

Member Countries

Albania
Algeria
Argentina
Australia
Austria
Bangladesh
Belarus
Belgium
Bénin
Brazil
Bulgaria
Canada
China, P.R.
Croatia
Czech Republic
Denmark
Ecuador
Estonia
Finland
France
The Gambia
Georgia
Germany
Greece
Guinee, Republic de
Hungary
India
Indonesia
Iran, Islamic Rep.
Ireland
Italy
Japan
Kazakhstan
Kenya
Latvia
Lithuania
Macedonia, FYR
Mauritania
Mexico
The Netherlands
Norway
Pakistan
Peru
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Russian Federation
Senegal
Slovak Republic
Slovenia
South Africa
Sweden
Switzerland
Togo
Tunisia
Ukraine
United Kingdom
United States of America

Wetlands International

Wetlands International is the world's leading wetland conservation organisation, with offices in 16 countries and over 40 years' experience in wetland conservation activities. Its mission is to sustain and restore wetlands, their resources and bio-diversity for future generations through research, information exchange and conservation activities world-wide.

A major part of the activities of Wetlands International focuses on raising awareness through publications, the internet (www.wetlands.org) and other media. This means targeting policy developers and decision-makers in particular, and then assisting in policy building, capacity building and training.

As millions of people depend on the continued existence of wetlands, and ignorance of their importance is still leading to world-wide depletion, it's in everybody's interests that as much sound, scientific information is made available as possible. This not only serves as a basis for developing national and international policies but also provides detailed technical information that can be used at community level to support conservation activities such as wetland restoration. Wetlands International not only provides valuable information, it also assists on a practical level by providing training programmes and helping to implement and manage the projects that are developed. This extensive work can only be carried out in partnership with other organisations.

Wetlands International National Government Participation

Wetlands International is governed by a global Board of Members comprised of representatives from 58 participating countries (including not only government representation but also wetland science specialists and representatives of environmental NGOs). Two delegates from each participating country become part of this active world-wide network. Each country, through its delegates, directly contributes to the content and direction of the organisation's strategic planning and influences global decisions on wetland issues.

Wetlands is the tri-annual newsletter of Wetlands International
ISSN 1362-4598
Number 10 - June 2001

For further information and subscription please contact:

Wetlands International
PO Box 471
6700 AL Wageningen
The Netherlands
Tel: +31 317 478854
icu@wetlands.agro.nl
www.wetlands.org
Visiting/courier address:
Droevendaalsesteeg 3A
6708 PB Wageningen

The views and opinions expressed in Wetlands are not necessarily those of Wetlands International or its members. Articles may be reproduced elsewhere by acknowledging the source as **Wetlands- the newsletter of Wetlands International.**



Contents

	page
Wetlands in a changing world	3
Wetland Inventory and Monitoring - strategic approaches to decision making	4-6
Wetlands International Global Annual Review 2000	insert
News from around Wetlands International	7-9
Specialist Group network news	10
Wetlands International Global Programme Update	11
Conservation and Wise Use of Wetlands - Global Programme	12

Cover: Barnacle Geese and White-fronted Geese
(H.H.M.Dekkers)

From the President

Welcome to this latest issue of *Wetlands*. I am now well in to my final year as President and I am delighted to be able to report that we continue to be engaged in key wetland conservation issues at local, national, regional and international level.

Annual Review 2000

In the middle of this newsletter you will find inserted the first ever Global overview of our activities in 2000. The review summarises global programmes, including work with Ramsar, CMS, and CBD, and gives progress in Europe, in Africa, in Asia, in Oceania and in the Americas. In addition the work of the 21 Specialist Groups is also described, as well as formal acknowledgement of our sponsors and partners. I hope you find the review useful.

Wetlands International - reorganisation

As many of you are aware, Wetlands International has been in existence for 5 years. In the last few months the Board of

Directors has been reviewing the effectiveness of the organisation to ensure the future stability and security for Wetlands International. We have agreed that a much simplified governance and accountable executive are required for the future effective running of the organisation and key changes will be:

- That the Board of Members will be strengthened as the ultimate strategic voice for the organisation;
- That a strengthened Board of Directors with greater skills and greater regional representation will become the day to day legal governance body on behalf of the Board of Members;
- That the management structures are made accountable and given authority by making the International Director accountable to the Board of Directors for the whole of Wetlands International and this post will lead a global management team.



Board of members meeting

The Wetlands International network meets every three years to review recent developments in wetlands conservation, management and sustainable use. The main aims of the meeting will be to consider these developments and to establish appropriate strategies for Wetlands International's global programmes for the following five years. I look forward to seeing many members of the network at this meeting (see box on this page).

