

News from the International Waterbird Census Western Palearctic and Southwest Asia



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Newsletter for national waterbird monitoring coordinators and observers

The main purpose of this newsletter is to keep coordinators of national waterbird monitoring schemes in Europe, North Africa, Southwest and Central Asia up-to-date with developments in the International Waterbird Census (IWC). It is also intended for counters and all others interested in IWC. For those who are behind with data submission, we wish to kindly request that you send waterbird count data up to and including **January 2010**. This newsletter was compiled at Wetlands International's headquarters in Ede, The Netherlands. Please e-mail if you have questions or comments: post@wetlands.org

Funding cuts cause uncertainty for IWC staffing

The 2009-2010 review of IWC and related work funded by JNCC ended in 2010. The meeting in the Hague in June 2010 reported in the July Newsletter established a process for European Governments to support Wetlands International's waterbird work. Because of the prevailing economic climate in Europe, this process had only limited success, leaving IWC in a precarious situation at the time of writing this Newsletter. At Wetlands International's (WI) headquarters it will probably be necessary to make staff cuts.

Szabolcs Nagy remains as head of Biodiversity and Ecological Networks, responsible for IWC and related work and **Taej Mundkur** is Programme Manager – Flyways.

Simon Delany's contract is under review and may be terminated in 2011. **Nicholas Tubbs**, focal point for the Wetlands International Specialist Groups, will have less time for this and will undertake a number of other duties.

Stephan Flink will continue to manage the IWC database and related technical tasks. **Tom Langendoen** is working on a short contract to ensure that analyses are completed for the 5th edition of the AEWA Conservation Status Report, due in 2011.

With the ending of the WOW project in December 2010, **Umberto Gallo-Orsi** and **Alexander Solokha** will also take up new work in 2011.

Count dates: January 2011

Please note that the recommended dates for IWC counts in 2011 in Europe, North Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia are:

15-16 January 2011

Recommendations for the counts:

- For the convenience of volunteer counters, the recommended dates cover the traditional weekend nearest the middle of January. These dates are for guidance only and counts from any date in January are very welcome
- **Please submit your data in the standard manner recommended by Wetlands International, using the site names and site codes on the official site list, and providing details of any changes in, or additions to the site list**

Summary of IWC counts from 2003 to 2009

Thanks to the helpful responses of many National Coordinators, and support early in the year from LNV, the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Food Quality, it has been possible to update and clean the IWC database and compile tables of national count totals of each waterbird species for the years 2003 to 09. Work in the second half of 2010, preparing the data for the next edition of AEWA's *Report on the Conservation Status of Waterbirds in the Agreement area* allowed further work on the data for forthcoming population trend analyses up to and including 2008. See report on Page 4 for more details of this analysis. The tables of national species totals are now available on the Wetlands International website

National January count totals of all species included in IWC are available via this link:

<http://www.wetlands.org/Whatwedo/Biodiversitywaterbirds/InternationalWaterbirdCensusIWC/WesternPalearcticandWestAsianWaterbirdCensus/IWCResults20032009/tabid/2476/Default.aspx>

We request National Coordinators please to check the totals for your country and let us know if they include any errors.

The lag time between data submission and importation into the database is caused by a number of factors, but through the hard work of a number of people has been reduced significantly in 2010. This trend should continue with the adoption of web-based data submission in 2011, but it depends strongly on the cooperation of National Coordinators in submitting their data in a timely and useable manner. The table on page 4 shows that we have received data from a few countries for which it has not yet been possible to import the data into the database. The usual reasons for this are differences in formatting of submitted data from the formats required by the IWC database, but other issues such as missing or incorrect geographic coordinates are also involved.

Trend analyses for species with sufficiently high quality data will be completed in 2011.

Together with the national totals now available, this information will provide national coordinators with a wealth of data and information which will allow national level counts to be put in an international context.

Development of new database

Work has continued on the new, flexible, web-based, GIS enabled data management system for IWC. Jonathan Palmer at the Wildlife Conservation Society in New York is making final adjustments and it is planned to launch the new system in 2011. We hope that the availability of the new system will enable us to streamline the IWC data management into a flexible global system that will enable us to collect, analyse and output waterbird count data more efficiently.

