

Global Newsletter December 2013

Dear [FirstName:recipient],

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

UN Climate Summit in Warsaw Poland



The 19th Conference of the Parties (COP19) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change took place in Warsaw, Poland in November 2013. Wetlands International and the Russian Federation organised a well-attended <u>event</u> to highlight the importance of high carbon ecosystems such as steppe, tundra and peatlands. We featured our achievements and ongoing partnerships with governments and the private sector restoring peatlands in <u>Russia</u> and <u>Indonesia</u>, and safeguarding <u>Arctic wetlands</u>. This led to a lively discussion on how to promote and scale up efforts globally, as it is essential that these ecosystems are addressed in the <u>post-2020 climate agreements</u> to be negotiated by 2015.

At the summit countries finally agreed on a framework for activities aimed at reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. The so-called "Warsaw REDD+ Framework" consists of a package of seven decisions which provide the basis for the implementation of forest-related mitigation activities in developing countries. Through our advocacy work over the last seven years, we succeeded in ensuring that this framework takes into account the emissions of underground biomass – in particular from peatlands.

In addition to our efforts on mitigation, we joined with The Nature Conservancy and other organisations to issue a <u>plea for more attention to adaptation issues</u>, and in particular the role of ecosystem conservation and rehabilitation in creating resilience to climate change impacts. •



Panel (L-R): Andrey Sirin, Institute of Forest Science, Russian Federation; Tatiana Minayeva, Wetlands International; Jane Madgwick, Wetlands International; Michael Gytarsky, Institute of Global Climate and Ecology, Russian Federation; and, Gleb Kraev, Centre for Forest Ecology and Productivity, Russian Federation Photo by: International Institute for Sustainable Development.

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Towards sustainable palm oil



As a member of Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), Wetlands International has implemented a science review on the environmental and social impacts of oil palm plantations on peatlands and helped develop best management guidelines for existing plantations on peat. The new guidelines now recognise and address the peatland related issues of greenhouse gas emissions, soil subsidence and flooding. In November 2013 we participated in the 11th annual meeting held in



Medan, Indonesia, where we further promoted the conservation and restoration of peatlands in Indonesia and Malaysia. During one of the

interactive sessions, we raised the importance of alternative land uses on peat such as paludiculture (economic use of rewetted peatlands with indigenous commercial plant species). This initiative was well-received and has sparked interest from some companies to conduct a pilot project on tengkawang (illipe nut) cultivation in their oil palm plantations on peat.

We also used this event to introduce a draft <u>Grower's Manual</u>, to support the implementation of the RSPO standards related to peatlands. We are currently soliciting comments from interested parties, and we will use the feedback to publish a revised version next year. Your feedback is welcome. <u>Read more</u>. •

First 'permeable structures' in place to protect eroding coastlines in Java

What do you do when your house is slowly being swallowed by the sea? This is the question that Wetlands International was asked to advise on by the community of Timbul Sloko Village, on the North coast of Central Java, Indonesia. Wetlands International and its partners have come up with an alternative solution to the traditional approach of placing hard structures as protection against coastal erosion. Instead, we are building 'permeable structures' to mimic the function of the root system of a mangrove forest. The first structures have been placed mid-September. These permeable structures weaken the power of the waves and at the same time let mud pass through so that the land can build up again. Read more on permeable structures and the results here.



Argentina Senate approves legislation on minimum standards for wetlands





The legislation establishes minimum standards for the conservation, protection, restoration and wise and sustainable use for Argentinian wetlands, and is now awaiting final approval. Wetlands International and other NGOs involved in the Argentine Ecosystem Program have contributed their knowledge, technical and political experience to the negotiation and consensus-building process.

The bill is a major step forward for Argentina's wetlands. It seeks to articulate wetlands wise use in correspondence with the need for inclusive economic and social development. It also establishes a National Wetland Inventory, where all existing natural wetlands will be identified, along with the necessary information for proper conservation, control and monitoring. Read more in Spanish. •

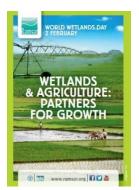
Turning one billion tourists into one billion opportunities to

protect the world's original long-distance travellers.

In 2012, a record one billion tourists crossed international borders - a true milestone in international travel and a clear sign of the strength of the tourism sector. "Destination Flyways" channels this strength into a force for global biodiversity conservation and enhanced livelihoods for local communities by creating a network of sustainable and resilient destinations. Each year, millions of migratory birds set out to travel the world, flying along the same routes, also known as flyways. Spanning continents and oceans, and used by a myriad of bird species, the flyways represent one of the most spectacular and valuable assets of the world's natural heritage.

In cooperation with our partners, Wetlands International is working to provide an adequate framework for sustainable tourism management along the flyways in Africa, Asia and Europe, which will generate revenue for improved management of biodiversity and spread the benefits of tourism to local communities, while creating attractive experiences for tourists. In the first phase, we will assess three internationally important sites for waterbirds - Chongming Island (China), Chilika Lake (India) and Djoudj National Park (Senegal). Read more.

Get involved in World Wetlands Day and the Global Freshwater Fish BioBlitz



2 February 2014 is <u>World Wetlands Day</u>, which annually celebrates and raises awareness for the world's wetlands. Check locally to participate in one of the many events, lectures, nature walks and community clean-ups that are held around the world.