Chris Kalden, President,
Wetlands International

Wetlands in a changing world

29 November - 2 December 2001, Wageningen, The Netherlands

Wetlands in a Changing World will focus on major global themes and developments related to the core activities of Wetlands International. The seminar will pay attention to issues such as follow-up to the World Water Forum (Water for Nature, Water for Food); the World Commission on Dams, the Climate Change Convention, the River Basin Initiative, the Global Peat Conservation Programme, and various Flyway Strategies. Links with Wetlands International's main core activities including the International Waterbird Census, Wetlands Inventories and specific national and regional Wetland Conservation activities will be explored with the members, specialist groups and global partner organisations.

National Delegates (many of them decision makers), Specialist Group representatives, local project leaders, wetlands experts, donors, partner organisations and observers from international treaties, will discuss recent developments and how, in the light of the changes, they put into practice the conservation of wetlands and wetlands values.

The aims and objectives of the meeting are:

- To review trends and achievements of the many global wetlands inventory, assessment and monitoring initiatives which have a link with wetlands conservation and sustainable use;
- To identify, share and provide up to date information among participants as a common knowledge pool to work more closely together for water and wetlands management;
- To review current options for financing the conservation and wise-use of wetlands in the light of the many new opportunities;
- To target the development of the Wetlands International programme and to set the global priorities for wetlands management, including waterfowl populations and flyway developments.

For news updates go to our web site at www.wetlands.org.

HRH The Litunga Ilute Yeta IV

One of Africa's great leaders passed away in the year 2000: HRH The Litunga Ilute Yeta IV, traditional king of Barotseland, Western Zambia. The Litunga participated as the Guest of Honour in the 2nd International Conference on Wetlands and Development held in Dakar, Senegal in November 1998, where he gave a captivating plenary speech on the strong and deep-rooted relationship between the people of Barotseland and the wetlands upon which they depend for their livelihood.

Many of us had the great pleasure to meet The Litunga during this visit and to get to know him. It was marvelous to see how effortlessly he communicated with people of all levels.

Wetlands International remains committed to building a fruitful collaboration with the Barotse Royal Establishment towards successful management of the bountiful wetland resources of this area of the Zambezi Basin.

Wetland Inventory and Monitoring - **strategic approaches** to decision making

*Max Finlayson, Coordinator, Wetland Inventory and Monitoring Specialist Group
Doug Taylor, International Science Coordinator*

Wetlands International is a leading advocate of wetland inventory, assessment and monitoring - one of its four global programmes. The inventory of wetlands is fundamental to rational management of land and water, and is a cross-cutting technique that relies upon strategic choices concerning scale, targeting and analysis. Inventory assists all stakeholders to share information and to reach a common understanding and as described by the Ramsar Convention, aims to:

- **identify where wetlands are, and which are the priority sites for conservation;**
- **identify the function and values of each, including ecological, social and cultural values;**
- **establish a baseline for measuring future change in wetlands, their functions and values;**
- **provide a tool for planning and management at both practical and/or political levels; and**
- **permit comparisons at all levels (local, national and international) .**

Much has been written about the need and techniques for wetland inventory, but many incompatible systems have resulted. Knowledge of the global wetland resource was reviewed in 1999 (see Wetlands vol. 7 re: Global Review of wetlands resources and priorities for wetland inventory - GRoWI) for the May 1999 Ramsar Convention meeting of Contracting Parties - COP7, concluding that inventory information is incomplete, often incompatible and inadequate. Yet wetland inventory is also recognised as a fundamental tool in national needs assessment, involving natural resource stakeholders at all scales, and leading to identification of priorities for management action. Standardised inventory methods are available and have been successfully used in some circumstances. Most notable are the Mediterranean wetland inventory (MedWet), the United States Fish and Wildlife Service national wetland inventory, and the Ugandan national wetland inventory. The methods, including remote sensing techniques, and classifications used in these approaches have been successfully adapted for use in other countries and could be further adapted.

Strategic approach to wetlands inventory

Partly in response to the deficiencies reviewed through the GRoWI, wetlands inventory has reached an exciting point in its evolution, with several initiatives pointing the way to

more effective techniques and more logical analysis. For example the Asian Wetland Inventory (see Box) plans an hierarchical (spatial scale) approach to integrate a poorly collated yet extensive Asian country dataset, collected over many years, which urgently requires placing into context, and more effective use to target specific wetlands and to identify management actions. The MedWet inventory methodology is especially well developed, based on work between 1993-1996, and since considerably elaborated by development of the MedWet Database. The MedWet methodology is currently being considered, among others, by the Ramsar Convention as a standard framework for wetland inventory worldwide. Well before the GRoWI report, the South American Wetland Assessment Project (see Box) ran from 1994 to 1999; one of the most ambitious projects attempted by Wetlands International and many partner organisations and individuals, which extensively assessed the 19 ecoregions of South America. This strategic inventory provides the framework and baseline for all future work. The challenge ahead is to follow up this extensive approach with further detail and an effective monitoring programme.

