

The African Waterbird Census (AfWC)

News from Dakar

Jacana Actophilornis africanus



(Photo from WWF web site)

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Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Many of you already know Hilaire our AfWC focal point, in particular colleagues of West Africa, but for the benefit of those he has not yet had the pleasure to meet, he will present himself again and say some words on the actual development of the African Waterbird Census (AfWC).

Introduction

My name is Hilaire Yaokokoré Béibro, an ornithologist by training, and I have worked as Technical Assistant with the West Africa Programme in Dakar, Senegal for 18 months. Among others activities, I am responsible for the African Waterbird Census (AfWC) for which I am also the main coordinator. On this program I work together Tim Dodman, Issa Sylla and Abdoulaye Ndiaye from our office here in Senegal and also our other Wetlands International colleagues in the Netherlands. I

benefit from the experience of our "Mr. Africa of Wetlands International", Tim Dodman, you all know. Tim as you know, has been our AfWC coordinator for some years. Tim is currently very occupied with the development of the Africa Programme and has handed the management of the AfWC on to, which I hope I can continue to develop successfully with the support of all.

Recent Activities

Recently we have published the 1998 AfWC report, which will be with you very soon, if a little late. This delay is due to our period of transition with the AfWC programme. With the opening of the first Africa Office in Senegal, our headquarter in Wageningen (the Netherlands) has been decentralising the activities of the Africa Programme. Consequently, I have completed an initial training in Wageningen to gain a better working knowledge of the programme, more especially the AfWC and management of the Wetlands International database. This was followed by the editing and publication of the 1998 AfWC report here in Dakar and at last, the transfer of the AfWC database to the West Africa Office.



Grey heron *Ardea cinerea*
(Photo from WWF web site)

What next ?

What can we do now to make good our mission; to pursue the work our colleagues of Wageningen have done so well and how to continue developing and improving the programme in the region ?

It is together we can answer this question! And this is what I would like to challenge through our strong and dynamic network. It now belongs to each of us to make the process work better so we can move forward.

With support of all I will, of course, do my best to produce the AfWC report with minimum delay and to develop the new possibilities that we have.

Address your mail and information requests at

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Objet : DOEA, Country, objet...

Visit our Web site at

<http://www.wetlands.agro.nl>

AfWC report**1999**

New census and site forms are now available. We will be sending them to you as well as the

AfWC 1998 report. We will add a copy on diskette in Word 6/95 file of both forms.

AfWC report**1999**

Concerning the AfWC 1999, I would like to invite you to have a close look at the overview of data received and national texts, which I have written for your intention.

- Thanks to all our colleagues (they are numerous!) who already sent us their reports, census and sites forms from June/July 1998 (for some) and January/February 1999.

- We would like those who have not done so yet, to send us a brief report of one to two pages to summarise their observations.

- Those who, for various reasons, have not send their AfWC data yet are welcome to do so by the 10th December.

AfWC & New census and site forms**2000**

Some of you have already to send data from June/July 1999 for the 2000 report. We offer our congratulations and encourage others to follow suit. Prompt receipt of your data helps us to produce our report on time and keeps all our readers best informed.

New census and sites forms are now available. We will send them to you as well as a copy of both forms in a diskette (Word 6/95) in the package 1998 AfWC report.

News from the AfWC Steering Committee

Following our first steering committee meeting, I am pleased to inform you of the committee decision to nominate AfWC Regional Coordinators (RC) who will represent five regions within Africa.

The Regional Coordinators are as follows:

- Central Africa, Mr Mokoko Ikonga Jerome (National Coordinator Congo)
- East Africa, Dr Julius Arinaitwe (NC Uganda)
- Madagascar and Indian Ocean Islands, Mr Rivo Rabarisoa (NC Madagascar).
- Southern Africa, Mr Doug Harebottle (NC South Africa) and
- West Africa, Mr Sara Diouf (NC Senegal)

These Regional Coordinator will work in close collaboration with you and they should be in contact with you very soon, if they have not already done so. Please also contact them to coordinate activities at a regional level.

More recently in September, the second AfWC steering Committee meeting was held in Madagascar. Many important decisions were taken concerning the future of the program and the network, and a report of the key points will be communicated to you soon. The next committee meeting is scheduled for 4-6 September 2000 in Kampala, Uganda, just before the 10th Pan-African Ornithological Congress (PAOC).

Other news!

Wetlands International and the Crane Foundation have collaborated to set up a project in Africa to establish the status of the Crowned Crane. A note has been circulated extensively and we look forward to welcoming the new project Coordinator to our office here in Dakar.

Any new ideas and comments to develop our network are most welcome.

Thanks for your support and wish you all the best!

Hilaire Y. Béibro, Dakar, 18 November 1999