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Final European Union Biofuel Directive limits impact on wetlands

After strong advocacy, the EU Renewable Energy Directive that promotes the use of biofuels, will not recognise feedstocks from carbon rich wetlands as ‘renewable’. It also excludes peat under the ‘renewable energy’ label. This is a significant success, despite the fact that many other precious wetlands and ecosystems are still at risk due to very weak criteria for limiting the impacts of biofuel production on land-use.

This is the conclusion of Wetlands International after thorough analysis of the [Renewable Energy Directive](#) that was adopted by the European Parliament on the 17th of December 2008.

For more information read the full [Press Release](#).

Photo: sugarcane for ethanol production.



Photo: Indonesian children planting a mangrove seedling on World Wetlands Day, 2nd of February 2009

World Wetlands Day focused on “Upstream-Downstream: wetlands connect us all”

World Wetlands Day's (2nd of February) theme this year 'Upstream-Downstream' highlighted how the world's wetlands are connected to millions of people whose livelihoods, safety and security depend on them for water supply and their capacity to help regulate floods.

Climate change will considerably magnify the problems that ongoing degradation of these river basins will bring to nature and people. Increasing the resilience of these wetlands is therefore a fundamental issue that must be part of climate change adaptation strategies.

Many activities were organised all over the world. For example, [Wetlands International Indonesia Programme](#) held a mangrove planting workshop for children (photo). Mangroves provide protection against storms and other extreme weather events. The [Wetlands International Africa](#) office held a celebration of Wetlands Day at which Mr. Djibo Leyti Kâ, Minister of Environment was present. Location was the National Bird Park of Djoudj (Saint-Louis, Senegal).

Moreover, in Argentina national television broadcasted the [Wetlands International Argentina office](#) production “[Húmedales de la Argentina](#) (Wetlands of Argentina)”.



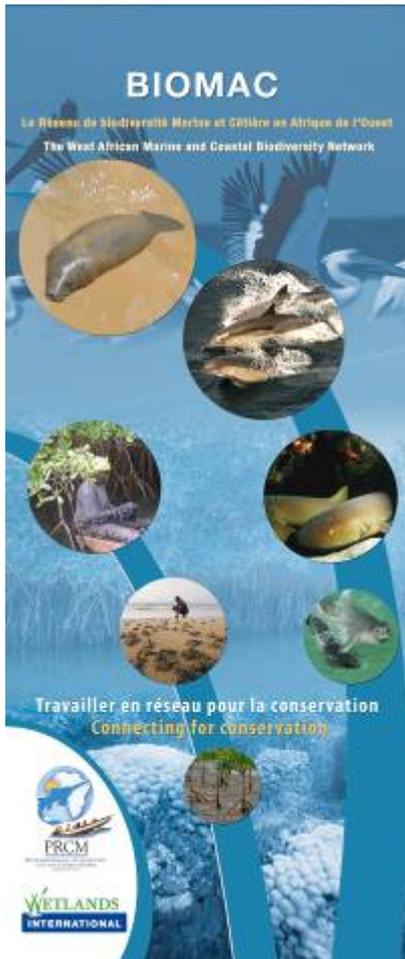
Photo: A Bar-headed goose is being equipped with a satellite transmitter at Chilika Lake, India

New research with Satellite-Tracked Birds in India to the spread of Avian Influenza

The largest waterbird congregation site in the Indian subcontinent is the site of a new international study of migratory birds and their role in the spread of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1. The study, launched by the United Nation's Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and its partners, is the first of its kind in India.

In December 2008, a team of international scientists captured, sampled, and marked 70 waterbirds with satellite tags at Chilika Lagoon in India. In the coming months, these researchers will track the satellite-marked birds to help them understand whether relationships exist between the locations of these marked birds and HPAI H5N1 outbreaks along the birds' migratory pathways.

Species that researchers marked included common teal (*Anas crecca*), northern pintail (*Anas acuta*), northern shoveler (*Anas clypeata*), and bar-headed goose (*Anser indicus*), all species that have been afflicted with HPAI H5N1 in the past.



Wetlands International Africa launches Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Network (BIOMAC)

Wetlands International Africa has launched the Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Network (BIOMAC) in Guinea Bissau at the 4th Forum of the Regional Coastal and Marine Conservation Programme for West Africa ([PRCM](#)).

BIOMAC addresses the many challenges facing the West African coast through information sharing, environmental monitoring, rapid reaction systems and capacity building. The mission of BIOMAC is 'building strategic partnerships to protect our marine and coastal heritage'.

PRCM is headed by the [Wetlands International Africa office](#) in Dakar, Senegal. The West African coast is rich in resources and biodiversity, but at the same time subject to many threats.

The last fifty years have seen a huge decline in animal and plant resources and an alarming reduction in fish stocks. This situation is being made even worse by the effects of climate change.

Photo: BIOMAC poster

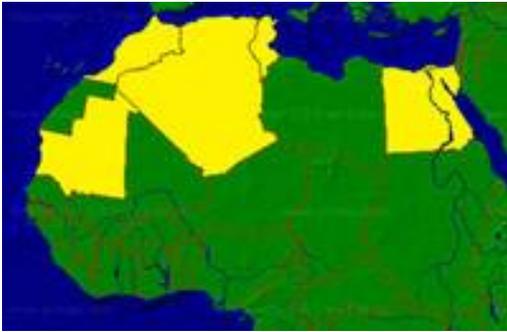


A Manatee is being rescued from a certain death in a river level dropping arm of the Senegal River

Successful rescue operation of Manatees in the Senegal River

Five Manatees (*Trichechus Senegalensis*) have been saved from a near death in the Senegal River by a joined [Wetlands International Africa](#) operation. The large mammals – also known as Seacows, although they live in fresh water rivers – were stuck in one of the River Senegal's arms in Navel in the Matam Region of Senegal.

