

# African Waterbird Census

Newsletter No.4, June 2010



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## Contents

1. About this newsletter
2. Submission of 2007 to 2010 waterbird count datasets and reports
3. New memorandum for conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats signed
4. The Flyway Training Kit launched
5. Critical Site network tool launched
6. Development of new IWC data management system
7. The Hague Action Statement calls for more efforts to conserve migratory waterbirds and their habitats
8. Avian Influenza surveillance, waterbird monitoring and wetland conservation capacity building in Sudan
9. New guides for eco-tourism in Banc d'Arguin

## About this newsletter

The main purpose of this newsletter is to facilitate communication in the African Waterbird Census (AFC) network. 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)).

## Submission of 2007 to 2010 waterbird Count datasets and reports

Dear National Waterbird Count Coordinators and volunteers, Trust that this newsletter finds you well and hope that waterbird counts in your country continue to grow. I take this opportunity to appeal to you once again to send any data and reports for the period 2007 to 2010. While most data for 2007 have been received, emphasis is on data for 2008 onwards. See table below for the data that has so far been received.

Number of countries that have submitted data in respective years

Year	Number of Countries
2007	21
2008	7
2009	13
2010	3

The table presents the number of countries that have submitted their datasets and reports by year. We know that many more countries have done the counts and are yet to submit their datasets. Please send any pending data to [oliver.nasirwa@birdlife.or.ke](mailto:oliver.nasirwa@birdlife.or.ke) or get in touch if you need any assistance on how to submit the data. I take this opportunity to thank you all and especially National Coordinators who have submitted their entire datasets.

This Newsletter covers outcomes that have resulted from the UNEP-GEF African-Eurasian Flyways Project also known as the Wings Over Wetlands Project (WOW). The newsletter highlights the signing of a

Memorandum of Cooperation between the lead project partners to strengthen the conservation of waterbirds and wetlands, the launch of the Flyway Training Kit which is a capacity building resource that provides a flyway approach to conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats and the Critical Site Network tool that provides an access to information on waterbird species and their sites covered by the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA). There is an update on the development of the web-based database, and reports on training and surveys in northern Sudan and Mauritania, among other articles.

Enjoy reading, thank you

Oliver Nasirwa, *African Waterbird Census Coordinator*

## New memorandum for conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats signed.

A new Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) between Wetlands International, BirdLife International, AEWA and Ramsar Convention aimed at redoubling efforts to conserve migratory waterbirds was signed at The Hague on 14th June 2010 during the 15th Anniversary Symposium of AEWA. This historic MoC is an outcome of the five-year WOW project that ends successfully in December 2010. The MoC aims to consolidate and progress a programmatic partnership for flyway-scale conservation of migratory waterbirds and the wise-use of wetlands by:



1. Improving access to good flyway-scale information based on sound science;
2. Strengthening capacity in understanding and applying flyway conservation concepts;
3. Promoting effective communication and creating awareness;
4. Stimulating and maintaining effective management of flyway networks of sites for migratory species;
5. Promoting conservation and flyway-scale approaches across the critical network of sites used by migratory waterbirds.

The MoC focuses on promoting: the use of the Critical Site Network tool; rolling-out of the Flyway Training Kit; and regional training-of-trainers. <http://www.wetlands.org/NewsandEvents/NewsPressreleases/tabid/60/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/2282/Default.aspx>

## The Flyway Training Kit launched

The ways and means of conserving migratory waterbirds at the flyway-scale have been largely unknown and no specific material especially for training purposes existed. This is no longer the case as a Flyway Training Kit has been developed and was launched in a side event of the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and

Technological Advice of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD-SBSTTA) meeting at UNEP in Nairobi, Kenya on 14th May 2010. This kit is an outcome of the WOW project and introduces the flyway approach to the conservation of migratory waterbirds. It is a result of a broad collaborative effort among many donors, partners and training institutions across the African-Eurasian region. The kit is now available in English and will soon be available in French, Arabic and Russian. The kit is an excellent guide to training of trainers as it includes three modules with example-rich text, case studies and exercises, presented in a flexible ring-bound format accompanied by CDs. The modules are supported by comprehensive sets of PowerPoint presentations and a range of supporting materials. The kit is designed to support targeted trainings and can be customised by topics related to flyway conservation, wetland management and migratory waterbird conservation. This new kit is a one-of-a-kind resource in flyway-scale conservation and a milestone towards meeting core strategic objectives of the Ramsar Convention and AEWA. The kit is available for download at <http://www.wingsoverwetlands.org/flywaytrainingkit/> and as hard copy through NHBS.

