

Dear Readers,

Please see below a selection of news and activities from across the Wetlands International network. Enjoy!

## Integrated Water Management in Senegal

This past June the Wetlands International Supervisory Council met for the first time in Senegal where they made field visits to a number of sites, including the Ndiael Special Avifauna Reserve.

The Ndiael area, a complex wetland of great value in the Sahelian zone of Africa, has over the last decades been degraded due to the diversion of water supplies upstream. The reduced water flows and gradual desertification have greatly reduced the natural values including internationally significant waterbird populations. This has also devastated local livelihoods as fisheries and grazing for livestock have declined and now severe water shortages and health problems are causing local communities to struggle for survival. However, there is hope. Wetlands International along with its partners in the Ecosystem Alliance and Ndiael Inter-Villager Association (AIV) are working on re-flooding this area in a project titled, *Contribution to the restoration of the Ndiael Reserve*. [Read more](#). •



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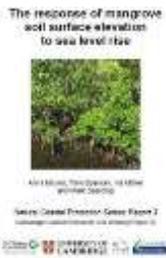
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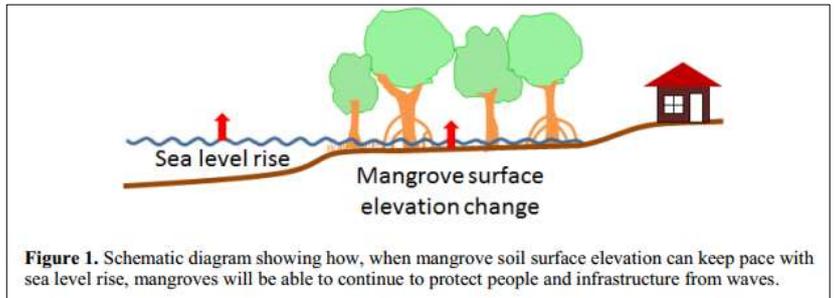
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## New Study: Mangroves can cope with sea level rise by increasing soil height



A [new report](#) by The Nature Conservancy and Wetlands International shows that mangroves can adapt to rising sea levels by building up soils in some locations, allaying fears that mangroves may be lost as sea levels rise.



Coastal ecosystems such as mangroves can reduce risk to people and infrastructure from wave damage and flooding. The continued provision of these coastal defence services by mangroves is dependent on their capacity to adapt to projected rates of sea level rise. This report explores the capacity of mangrove soil surfaces to increase in elevation in response to local rises in sea level. [Read more.](#)

## Predicting Floods, Protecting Communities in the Inner Niger Delta

The flood pattern of the Inner Niger Delta (IND) is the engine for socio-economic development for two million inhabitants in this region. Flooding can occur unexpectedly and have disastrous livelihood impacts for the local inhabitants.

The need for an advanced flood warning system was fulfilled with the launch of OPIDIN, a flood forecast tool, which came online this month in the IND.

OPIDIN provides farmers, herders, fishermen and navigators with advanced flood warning information, such as the flood curve, its peak level and date, location and duration. This information allows the people of the IND to plan ahead and reduce the negative impacts of floods. For more information on OPIDIN, please visit [www.opidin.org](http://www.opidin.org). [IND Flood Atlas.](#)



## Into the forest: An update from Brunei

To protect and restore wetland areas of high biodiversity value in the lower Belait district we are working together with Brunei Shell Petroleum to develop a Biodiversity Action Plan. For this we are doing an inventory of what plants and animals are living in the area.

Over the last few weeks we have had some spectacular sightings, both of rare species and of large numbers of animals. The going is hard in peat areas; while doing the surveys our experts and their assistants regularly get stuck, wet, stung and dirty, but overall the work has been rewarding. The project area for instance appears to be a very good spot to see rare birds that you can only find in peat areas, like Grey-breasted Babbler and Hook-billed Bulbul and to see the Bornean Bristlehead, a difficult to find Bornean endemic. [Read more.](#)



(photo by Ivonne Meuche)

## BioBlitz for Nature Enthusiasts – Volunteers Needed!



A new movement for nature enthusiasts - BioBlitz, is an opportunity to be directly involved in wildlife monitoring, a crucial step in conservation action.

