Effectiveness of an environmental regime is linked to a number of factors; including inclusion of science, non-governmental organization (NGO) involvement, transparency of the agreement’s activities, and the existence of compliance and enforcement mechanisms. This research is a case study of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. Data is from Convention documents: National Reports from Conferences of the Parties 7, 8, and 9; Convention resolutions and reports from all Conferences of the Parties; reports to the Convention from the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) and the Standing Committee; and Convention Handbooks. Environmental effectiveness is investigated through analysis of three significant factors: the extent to which the Convention has met its own goals, the role that science has played in decision-making, and the involvement of NGOs. Results indicate that the Convention is partially meeting its own goals, although findings also show that there is room for improvement in all the factors considered in this study. The Convention is in need of further development of indicators to assess its own environmental effectiveness. STRP, the scientific unit of the Convention, has a degree of autonomy/integrity and responsiveness/involvement that allow it to add value to Convention activities. NGOs are found to be a key element in the functioning of the
Convention in that they are specifically incorporated in Convention activities related to communication of and education on Convention goals and standards.