### Critical Site network tool launched

On June 14 the Critical Site Network tool was launched during the 15th Anniversary Symposium of AEWA. This online resource provides an unprecedented level of access to information for all waterbird species covered by AEWA. It brings together for the first time the most current and comprehensive information on the species and the sites they use by accessing the four major international databases: the IWC, The RSIS, WBDB and WDP. A total of 3,020 Critical Sites, for over 560 biogeographic populations, have been identified by the tool. <http://dev.unep-wcmc.org/csn/default.html#state=home>



### Development of new IWC data management system

In 2009, Wetlands International and Wildlife Conservation Society - New York (WCS) in a partnership under the Global Avian Influenza Network for Surveillance (GAINS) engaged Jonathan Palmer of WCS to develop a modern web-based GIS enabled system for managing Waterbird Census data at national and international scales. In May 2010, Jonathan Palmer visited Wetlands International headquarters in Ede, The Netherlands and handed over this new application. He spent a day with staff, in particular with Stephan Flink—Technical Officer, managing International Waterbird Census (IWC) data and Simon Delany—IWC coordinator, demonstrating how the system works. Since then, Stephan embarked on the complicated process of setting and testing this new system. The system has features that make it appropriate for use by National Coordinators for data management at country level. The plan is to roll-out the system globally later this year. It is expected that all National Waterbird Census Coordinators will adopt the system hence standardising the way waterbird count data is collected, stored and managed globally. The roll-out will include training National Coordinators on the use of the system as well as its broader application in wetland and waterbird conservation. For more information please contact: [Stephan.Flink@wetlands.org](mailto:Stephan.Flink@wetlands.org) and [Simon.Delany@wetlands.org](mailto:Simon.Delany@wetlands.org).

### The Hague Action Statement calls for more efforts to conserve migratory waterbirds and their habitats

The Hague Statement highlights challenges, gaps, strides and tremendous achievements made by AEWA in the last 15 years to conserve migratory waterbirds and their habitats. The statement is a call for international cooperation to increase efforts, measures, support and

contribution towards reversing habitat loss and degradation; development and management of site networks; and improved monitoring and reporting for migratory waterbirds and their habitats. This statement summarises outcomes of discussions by participants to the symposium celebrating the 15th Anniversary of AEWA, in June 2010, in The Hague, The Netherlands. Over 100 participants from 32 countries were in attendance. The full text of the Statement can be downloaded both in English and French from <http://www.unep-aewa.org/meetings/symposium/symposium.htm>.

### Avian Influenza surveillance, waterbird monitoring and wetland conservation capacity building in Sudan

A two-part national training course on wild bird monitoring and surveillance was held in Khartoum, Sudan from 20th to 29th January 2010. The two parts ran parallel one focused on wetland and waterbirds (27 participants) and the other on Avian influenza surveillance in wild birds (23 participants). The course was organised jointly by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), Office National de la Chasse et de la Faune Sauvage (ONCFS), the Sudanese Wildlife Society (SWS) and Wetlands International (WI). Support from Sudanese government was through the Wildlife Conservation and General Administration and the University of Sinnar. The course comprised

participants drawn from several organisations, notably wildlife and veterinary personnel. Theory sessions were held at the Veterinary Research Hall, in Soba, while all field training took place at Um-Shugeira Island in the White Nile River and Dinder National Park. Overall the training involved over 100 participants. The trainers included Tracy McCracken—FAO; Tim Dodman and Jan Veen—WI; Jean-Yves M.M. & Pierre D.R.—ONCFS; and Ibrahim M. Hashim and Esmat El Faki—SWS. For more information please contact: Ibrahim M. Hashim ([sudanwild@yahoo.com](mailto:sudanwild@yahoo.com))



### New guides for eco-tourism in Banc d'Arguin

Dakar, Senegal 30-Apr-2010: The internationally important wetlands of Banc d'Arguin National Park in Mauritania received a boost as 16 people drawn from five villages of the local Imraguen community are



trained as guides. As trainees they received specialised training in waterbird eco-tourism. This activity is an important step in implementing the eco-tourism strategy for the area. The strategy aims to develop eco-tourism

infrastructure and training of the local community. The training is under the WOW project supported financially by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), International Foundation for Banc d'Arguin (FIBA) and Wetlands International. Banc d'Arguin is a large internationally renowned wetland and protected area. The area attracts large numbers of fish and waders, making it a key stopover site for migratory waterbirds from Europe to West Africa. For more information please visit <http://afrique.wetlands.org/News/tabid/1790/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/2213/16-New-guides-for-ecotourism-in-Banc-dArguin.aspx>

**Wishing you successful waterbird counts in 2010**