BioBlitz invites members of the public to upload photographs of fish observed in their natural environment

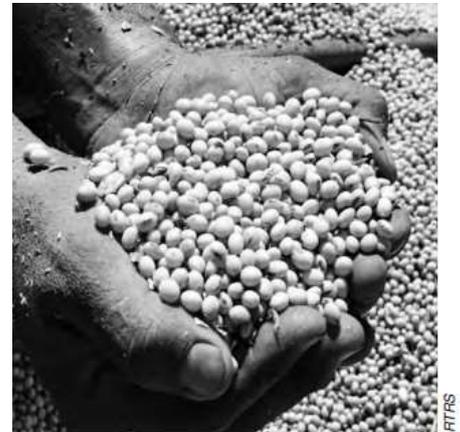
With ca. 16,000 freshwater fish species (and with numbers continually growing), the Wetlands International Freshwater Fish Specialist Group are looking for more people 'on the ground' to carry out observations. Help assist the scientific community with monitoring and describing species.

Can you help? We need enthusiastic and proactive volunteers, with expertise in fish taxonomy, to act as curators and assist with verifying species submitted by the public. If you can help, or for more information please email: [info@iucnffsg.org](mailto:info@iucnffsg.org).

## The Soy Boom in Argentina

Currently soy accounts for over 60% of the cultivated area of Argentina and is the main crop for biodiesel production, making Argentina the world's fourth largest producer of biofuels and the largest exporter.

But what are the consequences? A recent report by Wetlands International Argentina shows how the soy boom affects wetlands, the quality and quantity of water, and consequently, people. [Find out more here](#).



Soybeans ready for going to market.

## Black Crowned Cranes in Decline

The Black Crowned Crane (*Balearica pavonina*) is in decline across the Inner Niger Delta, largely due to habitat loss, extensive capture, domestication and the illegal trade of live birds. Bakary Kone and Bouba Fofana of Wetlands International Mali conducted surveys and found that the number of cranes in captivity exceeds those in the wild. Cranes are obtained as adults from the villages or as young from the wild, with local trade occurring for centuries. Crane body parts are also sold in markets as traditional medicine. There is a low level of awareness of the crane's protected status.

Wetlands International Africa and BirdLife International have launched a new initiative in the coastal zone of West Africa to conserve the vulnerable Black Crowned Crane. The project will focus on the following activities:

- Launching an education and public awareness campaign within the project area and at the national level;
- Translating relevant laws and regulations into local languages;
- Working to ban the export of cranes from Mali;
- Liberating captive cranes by compensating locals or providing alternative economic opportunities. [Read more.](#) •



AFRICAN CRANES, WETLANDS and COMMUNITIES



## Mangrove Destruction and Food Security in Panamá



Día Internacional para la Defensa del Ecosistema Manglar / 26 de julio

Sin manglares hay hambre!!!



On International Day for the Defence of Mangrove Ecosystems, 26 July, Wetlands International Panamá, in collaboration with a [coalition of 39 NGOs and community organisations](#), highlighted the importance of mangroves for fisheries and food production.

Through evidence from the field, the coalition warned that on-going destruction of mangroves will result in diminished fish stocks, lower production in fisheries, higher market prices, and eventually, the need to import fish to fulfil the demand for 'ceviche' - the national dish of Panamá. The concerns of coastal communities were also expressed, as the mangroves are very much part of their livelihood sustenance. [Read more](#) (Spanish).

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## International Forum on Processes and Services of Wetland Ecosystems

Co-sponsored by Wetlands International China, the International Forum on the Processes and Services of Wetland Ecosystems was held at Northeast Institute of Geography and Agroecology (IGA), Chinese Academy of Sciences, from 28 July to 3 August 2013 in Changchun.

