

6. Date of Ramsar designation:

7. Geographical coordinates: ~~38°30'N 76°10'W~~ 38°30'N 76°10'W

8. General location: (e.g. administrative region and nearest large town) ~~Atlantic Coast~~

Begins in Eastern Virginia and runs North through Eastern Maryland

9. Area: (in hectares) 13,425 ha

10. Wetland type: (see attached classification, also approved by Montreux Rec.C.4.7)

A, B, E F, H M

11. Altitude: (average and/or maximum & minimum) ~~+10~~

+5m to -20m

12. Overview: (general summary, in two or three sentences, of the wetland's principal characteristics)

Very large estuarine complex on the East coast of the United States

13. Physical features: (e.g. geology; geomorphology; origins - natural or artificial; hydrology; soil type; water quality; water depth; water permanence; fluctuations in water level; tidal variations; catchment area; downstream area; climate)

The Chesapeake Bay extends northward across the Atlantic coastal plain over Quaternary & Tertiary flat lying sedimentary rocks. The Complex ~~ends~~ up at the north end, extends over older Cretaceous rocks and butts up against the ~~edge of~~ East edge of the Appalachian Piedmont area.

It is about 300 Km long in a North-South direction and about 135 km wide at its widest point.

14. Ecological features: (main habitats and vegetation types)

The Chesapeake Bay has a wide range of habitats. The main types are: 1) aquatic beds w/ Eelgrass (Zostera marina), widgeongrass (Ruppia maritima), sago pondweed (Potamogeton pectinatus) and redheadgrass (Potamogeton perfoliatus; 2) Tidal flats which are largely unvegetated; 3) emergent wetlands (marshes) which may have smooth cordgrass (Spartina alterniflora), arrow arums (Peltandra virginica), pickerelweed (Pontederia cordata), spatterdock (Nuphar advena), salt hay cordgrass (Spartina patens) and other marsh grasses depending on salinity; 4) scrub-shrub wetlands dominated by either high tide bush (Iva frutescens) or wax myrtle (Myrica cerifera); 5) forested wetlands both estuarine with Loblolly Pine (Pinus taeda) and freshwater with red maple (Acer rubrum) blackgums (Nyssa sylvatica), black ash (Fraxinus pennsylvanica) and bald cypress (Taxodium distichum). 6) other freshwater emergent and scrub-shrub habits.

15. Land tenure /ownership of:

(a) site Multiple mixed Ownership

(b) surrounding area Multiple mixed ownership

16. Conservation measures taken: (national category and legal status of protected areas - including any boundary changes which have been made; management practices; whether an officially approved management plan exists and whether it has been implemented)

Various agencys of the State and Federal government are working to ~~preserve~~ prevent wetland losses. Several Fish & Wildlife service Wildlife Refuges have been established in the bay area.

17. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented: (e.g. management plan in preparation; officially proposed as a protected area etc.)

18. Current land use: principal human activities in:

(a) site Fishing, commercial & Sport, Agriculture, large Urban areas

(b) surroundings/catchment Industrial & urban development, Agriculture

19. Disturbances/threats, including changes in land use and major development projects:
(factors which may have a negative impact on the ecological character of the wetland)

(a) at the site Urbanization of the region ~~has~~ has resulted in loss of wetland area. Industrial & urban pollution ~~is~~ is threatening the ~~health of~~ biological & balance of the ecosystem

(b) in the surroundings/catchment Urbanization resulting in conversion & peremanent loss of wetlands

20. Hydrological and physical values: (groundwater recharge, flood control, sediment trapping, shoreline stabilisation etc.)

The wetlands of the Chesapeake Bay complex are very important in the control of sediment and Nutrient Retention & Removal from the waters entering the bay. ~~from the~~ & several large urban areas including Washington, D.C. and Baltimore Maryland as well as rivers which drain into the Bay ~~and~~, the wetlands of which are important for nutrient interception

21. Social and cultural values: (e.g. fisheries production, forestry, religious importance, archaeological site etc.)

Shell fisheries and fisheries have been important industries in Chesapeake bay almost since the beginning of settlement

22. Noteworthy fauna: (e.g. unique, rare, endangered, abundant or biogeographically important species; include count data etc.)

Over 20 species of vertebrates are considered ~~as~~ rare, threatened, endangered or of special concern in the Chesapeake Bay area. Among these are the Atlantic sturgeon (Acipenser oxyrhynchus), Canebrake Rattlesnake (Crotalus horridus ssp.), Little Blue Heron (Egretta caerulea) Southern Bog lemming (Synaptomys cooperi helaletes), Loggerhead turtle (Caretta caretta).

23. Noteworthy flora: (e.g. unique, rare, endangered, or biogeographically important species/communities etc.)

24. **Current scientific research and facilities:** (e.g. details of current projects; existence of field station etc.)

25. **Current conservation education:** (e.g. visitors centre, hides, information booklet, facilities for school visits etc.)

several National wildlife refuges on the bay have visitor centers, refuge description leaflets and species lists available.

26. **Current recreation and tourism:** (state if wetland used for recreation/tourism; indicate type & frequency/intensity)

Area is Used for Boating
Hunting & Fishing

27. **Management authority:** (name and address of body responsible for managing the wetland)

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Tidewater Administration
TAWES office Bldg, Annapolis, MD 21401

~~Virginia No Central Name~~

28. **Jurisdiction:** (territorial e.g. state/region and functional e.g. Dept of Agriculture/Dept of Environment etc.)

shared among numerous state, federal and local agencies including the Department of the Interior, Fish & Wildlife Service, The US Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

29. **Bibliographical references:** (scientific/technical only)

30. **Reasons for inclusion:** (state which Ramsar criteria - as adopted by Rec.C.4.15 of the Montreux Conference - are applicable)

31. **Map of site** (please enclose the most detailed and up-to-date map available - preferably at least 1:25,000 or 1:50,000)

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