In addition, 2 February also marks the launch of the Global Freshwater Fish BioBlitz, led by the IUCN/Wetlands International Freshwater Fish Specialist Group. Members of the public are invited as citizen scientists to contribute their photos of fishes observed in their natural environment. Uploading these

observations will assist efforts to conserve the world's freshwater fishes. BioBlitz is also looking for volunteers to act as curators to verify species submitted by members of the public. Visit the <u>BioBlitz</u> website for more information. •

Ambitious Waterbird surveys planned for January 2014

Wetlands International and several partners are initiating surveys to update the population size estimates for waterbirds across a wide range of countries in North and West Africa and West Asia for the 6th edition of the African <u>Eurasian Waterbird Agreement's</u> Conservation Status Report. The Grand West Asian Wintering Waterbird Survey will conduct counts on the Arabian Peninsula and Central Asia in collaboration with national organisations, with efforts under way to expand the area covered by counters across the region. A plan to survey the major sites of the entire East Atlantic coast from Iceland to South Africa is also in development. Extensive counts in West Africa are already planned by national organisations, along with the European and Southern African coasts. SOVON, the Dutch Institute for Ornithology, is now looking to fill any other major gaps along the African coast. North African countries will collectively organise and carry out an expanded census, with the support of Tour du Valt, ONCFS and AAO (Association "Les Amis des Oiseaux") Anyone wishing to join or contribute to the surveys can contact Szabolcs Nagy (szabolcs.nagy@wetlands.org). •



1000 hectares of bird habitat restored in Djoudj National Park, Senegal Thanks to support from Wetlands International and other partners, the Department of National Parks in Senegal recently completed a major habitat restoration initiative in Djoudj National Park. With funding from the Arctic to Africa initiative, nearly 1,000 hectares of parkland that were overgrown with Typha are now providing important habitat to waterbirds. The majority of restored areas are colonised by lilies that are the favourite food of thousands of ducks populating the park. The rehabilitation work has also expanded eco-tourism opportunities for people by providing canoe access to some scenic areas that have been impossible to reach for several years. Read more.



World Migratory Fish Day



Wetlands International is supporting the inaugural World Fish Migration Day on 24 May 2014. Events around the world will raise public awareness for healthy rivers and secure commitments for restoring the connections for migratory fish. Over 100 engaging events are already planned. <u>Visit the website</u> to organise your own event or find out more about participating in an existing one. •

Creating Visitor Centres and Eco-Trails in Russia

Wetlands International recently published a guide to developing visitor centres and ecotrails in protected nature areas in Russia. It is targeted at individuals or organisations interested in establishing a visitor or wetland centre, planning to renovate an old natural history museum, designing a network of walking trails, or a child-friendly exhibit or play area.

The guide contains detailed descriptions of the steps needed to plan and develop the concept, practical examples and tips to avoid common mistakes. The recommendations are illustrated by photographs and drawings. <u>Available for download in Russian</u>. •



Blogs and Videos



The Art of Augering in Tropical Peat

By Denise Cheah

In order to better understand the Badas peat dome in Brunei, we needed to clear a path through the peat forest, stick monitoring pipes into the ground at several intervals and take measurements. Sounds simple doesn't it? Well, I've never been so wrong in my entire life. Read more. •



Oil Palm on Peat: A path to (inevitable) disaster

By Marcel Silvius

Oil palm cultivation on peatlands is seen as an attractive option for many plantation developers in Southeast Asia. Not only is the land extensively available, the soils – despite the poor soil fertility – are somehow "working" for oil palm cultivation. Peatlands can therefore be perceived as lucrative and attractive for expansion of oil palm plantations. Read more.



A Tale of Two Heroes

By Yus Rusila Noor

Often conservation work starts with individual initiatives. The stories of Haji Madsahi and Babah Akong emphasise the value of local knowledge and initiative for the restoration of coastal ecosystems. They have both received awards for their work and Wetlands International now works with them, so that their efforts can be further scaled up. Read more. •



Flood Forests are the 'banks' storing the wealth of Mali's Inner Niger Delta

By Bakary Kone

The 38 floodplain forests of Mali's Inner Niger Delta are very important to the economy and livelihoods of the 1.5 million people who live there. They contain much of the natural wealth of the delta and are therefore referred to locally as 'banks'. Read more. •



Mangrove-mud coasts; a muddy story (6)

By guest bloggers, Han Winterwerp and Thorsten Balke, **Deltares**

If you ever visit a mangrove-mud coast, you will see that the mangroves grow more or less between the waterlines at mean high water and the waterline at the highest tidal level occurring in a year. Understanding the relation between tides and mangroves is therefore essential to rehabilitation efforts. Read more. •

European River Restoration Conference Videos



All the keynote addresses and presentations of the European River Restoration Conference that was co-organised by Wetlands International are now available online. Please visit the conference webpage to see keynote speeches from Janez Potočnik, European Commissioner for Environment and Hans Bruyninckx, Executive Director, European Environment Agency and the keynote interview between Peter Gammeltoft, Head of Unit for Water, DG Environment and Jane Madgwick, CEO Wetlands International. You can also view the announcement of the winner of the 1st European RiverPrize. •

Publications from our Network



Wader Study Group Bulletin – Volume 120, Number 2

The Wader Study Group Bulletin publishes peer-reviewed papers on results of wader research from all parts of the world. Click to learn more.



Freshwater Fish Specialist Group - Newsletter

The physical and chemical properties of freshwater fundamentally determine the nature and occurrence of life within, including the fishes. Read more.



Goose Specialist Group -Bulletin #17

The Goose Bulletin is the official bulletin of the Goose Specialist Group of Wetlands International and IUCN. Read more.

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of Welenda International and UCN

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