Compatibility and communication

A classification system is essential to consistently describe wetlands, and the Ramsar system is a useful global standard. During the GRoWI, however, effective and unambiguous delineation of wetland types employing the Ramsar system was found not to be possible, due to ambiguity over vegetation, soil and inundation description. The Asian Wetland Inventory will instead use a classification, which is based on landform attributes and water regime characteristics. These are mutually exclusive categories and provide a consistent basis for identifying wetlands. It facilitates a scalar approach to classification and hence to wetland inventory without being



Web site for the Asian Wetland Inventory

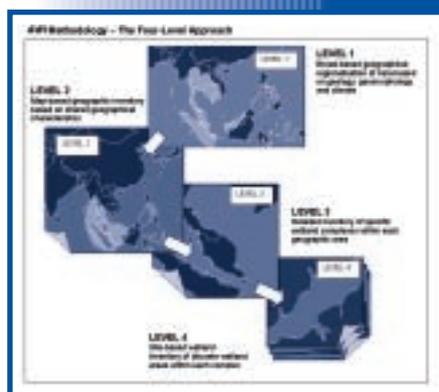
entrapped initially by, for example, vegetation features that are not independent of climatic or soil characteristics. This approach brings out the underlying similarity of wetlands across a wide range of climatic, geomorphic, soil, and vegetation settings based on the rationale that landform and water characteristics are the dominant and/or common feature for all wetlands, regardless of their setting.

The MedWet inventory approach, although also scalar, is substantively different and is targeted at the Mediterranean region, therefore the classification system used, which is principally based upon hydrology, soil type and vegetation is unique to the region. A valuable feature of the MedWet inventory toolkit is its inter-classification "translation" allowing comparison of the hierarchical structure (levels) used by MedWet, to be compared with the Ramsar or CORINE (EU) systems. MedWet's Habitat Description System uses, in order of scale, Systems, Subsystems, and Classes to classify wetlands. It is important to remember, however, that classifications and associated data storage issues, while consuming significant time and resources, are only a means to an end. The key purposes of inventory, outlined at the beginning of this article, are to enable and help prioritise rational management action. This, however, is difficult to achieve without some agreement on essential components and steps to effective inventory.

Is it possible to achieve a global standard?

The debate concerning the most appropriate approach to global standardisation of minimum inventory standards for national and regional use, is an active one and the Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel meeting in June 2001 will discuss a draft Framework that builds upon the key examples discussed above.

Continued on page 6

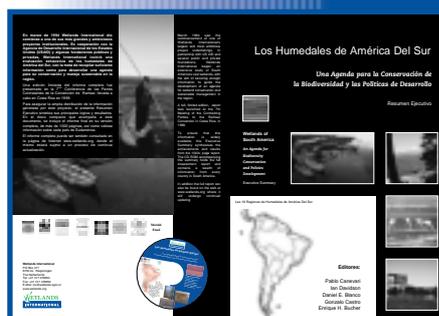


the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and the Ministry of the Environment Japan.

A website for the Asian Wetland Inventory <http://www.wetlands.org/awi> was launched on 10 July 2000. The aim is to announce updates of AWI activities and news, to promote exchange of information on the AWI, and to provide online data input (at a later stage, for AWI co-ordinators).



South American Wetland Assessment



In March 1994, Wetlands International began a most ambitious project: to catalogue the biological, social and economic importance of wetlands in South America. In partnership with US AID and several public and private foundations, this initiative aimed to secure enough information to guide the development of an agenda for wetland conservation in the region. Over the ensuing five-year period, a massive amount of information was gathered and analysed by a diverse team of more than 20 wetland experts from across South America. While vast areas remain relatively intact, the Assessment confirmed that South America's wetlands were under increasing threat. The Assessment presented a broad series of recommendations for promoting the conservation and wise use of these increasingly threatened areas. The full 1000+ page, limited edition, Assessment report was launched at the 7th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention in Costa Rica, in 1999.

The Assessment provided the incentive for a series of important regional and national wetland publications. These included the first wetland

distribution map of South America; a compilation of environmental legislation related to the wetlands of South America

(Solano, 1997; published in partnership with IUCN and the "Sociedad Peruana de Derecho Ambiental" Peruvian Society of Environmental Law); and a national wetland inventory for Argentina (Canevari et al. 1998).

Now, to make the Assessment widely accessible, the entire report has been redesigned for presentation over the World Wide Web. This no-nonsense digital version also includes a new Executive Summary, and incorporates updated information from the aforementioned wetland inventory work by Wetlands International. The new website is <http://www.wetlands.org/SA/>.

We trust that increased awareness availed by web publishing of the Assessment will provide further incentive to policy and decision makers towards the sustainable management of South America's amazing wetland wealth.