These plant-eating mammals, which are denominated as 'vulnerable' on the [IUCN Red List of threatened species](#), become stuck in river arms when river levels drop. By themselves they are not able to reach the main river arm and therefore must be rescued and brought to deeper waters.



***Map of the implementing countries of
WetCap.***

Waterbird conservation in Africa gets boost

A new 3-year project on “Strengthening waterbird and wetland conservation capacities in North Africa (WetCap)” is embarking on its first year of implementation as of this month. Within the framework of this project capacity building activities will take place in Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt and Mauritania.

The WetCap project is linked to the ongoing UNEP-GEF African-Eurasian Flyway Project, also known as “[Wings over Wetlands Project](#) (WOW)”. It will be implemented under the umbrella of the UNEP Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds ([AEWA](#)), in cooperation with its project partners [BirdLife International](#), [SEO/BirdLife](#) (Spanish BirdLife partner), [Wetlands International](#) and the [Ramsar Convention](#).

For more information, read our full [Press Release](#).



Photo: palm oil growing in peat swamp areas in Indonesia

Indonesia takes steps to halt and accelerate peat swamp loss

The government of Indonesia has taken a promising step last February by asking [World Bank](#) for support in reducing carbon emissions from forest and [peatland loss](#). However, last month, the Indonesian Ministry of Agriculture issued a decree (in [Indonesian](#) / [English translation](#)) to open up peat swamp areas for the development of palm oil plantations.

For more information, read the full [Press Release](#).

First mapping of waterbirds for monitoring avian flu completed in South America

Wetlands International Argentina recently completed the first mapping of key waterbird species of importance for avian flu monitoring in South America, in the framework of the Wild Bird Global Avian Influenza Network for Surveillance initiative (GAINS) and with the valuable support of the Wildlife Conservation Society.

The aim of this project was to contribute to the GAINS initiative, with updated information on distribution, abundance and migration of waterbird species, with a potential risk to Avian Flu dispersion within South America.

Twenty five species of ducks, geese, shorebirds and gulls -whose ecological and behavioural characteristics make them more susceptible to contracting and spreading the disease-, were selected. For each species the Argentina office compiled and standardised information from the Neotropical Waterbird Census (1990-2006) and from other sources, which was later used to map abundances, seasonality, and distribution and migration in South America.



Map of the distribution of the Buff-breasted Sanpiper in South America.



Photo: Wetlands International starts with offsetting all flight emissions

Wetlands International goes climate neutral

Wetlands International signed today the agreement to offset all emissions of flights booked by its headquarters, according to the [Gold Standard](#). The [Climate Neutral Group](#) will organise the offsetting programme by investing in alternative energies (wind energy) of an amount equal to the emissions of flying. The ambition of Wetlands International is to expand the compensation to other emissions and other parts of the global organisation as soon as administratively feasible.

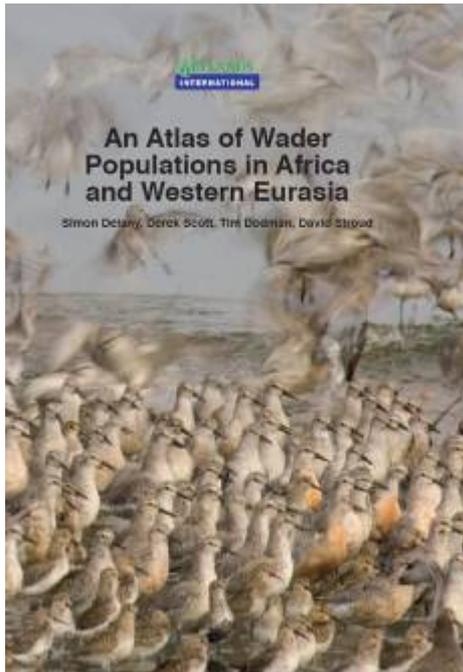
Second major ambition for this year is to reduce the emissions by for instance investing in teleconferencing and a policy to promote the use of alternatives for flying. Moreover, the annual Association of Members Meetings will be held electronically for two years and every third year in person instead of yearly in person.

The emissions of our organization will also become a part of our reporting in our [Annual Review](#).

New publications:

Wetlands in the Moscow Region: natural, economic, historical and cultural aspects

[This publication](#) is available from the [Russia Office](#) of Wetlands International.



An Atlas of Wader Populations in African and Western Eurasia

Also known as the [Wader Atlas](#), this milestone publication is a compilation of current knowledge of the numbers, distribution and movements of one of the most remarkable groups of birds in the region covered by the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement ([AEWA](#)).

Long-term waterbird count data have been combined with an extensive literature review, especially published results of bird ringing and national bird atlases, to produce maps showing the population boundaries that are used as a basis of the conservation of these species.

The [Wader Atlas](#) will be launched on International Migratory Bird Day – 8th of May 2009.

[Click here to get £20 discount with our Pre-Publication Offer](#)

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