

# African Waterbird Census



Newsletter No.2, June 2009

Wetlands International Africa  
Rue 111, Zone B Villa N°39B, BP 25581 Dakar-Fann, Sénégal  
Tel: (+221) 33 869 16 81; Fax: (+221) 33 825 12 92

Please send all communication regarding this newsletter to **Oliver Nasirwa, African Waterbird Census Coordinator**, Wetlands International, c/o BirdLife Africa Partnership Secretariat, ICIPE Campus, Kasarani Road; PO Box 3502, 00100, Nairobi, Kenya; Tel. +254 (0)20 8562246; Fax. +254 (0)20 8562259; email: [oliver.nasirwa@birdlife.or.ke](mailto:oliver.nasirwa@birdlife.or.ke)

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## About this newsletter

The main purpose of this newsletter is to facilitate communication in the African Waterbird Census (AfWC) network. I apologise for the inconsistency in the production of this newsletter, but hope that this will improve. To contribute please send news, short articles including photos and any information to Oliver Nasirwa ([oliver.nasirwa@birdlife.or.ke](mailto:oliver.nasirwa@birdlife.or.ke)) and/or Moussa Séga Diop ([mousediop@yahoo.fr](mailto:mousediop@yahoo.fr)).

## African Waterbird Census-January 2009

In November 2008, Wetlands International (WI) received Euro 15,000 from the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) as a small grant facility to support the International Waterbird Census (IWC) activities in Africa. National Coordinators in 19 countries submitted applications and successfully received the grants that supported part of their January 2009 counts. The countries supported were Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Congo Brazzaville, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana Guinea, Kenya Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Somaliland, Togo and Zimbabwe.

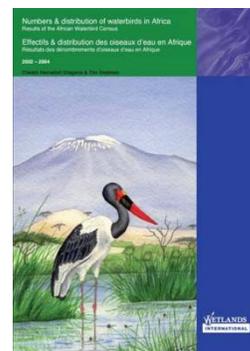


Photo by ACNR: Waterbird counts in Lake Rweru, Rwanda

There are still some important gaps in information on waterbird numbers and their sites in Africa, hence the need to continue exerting more effort to expand AfWC in terms of increasing the number of participating countries and sites covered. Thanks to AEWA and WI for the support to AfWC.

## African Waterbird Census 2002-2004 Report

The publication "Africa Waterbird Census 2002-2004 report" came out in September 2008 on CDs, which have been distributed. This is a bilingual publication produced by Wetlands International covering the African Waterbird Census (AfWC) in the period April 2001 to January 2004 with emphasis on data from months of July and January. During this reporting period, a total of 40 countries took part and 1,050 wetlands were covered at least once. New countries that joined the large AfWC family, include Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Equatorial Guinea. Fruitful contacts were established in the islands of the Indian Ocean and we welcome the interest shown by Mayotte and Réunion. New wetlands were also covered. Hard copy reports have been produced and are awaiting arrangements for distribution. The report can be downloaded at: <http://afrique.wetlands.org/LIBRARY/Publications/tabid/1322/mod/3861/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/2167/Default.aspx>



## Wings Over Wetlands Project

This project is a joint effort between UNEP-GEF, Wetlands International and BirdLife International. It aims to enhance the conservation of migratory waterbirds in the African-Eurasian Flyway. Steady progress has been made in the delivery of project outcomes and especially in the development of the



Photo: Ivo Zafirov

Critical Site Network tool. AfWC has provided a big chunk of information in the development of this Tool. Under this project some gap filling surveys have taken place in Rwanda, Burundi, Somaliland, South Sudan, Zimbabwe and Zambia. There are plans to undertake some surveys in Ethiopia, and to implement some monitoring training activities for more countries where gaps have been identified.

### **Consultation on the draft list and description of sites for the Critical Site Network Tool**

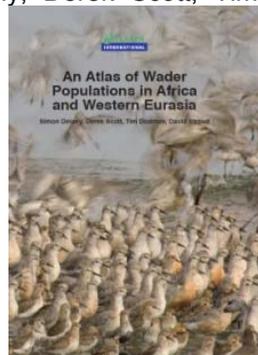
The AfWC sites and data are being analysed in order to develop a draft list and descriptions of sites that make 'the critical network of sites' for migratory waterbirds. The next phase is to conduct regional

**Prepare and participate in the upcoming consultations to develop the list and description of sites for the Critical Site Network Tool**

consultations in order to finalise this list and site descriptions. The draft list and site descriptions will be out any time soon and we shall be making a call to all National Coordinators and regional experts to participate in this exercise.

### **New publication**

An Atlas of Wader Populations in Africa and Western Eurasia edited by Simon Delany, Derek Scott, Tim Dodman and David Stroud is out. This new wader atlas is the first comprehensive overview describing the key site networks used by waders in Europe, West Asia and Africa. It highlights conservation issues for waders and the need for better protection of the key wetlands along their flyways, especially in Africa and the Middle East. This publication



was offered free to all AfWC National Coordinators, thanks to Wetlands International. More copies can be ordered from NHBS at GBP 70 per copy. [http://www.nhbs.com/an\\_atlas\\_of\\_wader\\_populations\\_in\\_africa\\_and\\_tefno\\_162194.html&tab\\_tag=album](http://www.nhbs.com/an_atlas_of_wader_populations_in_africa_and_tefno_162194.html&tab_tag=album)

### **From South Sudan**

South Sudan encompasses an important part of the African-Eurasian flyway for migratory waterbirds. The first waterbird counts in South Sudan were conducted in February 2008, in Nimule National Park. The most recent work on waterbirds in South Sudan was a surveillance on the bird flu (H5N1) virus. This surveillance was carried-out between December 2008 and January 2009, at Rumbek and Juba. About 500 faecal and tracheal samples were collected and sent for testing and results are not yet out. This work was coordinated by Wetlands International in collaboration with the Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism of the Government of South Sudan through funding from the GAINS (Global Avian Influenza Network for Surveillance) Project.



Photo: Oliver Nasirwa: waterbird counts in South Sudan

For more information please contact Peter Minasona Lero ([minasonalero@yahoo.com](mailto:minasonalero@yahoo.com)), Directorate of Wildlife Management, Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism, Juba, Sudan.

### **Submission of national AfWC reports**

I take this opportunity to congratulate all national coordinators for the arduous task of keeping the waterbird counts going. We encourage data submission and reports to comply to the formats of reporting. AfWC has standard countforms, which we recommend that you use for submitting data. Accompanying these countforms with narrative reports is welcome as this provides much needed additional information useful for compilation of country by country accounts in the AfWC report. Please accompany data from new sites with, filled-in site forms. The site forms, countforms and guidelines for filling the site forms are available on request.

For guidance, the waterbird counts are carried-out on the weekend closest to the 15<sup>th</sup> of the months of January and July each year. However, data from any other time during the year are welcome. We encourage all coordinators to submit their data and reports by April of each year.

### **First trans-boundary Ramsar site in Africa**

The Saloum-Niumi site is the first trans-boundary Ramsar site in Africa, designated on 1st December 2008. This site is a complex of wetlands and savannah forest situated astride the borders of Senegal and The Gambia. Thanks to efforts initiated and sustained for several years by many partners including World Conservation Union (IUCN) and Fondation Internationale pour le Banc d'Arguin (FIBA). The process was completed under the auspice of the WOW project with the support of Wetlands International and its partners – Direction des Parcs Nationaux (DPN-Sénégal) and Department and Park Wildlife Management (DPWM-Gambia).

**Wishing you successful waterbird counts**