The Executive Summary and CD Rom containing the full report are now being distributed in the region.

Key steps identified by the Wetlands Inventory and Monitoring Specialist Group are:

1. State the purpose and objective
2. Review the extent of existing knowledge and information
3. Review existing inventory methods
4. Determine the scale and resolution

5. Establish a core or minimum data set
6. Establish a standardised habitat classification
7. Choose an appropriate method
8. Establish a data management system
9. Establish a time schedule and extent of resources
10. Assess the feasibility & cost effectiveness
11. Conduct a pilot study
12. Analyse the data
13. Report the information
14. Review and evaluate the inventory

The exciting challenge ahead is to build consensus around a core data set (see Table 1), which will stimulate more effective communication between countries and regions. A truly global wetland inventory approach would then be possible enabling the information collected to be widely accessed. Wetland inventory is now recognised as one of the key integrating tools for national and regional development as an effective cross-sectoral approach. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment incorporates the leading edge thinking on inventory developed through partnerships under the Ramsar Convention, which should lead to wider awareness of the effectiveness of wetland inventory assessment and monitoring.

Table 1: Core data and additional information categories identified for wetland inventory and assessment.
(taken from CM Finlayson and L Costa, paper for Ramsar STRP10, June 2001)

Core data

- Area and boundary (size and variation, range and average values) *
- Location (coordinates, map centroid, elevation) *
- Geomorphic setting (where it occurs within the landscape, linkage with other aquatic habitat, biogeographical region) *
- General description (shape, cross-section and plan view)
- Soil (structure and colour)
- Water regime (periodicity, extent of flooding and depth)
- Water chemistry (salinity, pH, colour, transparency)
- Biota (vegetation zones and structure, animal populations and distribution, special features including rare/endangered species)

Recommended additional information

- Landuse - local and in the catchment
- Impacts and threats to the wetland - within the wetland and in the catchment
- Land tenure and administrative authority - for the wetland critical parts of the catchment
- Conservation and management status of the wetland - including legal instruments and social or cultural factors
- Climate - zone and major features
- Groundwater features - noting that catchment boundaries may not correspond with those of groundwater basins
- Management and monitoring programs - in place and planned

* These features can usually be derived from topographical maps or remotely sensed images, especially aerial photographs.

Contacts and References

Doug Taylor,
Email: taylor@wetlandsagro.nl, or
Max Finlayson,
Email: maxf@eriss.erin.gov.au

http://www.wetlands.agro.nl/Wetland_Inventory/GRoWi_2nd_edn/welcome.html

http://www.ramsar.org/key_strp_index.htm

LT Costa, JC Farinha, N Hecker and P Tomàs Vives 1996. Mediterranean Wetland Inventory - a reference manual.

CM Finlayson and J Howes (in preparation, 2001). A Manual for an Inventory of Asian Wetlands
Finlayson CM & van der Valk AG (eds) 1995. Classification and Inventory of the World's Wetlands. Advances in Vegetation Science 16, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht.

News from around Wetlands International

New street address for Indonesia Programme

In March 2001, Wetlands International - Indonesia Programme moved to a new office in Bogor, West Java.

Contact details:

Wetlands International - Indonesia Programme

Jl. A. Yani, No. 53
16161 Bogor, Indonesia
PO Box 254/BOO
16002 Bogor, Indonesia
Tel: +62-251-312 189
Fax: +62-251-325 755
E-mail: admin@wetlands.or.id
Web site: <http://www.wetlands.or.id>

New Project-Office for Wetlands International - Oceania

Wetlands International - Oceania opened a new project-office in Brisbane, Australia in early October 2000 to complement and expand on the activities of its head office in Canberra. The project-office is hosted by the Biodiversity Assessment Group of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Queensland State Government's agency responsible for, among others, conservation and management of wetlands and wetland species in reserves, and implementation of the Ramsar Convention.

The office is situated in the Queensland Herbarium research laboratories in the Mt Coot-tha Botanic Gardens. Through this office, Wetlands International - Oceania will collaborate with the EPA, across all divisions and regions, on wetland conservation and research projects in Queensland. Meanwhile, similar activities will be conducted with other State agencies and other NGOs, especially in the northern and inland parts of Australia.

The project-office provides the opportunity for Wetlands International to enhance its contribution in Australia and the Oceania region. Wetlands International looks forward to expanding current linkages with institutions and NGOs in Australia and developing new initiatives for conservation of Australian wetlands.