We expect from the new web-based application that it will speed up collection and reporting back of count data to the network. The new data management system will present little or no change for countries with their own data management systems. However, we are going to review and document data exchange protocols with all countries. The new web-based system is expected to be particularly useful for National Coordinators of waterbird count schemes still lacking modern data management systems because it will make it easier for them to collect the data from their network and to produce site and national level outputs in various formats. To facilitate the collection of data, the web-based system will allow national coordinators to delegate access rights to their sub-national coordinators and observers in a hierarchical structure who will be able to submit and retrieve their own data. Considering the fact that on-line data entry is still problematic in many countries the new web-based system is designed to enable off-line data entry through using Excel sheets.

Further information about the new system is available at:

<http://www.wetlands.org/Whatwedo/Biodiversitywaterbirds/InternationalWaterbirdCensusIWC/DevelopmentofanewIWCdatamanagementsystem/tabid/2247/Default.aspx>

Data submission overview by country

The table presents a summary of which countries have sent waterbird count data for inclusion in the IWC database in each year between 2003 and 2010. If you see that your country has not yet sent data for some of these years, we hope this will encourage you to send them as soon as possible. It is important to use the recommended formats when submitting data, to prevent delays in importing your data into the IWC database. It is good that data from 2002 to 2006 are nearly complete, and for most National Coordinators, the priority now should be to send data from **January 2007, 2008 and 2009**.

+ = available +/- = partly available - = not yet available

	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
Baltic/Nordic								
Belarus	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	+
Denmark	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
Estonia	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
Finland	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
Iceland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kaliningrad	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Latvia	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-
Lithuania	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Norway	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
Poland	+	+	+	+/-	-	-	-	-
Sweden	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Black Sea/East Mediterranean								
Albania	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bosnia& Herz.	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
Bulgaria	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-
Croatia	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cyprus	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
Egypt	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-
Greece	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-
Israel	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	-
Lebanon	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Macedonia	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	+
Montenegro	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Palestine A	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Romania	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
Russia	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-
Serbia	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-
Slovenia	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
Syria	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	+
Turkey	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-
Ukraine	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-
Central Europe								
Austria	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+/-
Czechia	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
S Germany	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-
Hungary	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-

	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
Slovakia	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-
Switzerland	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
North-west Europe								
Belgium	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-
France	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
Germany	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-
Ireland	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-
Luxembourg	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
Netherlands	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-
UK	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
South-west and Central Asia								
Armenia	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-
Azerbaijan	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	-
Bahrain	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Georgia	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Iran	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-
Iraq	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+
Jordan	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Kazakhstan	+	+	+	+	+/-	-	+	-
Kuwait	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kyrgyzstan	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-
Oman	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+
Qatar	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
Russia	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-
Saudi Arabia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tajikistan	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-
Turkmenistan	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	-
UAE.	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	+
Uzbekistan	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	-
Yemen	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
West Mediterranean								
Algeria	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
France (Med)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
Italy	+	+	+	+	+	+/-	+/-	-
Libya	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-
Morocco	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	-	-	-	-
Portugal	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-
Spain	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
Tunisia	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-

New trend analyses based on waterbird population flyways

The triennial *Report on the conservation status of waterbirds in the Agreement Area* prepared by Wetlands International in the year before each of the AEWA Meetings of the Parties has become the medium by which population trend analyses for waterbirds are undertaken and reported by Wetlands International. The fourth edition appeared in 2008: see: http://www.unep-aewa.org/meetings/en/mop/mop4_docs/meeting_docs_pdf/mop4_8_csr4.pdf

The fifth edition, currently in preparation, will be reviewed by the AEWA Technical Committee in the spring of 2011. A major development for the fifth edition will be the use of individual species flyway boundaries as the geographic basis of waterbird population trends. This promises to be a big improvement on previous analyses, which used six standard groups of countries in Europe as the geographic basis of these analyses. (Baltic/Nordic, NW Europe, Central Europe, West Mediterranean and Black Sea/East Mediterranean).

The new approach is ambitious and has been made possible by the availability of GIS shapefiles for each species through the Anatidae Atlas, Wader Atlas and newly launched Critical Site Network Tool. These shapefiles allow the appropriate sites for each population to be selected for each trend analysis. Complications include how to deal with overlapping populations and how to allow for the uneven distribution of counted sites and of waterbirds in different parts of their range. Colleagues at SOVON, the Dutch Centre for Field Ornithology, are contributing to the project by providing expertise in data modelling and advanced spatial analysis. We will conduct intensive analyses in the early months of 2011 and results will be made available to the AEWA Technical Committee in the spring. The final report is due for publication in time for the next AEWA MOP in France in 2012.