The aim of the forum was to further identify some of the key priorities of cooperation with international partners and to serve as a milestone in the further facilitation and advancement of the existing cooperation, exchanges and partnerships in wetland science.

More than two hundred scientists from six different countries including the US, Romania, Russia, Japan, Korea and China participated in a dialogue on wetland ecological processes, functions, services, and their ability to respond to global climate change. •



## Blogs and News

### Room for the River as an antidote to Europe's flood woes

By Paul Brotherton

As part of a training course on river restoration sponsored by the [RESTORE](#) project, I recently visited the Waal River, a main branch of the Rhine River, flowing through the Netherlands. Here the Dutch are making 'Room for the River', restoring floodplains to reduce the risks of floods and creating benefits for people and nature. On the heels of recent catastrophic floods in Central Europe, this approach deserves a closer look if Europe is to meet many of its growing environmental and social policy challenges, including climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. [Read more.](#)



### New hope for water and life in the Senegal delta?

by Jane Madgwick, CEO Wetlands International

23 June 2013 - A week before US President Obama descends on Senegal to encourage the tracking down of terrorists in the region, I joined our Africa team and the international Supervisory Council there to investigate issues related to a more fundamental security challenge – relating to increasingly scarce water resources. As we witnessed in Mali last year, water security, human conflicts and mass migrations are closely intertwined in this fragile Sahelian zone.

I could see a lot of water and the impressive metal spans of the river bridge from the balcony of my French colonial hotel room in St Louis - a city crammed into a delta island, once the capital of West Africa. The bridge connects the island to the mainland and is the symbol of the City. It was a challenge to run across it in the early mornings, dodging traders and the curious stares of kids. Reaching the mainland I ran as far downstream as the first skinny patches of mangroves, where some old fishing boats had been left to rot and a few egrets and reef herons patrolled the shore, amongst the plastic litter. On the Atlantic side of the island, the beach was alive with the activity of artisanal fishers with their nets and colourful pirogues. [Read more.](#) •

### Mangrove-mud coasts; a muddy story Part 4

By Han Winterwerp

2 July 2013 - In my previous blogs, I described the large losses of our mangrove heritage, in spite of the great value of these ecosystems. Today, I argue that these losses are caused by thoughtless land-use.

Thoughtless, as fish/shrimp ponds are built too close to the waterline, infringing on the need for a sufficiently wide green belt. This green belt provides "room for the sea". Such room is required for the deposition of sediments carried by the tide, and for reducing the energy of incoming waves. [Read more.](#)

## Putting the carbon ahead of the drivers

By Vera Coelho

The round of applause at the end of the REDD+ negotiations in Bonn reflected the relief of the Parties at having concluded work on several difficult issues. But their efforts will not stop deforestation and forest degradation.

After two weeks of [meetings in Bonn](#) (Germany), delegates negotiating the mechanism to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+) made significant progress. Several unfinished issues stemming from the [last meeting in Doha](#) (Qatar) were resolved in Bonn, or a way forward to tackle them was found. The particularly thorny issue of monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) finally has a light at the end of the tunnel. [Read more.](#)



## Sumatran fires: hype about the symptoms, insufficient action on the disease

The health and climate impacts of large peatland and forest fires in Sumatra provide yet another harrowing reminder of the unsustainability of palm oil and pulp wood plantations on peat.

Massive fires raging on the Indonesian island of Sumatra have triggered warnings from health authorities in Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia, and sparked a row among the three countries regarding responsibility for the fires. [Read more.](#)

## Annual Meeting – Save the Date!

From 21-23 March 2014 the Freshwater Fish Specialist Group will hold their annual meeting in Mexico. Stay connected for more information on [the Freshwater Fish Specialist Group page.](#)



## Stay Connected with Wetlands International



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