Contact details:

Roger Jaensch, Manager
Wetlands International - Oceania
c/- Queensland Herbarium, Brisbane

Botanic Gardens
Mt Coot-tha Road, Toowong Q 4066
Australia
Tel: +61-7-3406-6047
Fax: +61-7-3896-9624
E-mail: roger.jaensch@env.qld.gov.au

International Workshop on Conservation of Wetlands and their Wise Use in Korla City, Xinjiang of China

The International Workshop on Conservation of Wetlands and their Wise Use was held in Korla City, the Capital of Bayangolin Prefecture of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, China, from 5-12 June 2001. International and overseas organizations participating included representatives from the Ramsar Bureau, Wetlands International, CBD-



Ramsar River Basin Initiative/Global Environment Centre, International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), IUCN-Netherlands Committee, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), and Ramsar Centre-Japan.

The Workshop recommended that the following actions be taken by International organizations, Governments, NGOs and other bodies:

1. Encourage China and its neighbouring countries to work together to actively implement environmental conventions and associated activities such as the River Basin Initiative (RBI) and the Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy.
2. Promote the development of the River Basin Initiative in the Asian region to act as a framework to support the assessment and exchange of experience in wetland, biodiversity and river basin management through assessments, compilation of case studies and also capacity building activities.
3. Develop an action plan for the conservation of migratory waterbirds in the Central Asian-Indian Flyway including the establishment of a



network of internationally important sites.

4. Facilitate the active participation of local communities and other stakeholders in all stages of wetland conservation and management activities - through the formulation and implementation of an integrated wetland education and awareness strategy.
5. Develop information and training materials on wise use of wetlands and water resources based on both international (such as the relevant Ramsar guidelines) and local experience (through preparation of case studies and reviews of local experience) to assist the sustainable development of western China.
6. Undertake a more detailed assessment of the experience and lessons learned in management of rivers, wetlands and biodiversity in Xinjiang Autonomous Region to help guide future development and restoration projects.
7. Strengthen international cooperation to support wetland conservation in the Asian region, particularly in fields of wetlands management, information exchange, and capacity building.

Further information: Li Lukang, lilukang@public3.bta.net.cn, Wetlands International - China Programme

Towards Sustainable Management of the Inner Niger Delta, Mali

Wetlands International participated in a workshop held in Mopti, Mali, in November 2000, which aimed to develop a programme for the conservation and sustainable use of the natural resources of wetlands in Mali, especially the Inner Niger Delta.

Much more is known about the Inner Niger Delta than other wetlands of Africa, but establishing lasting mechanisms of integrated management continues to be a challenge. This vast mosaic of wetlands constitutes a complex ecosystem where the rhythms of life revolve around the annual flood cycle, resulting in a complex

interdependency involving the people, plants, and animals of the Inner Delta. There is a vital need to prevent the erosion of natural values through adverse factors, such as potential removal of the flood regime through the effects of upriver dams.

WI has been involved in an integrated programme of research and development in the region since 1998 and continues to work towards developing integrated management proposals and monitoring procedures that address this complex ecosystem.

The government of Mali attaches great importance to such an approach, and WI is pleased to be working closely with the government and other partners such as IUCN, IRD, the Near East Foundation, WWF, ONCFS and local NGOs towards an integrated management of this magnificent wetland.

Wetland Benefits in Chinese

The China Programme has translated Wetland Benefits, a WI - Asia Pacific publication, into Chinese. The Chinese version is complete with colour illustrations and diagrams and serves as an important tool to promote public awareness of the wise use and benefits of wetlands. Since it was first published in English in 1993, Wetland Benefits has also been translated into Thai, Indonesian, Malay and Khmer.

China National Wetlands Conservation Action Plan Published

A National Wetlands Conservation Action Plan was published in 2000 by the State Forestry Administration, focal point for the implementation of the Convention on Wetlands in China. The plan is now in effect and includes a summary of the status of wetlands and wetlands management in China, the importance and objectives of wetlands conservation and the priorities of wetlands conservation.

For more information, contact:
Wetlands International - China Programme,
E-mail: wicp@public3.bta.net.cn

Indonesian Mangrove Guidebook

Indonesia supports the largest and most species-diverse area of mangroves in the world, accounting for up to 23% of the world's mangrove. Unfortunately, little

attention has been paid to this valuable ecosystem, partially because of the lack of an identification guide to Indonesia's mangroves. Now, the WI - Indonesia Programme has published an Indonesian mangrove guidebook adapted from A Field Guide of Indonesian Mangrove (Giesen et al.). The guide, written by Yus Rusila Noor, M. Khazali and I.N.N. Suryadiputra, aims to provide individuals, government agencies and the private sector with a comprehensive guide to mangroves, including information on identification, habitat, benefits and regulations. Publication was made possible through support from the CY 1998 Environment Component of the World Bank/Netherlands Partnership Programme and the IUCN Regional Biodiversity Programme for South and Southeast Asia.

New Web Site for Wetlands International - Japan



Cambodian Workshop Proceedings

The proceedings of the "Wetlands, People and Ramsar" workshop held in Phnom Penh in September 1999 have been published. Included are papers from the three workshop sessions: "Wetlands and Local People in the Mekong River Basin"; "Wetlands and Local People - Regional Experiences"; and "Wetlands and Their 'Wise Use' - Approaches to Move Forward".