State of the World's Waterbirds launched at CBD CoP, Nagoya



It has long been our wish to present summarized information about global waterbird numbers and trends in a simple, appealing, accessible format. In 2010, this wish became a reality thanks to funding from the Japanese Department of the Environment, facilitated by BirdLife International, and the UK Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, facilitated by AEWA.

The booklet *State of the World's Waterbirds* was prepared during 2010 and launched at the Conference of the parties to the Convention on Biodiversity in Nagoya, Japan in October. The 24 page booklet aims to present what is known about the status of waterbird populations in different parts of the world. Using the newly developed Waterbird Index, based on the four editions of the Wetlands International publication *Waterbird Population Estimates*, it shows how numbers and population trends compare from region to region, and how they changed between the 1970s and the 2000s.

The first section is a summary of the current and past state of the world's waterbirds using the Waterbird Index. This is followed by a section detailing the pressures which most threaten these populations and the sites and landscapes they use. Finally, examples are given of responses to those pressures which are known to have benefited waterbird status and which should be used to guide and implement future management of these species. Download *State of the World's Waterbirds* here:

<http://www.wetlands.org/WatchRead/tabid/56/mod/1570/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/2679/State-of-Worlds-Waterbirds-2010.aspx>

Wings over Wetlands Project reaches successful conclusion

The WOW project was a joint effort between UNEP-GEF, Wetlands International, BirdLife International, UNEP-AEWA, the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, UNOPS, UNEP-WCMC and a range of other local partners along the African- Eurasian flyways. The project ends in December 2010 after four years. Its success is reflected in a series of Demonstration Projects in 12 countries, and in two major outputs, the Critical Site Network (CSN) Tool, and the Flyway Training Kit.

CSN Tool

Through WOW, an electronic portal called the Critical Site Network (CSN) Tool has been developed, which improves knowledge of and access to information on the critical sites required by migratory waterbirds across Africa and western Eurasia. The CSN tool helps decision-makers and planners at the local, national and international level identify which areas are part of the critical network of sites for each waterbird population. It provides comprehensive site and flyway scale information for 294 migratory waterbird species, including all of the 235 species covered by AEWA at the start of the project.

This online resource for the conservation of waterbirds and the important sites upon which they depend in the AEWA region was developed by a new partnership of leading global conservation organisations working for the protection of waterbirds and their habitats, strengthening the implementation of the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

The tool makes it easy to obtain information on the sites critical for waterbird species by accessing several independent databases and analysing information at the biogeographical population level, so providing a comprehensive basis for management and decision making. It is designed to help a range of different users from site managers to national authorities and international organisations. The CSN Tool, one of the

major achievements of the Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) project, is also an important example of the added value of cooperation between likeminded conservation organisations, international conventions and agreements, governments, UN agencies and other donors.

The CSN Tool provides access to the IWC count data as time series for individual sites or as distribution maps. It will thus become a tool to provide feedback to the IWC network.

The Tool is available at: <http://dev.unep-wcmc.org/csn/default.html#state=reports>

Flyway Training Kit

The second innovative conservation tool launched in 2010 by the WOW project, the Flyway Training Kit, is designed to build capacity to plan, implement, monitor and engage in effective flyway-scale conservation of migratory waterbirds and wetland habitats in Africa and Eurasia.

The result of a broad collaborative effort among many donors, partners and training institutes across the African-Eurasian region, the Flyway Training Kit is available in English, and French; Arabic and Russian versions will soon be available. The package includes three modules with comprehensive text, case studies and exercises supported by ready-to-use presentations, as well as accompanying CDs with a range of additional material. The kit is designed to assist in targeted training courses that can be customized by topic as they relate to flyway conservation, wetland management and migratory waterbird conservation.

The new Flyway Training Kit is a unique resource in flyway-scale conservation and represents an important step towards meeting core strategic objectives of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and AEWA.

See:

<http://wow.wetlands.org/CAPACITYBUILDING/TRAININGAWARENESSRAISING/WOWTrainingResources/tabid/1688/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

Finally...

A Happy New Year to everyone involved in IWC. We hope that your counts in January are successful, rewarding and enjoyable

Many thanks indeed for your continuing contribution to the IWC