

What's New @ Ramsar

Austria's University of Klagenfurt launches its second Master's course



The second Master of Science programme on the “Management of Protected Areas” begins on 21st September



On 21 September 2007 the second round of the very successful master programme of **Klagenfurt University (Austria)** on the *Management of Protected Areas* started with 19 new students from Austria, Belarus, Croatia, Kenya, Germany, Greece, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovakia, Sweden, Tanzania, and Uganda.

The University and the E.C.O. (Institute for Ecology) also based in Klagenfurt, started this two-year postgraduate course, leading to a Master of Science diploma, in 2005. The first international course was delivered in 9 blocks of several days each between September 2005 and June 2007. It was a great success for 16 students obtaining their Master diploma. Eight conservation professionals used the course to increase their qualifications for their current job, six students found a new job in conservation thanks to the skills acquired through the course, and only two students are still looking for a career move while they continue to work in protected areas management.

The conceptual framework of the course is based on the goals and meaning of the diverse categories of Protected Areas, ranging from large internationally acknowledged national parks to small nature reserves and natural monuments. This comprises all types of landscapes and ecosystems that are protected by law, by contracts, or by certificates, in order to primarily conserve natural features, biodiversity and landscapes. The course focuses on all features relevant for the management of these sites with a special emphasis on creating additional benefits in terms of research, education, raising awareness, recreation and sustainable regional, economic development. It is based on the successful Integrated Protected Areas Management concept developed by the E.C.O. Institute (www.ipam.info) through an EU co-financed Interreg project.



Preparatory work by the E.C.O. Institute was essential for the designation of the Keutschach-Schiefling mire and lake landscape area by Austria for inclusion in the Ramsar List in 2004. Depicted are water lilies and reeds of Keutschach lake, close to Klagenfurt, the capital of Carinthia, one of Austria's nine federal states.

Together with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biodiversity, UNESCO, IUCN, WWF and several local partners, the Ramsar Convention Secretariat advises and supports this international programme because it provides an efficient means to conservation professionals to acquire transdisciplinary skills to promote sustainable regional development, handle conflicts, increase benefits and conserve biodiversity of Ramsar Sites and other protected areas.


Internationally acknowledged experts, many of them from the institutions listed above, confront the students with direct real-life experiences and assure that the successful course participants will become part of an international network of experts, able to solve complex problems in the everyday life of protected areas. The master programme focuses on European and international categories of protected areas, nature conservation strategies in Central and Eastern Europe, integration of socio-cultural, economic and ecological aspects, participative management approaches, new technologies and methods.

In addition, the **Austrian Development Agency** provides some stipends to non-European students (during the course 2007-2009 for East African students) to make sure that the programme also sufficiently addresses global issues and can provide fruitful exchanges between European experiences and those from other regions. To find out more about the programme, visit the website: www.mpa.uni-klu.ac.at .

The **Advisory Board** of the course met for its 6th meeting on 24 September at Klagenfurt to discuss the curriculum 2007-2009, future improvements for the course and ways to make sure that those professionals involved in Ramsar Site (and other protected areas) management projects will increasingly benefit from this course in the future.

Report and photo by Tobias Salathé, Ramsar Secretariat



For further information about the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, please contact the **Ramsar Convention Secretariat**, Rue Mauverney 28, CH-1196 Gland, Switzerland (tel  +41 22 999 0170 , fax +41 22 999 0169, e-mail ramsar@ramsar.org). Posted 30 September, 2007, Sandra Hails, Ramsar.

[Home](#)