For further information, contact:
Wetlands International - Lower Mekong Basin Programme, E-mail: wetlands@bigpond.com.kh

Study on *Cryptocoryne purpurea*

The Nagao Natural Environment Foundation, Japan, contributed one million yen to the WI - Malaysia Programme to conduct a study on the conservation of the endemic aquatic plant *C. purpurea* (Purple water trumpet) at the Tasek Bera Ramsar site. The 12-month project will assess

the distribution of the wild population of *C. purpurea* and study its eco-physiology in its natural habitat. The project will eventually develop a Species Conservation Action Plan for inclusion in the Tasek Bera Integrated Management Plan.

Shorebird Migration Poster in 8 Languages

WI - Oceania, with funding from Environment Australia, has been involved in co-ordinating the production of local language versions of the Shorebird Migration or Shorebird Site Network poster. The poster was first launched in 1997 in English, Chinese and Japanese versions, and a Thai version in 1999. Korean, Indonesian, Malaysian and Vietnamese versions were produced in April 2000. The poster is part of the Shorebird Action Plan: 1998-2000.

The colour poster includes information about migration patterns, displays a map of the flyway and highlights the 25 sites currently participating in the East Asian-Australasian Shorebird Site Network. WI would like to thank Environment Australia for the support it continues to provide for shorebird conservation in the flyway.

For more information on the Shorebird Site Network, contact Doug Watkins, E-mail: doug.watkins@ea.gov.au, or visit the web site <http://www.biodiversity.environment.gov.au/environment/wetlands/infosrn1.htm>

Buff-breasted Sandpipers

Scientists from the USGS and WI will co-operate in a survey of Buff-breasted Sandpipers along the coast of Argentina and Uruguay and participate in satellite imagery analysis to develop habitat suitability maps. WI will take primary responsibility for co-ordinating ground surveys in Argentina and Uruguay, assessing the presence and abundance of Buff-breasted sandpipers and identifying plant communities. The USGS will use the final satellite image summary to extrapolate previously determined population density estimates for each plant community in each country over the entire historic range. This will provide a separate population estimate (with confidence intervals) for Argentina and Uruguay.

For more information contact:
dblanco@wamani.apc.org

Establishment of Ukrainian River Network

The all-Ukrainian seminar "Public Participation in Conservation of Small Rivers in Ukraine", organised by the WI - Black Sea Programme and the National Ecological Center of Ukraine, was held in Kiev in November 2000. Participants included representatives of environmental NGOs, the Ukraine Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources, the State Committee on Water Industry, the State Environmental Inspection and Ukrainian research institutions. A follow-up meeting of the Ukrainian River Network will be held this summer.

Upper Tisza Project

WI recently embarked on a project to designate a trans-border Ramsar site along the Upper Tisza River and enhance management co-operation between the four countries located in the river catchment. The project builds on the results of a Ramsar Small Grant project to identify potential Ramsar sites carried out by NGOs in Ukraine, Slovakia, Romania, and Hungary. Because the objective is congruent with the EU Water Framework Directive and the current workplan of the Ramsar Convention, the project will support the countries to meet their obligations under the Convention and to implement the Water Framework Directive.

The project's main goal is to improve mutual understanding and co-operation between parties and to produce an overview of the main stumbling blocks to the protection, management and wise use of the Upper Tisza and related wetlands. The project will also inform a proposal to implement a transboundary integrated management plan, which will include wetland restoration projects as part of an ecologically sound flood prevention scheme.

The follow up project will support the action points listed in a 2000 declaration signed by the four participating countries, stating they shall minimise environmental endangerment to the Upper Tisza. Measures to be taken include improved co-operation, the preparation of early warning and emergency response plans, conservation efforts and coordinated monitoring of Upper Tisza biodiversity.

Wetland restoration in the Fertő-Hanság National Park, Hungary

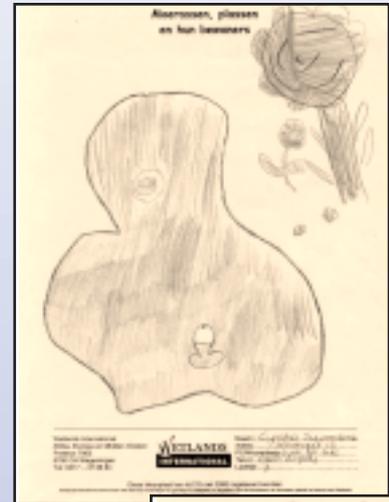
The Hungarian National Park Administration recently launched a wetland restoration project in the Fertő-Hanság National Park. The project is funded within the framework of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Dutch Ministry of Nature Conservation and the Ministry of Environmental Protection in Hungary. WI supervises the project implementation and bears the overall technical and financial responsibility.

