

## **To the participants of the AWC co-ordinators workshop**

Dear participants,

I send you all a warm welcome to this very important workshop as a colleague - the IWC co-ordinator in Denmark, as a user of the information - the coordinator of the Seaduck Specialist Group - and as a member of the Board of Directors of Wetlands International.

The International Waterbird Census is the backbone of Wetlands International. It generates the figures that are essential for the development and implementation of our conservation policy all over the world. It is also important because it forms the foundation of the Waterbird Population Estimates which we are contracted by the Ramsar Bureau to publish every three years, and which are one of the most important tools for conservationist.

It's embedded here, that if the IWC, of which AWC is a part, fails to deliver the usefulness drops dramatically.

My experience with the Danish network is that it either goes up or down it's never stable for many days. In fact, it has been increasing in periods when I have fed the network with information and decreasing in times when pressing tasks has taken me away from networking.

To be able to generate the necessary data within the countries and within the region the coverage will have to be the best possible, and you, dear participants, are those people that might make it work.

I wish you all a fruitful and encouraging workshop that will provide you all with the technical instruments and enthusiasm that is needed to increase the power of the AWC.

Yours sincere

Stefan Pihl

Note:

Presently there are 19 specialist Groups in the Wetlands International/Specialist Group partnership, of which 14 are taxonomic groups, while 5 are thematic and they have an open membership system whereby interested persons can join through the coordinators of the group. For more information please visit the website at:

<http://www.wetlands.org/networks/SGroups.htm>