The park is located in the Kisalföld region in the north-western part of Hungary and, together with the Neusiedler See-Seewinkel National Park in Austria, forms a transborder park of 27,299 ha. The Hungarian portion totals 19,629 ha., comprising the former protected areas of Fertő Lake and the Hanság area.

WI's involvement is based on the pilot character of this project, which will provide knowledge to be used in the design and implementation of wetland restoration activities on reclaimed and abandoned peatlands elsewhere in Central Europe, where ongoing political, social, and economic changes have led to the abandonment of vast tracts of wetlands drained during the communist era.

Wetlands International organised a drawing contest with the theme: **Wetlands and its inhabitants at the National Nature Fair 2000 in the Netherlands.** Due to very wet and stormy weather the fair had to be canceled. Nevertheless some children made a drawing of which some are shown below.

Wetlands and its inhabitants at the National Nature Fair 2000 in the Netherlands.



The Goose Specialist Group

The Goose Specialist Group of Wetlands International consists of some 400 goose researchers worldwide and seeks to strengthen contacts between all researchers studying migratory goose populations in the Northern Hemisphere. Several taskforces within the group focus on particular goose species. The most active one is the Lesser White-fronted Goose Task Force (*Anser erythropus*). Other taskforces focus on the Greylag Goose (*A. anser*) and the Bean Goose (*A. fabalis*).

Two new task forces were created during the last annual meeting, held in Roosta Estonia in April 2001. One focuses on age ratio assessments across all goose species while the other, the Bar-headed Goose Taskforce, is species oriented. This meeting was well organised by Aivar Leito of the Environmental Protection Institute of the Estonian Agricultural University in Tartu and was attended by 80 people from 18 different countries.



White-fronted Geese Drinking (H.H.M.Dekkers)

Annual meetings have been held since 1995, organised on an ad hoc basis by national organisations and usually held in Europe, such as in Poland, England, Bulgaria, Belgium and Estonia, but the 4th annual meeting was held in Japan in January 1999 to strengthen links with researchers in east Asia, hosted by the Japanese Association for Wild Geese Protection (JAWGP). Most members feel there is no need for a more formal structure of the group, though some would prefer a structure with paying members and a regularly printed bulletin, such as the Wader Study Group has.

The next meeting will be held in December 2002 on the Cota Doñana, Spain. This meeting will focus on population management of geese and will review the impact of hunting. The Greylag Goose will feature high on the agenda, as southern Spain is the most important wintering area for this species.

The present global co-ordinator is Bart Ebbing (b.s.ebbing@alterra.wag-ur.nl), based at Alterra in Wageningen (NL).

An editorial team consisting of Julia Stahl and Tony Fox assists the global co-ordinator in keeping the website up to date. Regional co-ordinators are Ray Alisauskas (Ray.Aalisauskas@ec.gc.ca) based at



Field trip during the 3rd Annual Goose Specialist Group meeting in Bulgaria in 1998

the Canadian Wildlife Service in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan (Canada) for North America and Masayuki Kurechi of the Japanese Association for the Protection of Wild Geese (hgh02256@niftyserve.or.jp) in Wakayanagi (Japan) for east Asia.

The most recent achievement of the group was an impressive compilation on the status and distribution of the goose populations of the Western Palearctic (edited by Jesper Madsen, Tony Fox & Gill Cracknell). Population censuses of all goose populations wintering in western Europe are stored in a central database, maintained by Lieuwe Haanstra at Alterra, Wageningen (NL). The tri-annual North American Arctic Goose Conferences are regularly visited by European goose workers as well.

Additional information can be found on the Wetlands International website: <http://www.wetlands.org/Sgroups/Goose/Goose.htm>

Bart Ebbing
Chairman Goose Specialist Group
Wetlands International.
b.s.ebbing@alterra.wag-ur.nl

Flamingo Specialist Group - New Omnibus edition of the Newsletter

New for 2001 is Newsletter Nr. 10, containing the Annual Reports for 1998, 1999 and 2000, and vignettes by Dianne Wilker, Carol Durand, Hilary Boys and Tobias Salathé. The full document is downloadable from the Flamingo Specialist Group website, <http://www.wetlands.org/sgroups/Flamingo/Flamingo.htm>.

During these 3 years, breeding by flamingos of all species has been reported from 16, 15 and 14 sites respectively. This apparent decline is, of course, due in large part to incomplete information. In fact, Greater Flamingos have colonised new sites in the Valle di Comacchio in Italy and the Laguna Petrola in Spain, and may have bred in Greece for the first time in recent history.

Around 80,000 pairs of Greater Flamingos were recorded breeding in 12 colonies in 1998, and 98,000 in 2000.

Population numbers of all flamingo species, with the exception of the Andean Flamingo, continue to be healthy. However, developments in Kenya give some cause for concern. The deaths are reported of very large numbers of Lesser Flamingos at Lake Bogoria.

One of the Group's main achievements during these past 3 years has been the organization of the 2nd World Flamingo Symposium, held in Miami in October 1998 (see Waterbirds 23 Special Publication). We are very pleased to be receiving more news from South and

Central America, which contain 4 of the 5 flamingo species. In the Old World, long-term studies of Greater Flamingos in the western Mediterranean continue thanks to excellent cooperation between biologists in France, Spain and Italy.

Contacts and References:

Alan Johnson
Email: johnson@tour-du-valat.com
<http://www.wetlands.org/sgroups/Flamingo/Flamingo.htm>
GA Baldassarre, F Arengo, and K Bildstein (eds) (2000). Conservation Biology of Flamingos, Waterbirds 23 Special Publication (1).

Global Programme Update.

International Waterbird Census

The overview report of the International Waterbird Census in the Western Palaearctic and Southwest Asia for 1995 and 1996 was published in 2000 and received a great deal of positive attention. Work is currently underway to publish the results of the 1997, 1998 and 1999 census.

The overview report of the Neotropical Waterbird Census is at press and will have a wide distribution. In the meantime, work has been undertaken to secure funds to continue with this important work in the South American region where a shortage of data is delaying many wetlands and waterbird related policy developments.

Waterbird censuses in Asia, Oceania and Africa continue to provide important data on the value of wetlands, endangered species and population developments.

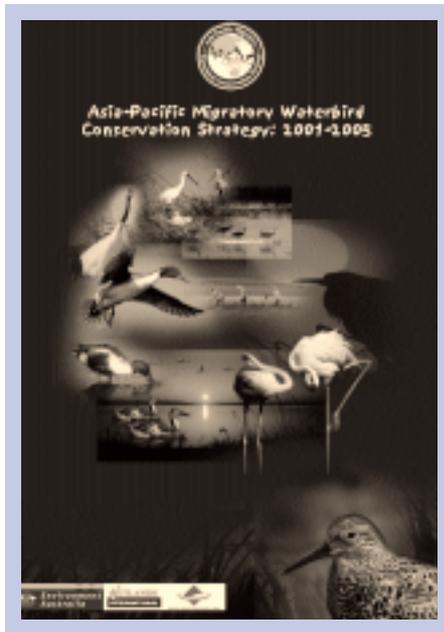
Closer links with North American waterbird monitoring activities are being developed to provide better global overviews of existing data and population figures. Much work has also been undertaken to analyse the completeness of the present International Waterbird Census by developing a project on GAP-filling census work. A pilot project for parts of the Western Palaearctic has been developed by a consultancy and is being reviewed. It's main purpose will be to look at the need for adjustments to the existing networks of sites being counted.

The International Waterbird Census needs a global strategy to bring all the different ongoing projects and initiatives within one framework targeting the needs of governments and international conventions and treaties.

Flyway Programmes

Co-ordinated actions on a flyway level are increasingly seen to be essential for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands and waterbird populations of both international and/or national importance. Wetlands International is involved in all major global flyway initiatives and provides technical and policy advice to governments and conventions.

The new Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy was launched in October 2000. The strategy provides the framework for many conservation activities and acts as a framework for site-related networks for shorebird, crane and duck, goose and swan conservation. It has created a new drive to conserve waterbirds in that region and has stimulated a large number of wetland conservation actions. Australia and Japan are major funders of the work led by the office of Wetlands International in Kuala Lumpur.



Recently Work on the Central Asian Indian Flyway (overlapping partly with the geographical range of the Asia Pacific Flyway Strategy and the African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement under the Bonn Convention) recently began and a flyway officer has been appointed to the Moscow office of Wetlands International. The project, initially funded by the Netherlands government, will be a great stimulus for surveys and endangered species conservation in a large geographical region where our knowledge of wetlands and waterbirds is very poor.

Wetlands International is also involved in the development of an America Pacific Flyway Project focussing on a number of Central and South American countries. The utilization of a flyway approach makes clear how areas and countries are interlinked and must work together to protect a shared resource.

The African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement implementation program, funded by the GEF, is concentrating on 10 large sites in the network and a number of institutional developments. A similar GEF proposal is being developed for the Asian Pacific Flyway and there are close links and co-operation with partners working on single-species flyway plans such as the Siberian Crane work by the International Crane Foundation and the Bonn Convention.

World Waterbird Population Estimates no. 3

This is an important policy support document based on the results of the International Waterbird Census as well as input by species specialists around the globe. It aims to provide the best available information about the total populations and, more importantly, trends within the populations of all waterbird species of the world and subspecies or geographically distinct populations.

