

Wetlands International

Annual Review 2005





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From the President

Max Finlayson



Some of the major global natural disasters and phenomena of 2005 have been linked to wetlands. The intensity of human impact of the Asian tsunami and of Hurricane Katrina was shown to be related to the presence and condition of coastal wetlands. And wetlands were cited as both a cause and solution for the abatement of avian influenza. Wetlands International, through its network of offices, partners and scientific experts, was able to react quickly with science-based advice and recommendations for action on issues like these during 2005. We were able to join forces with established conservation partners and bodies such as the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and Oxfam Netherlands to initiate major projects to demonstrate practical solutions and to influence the decisions of the global conventions.

Soon after the disastrous tsunami in Asia, Wetlands International began the management of the 'Green Coast' partnership project in five affected countries – turn to page 9 for more information on this valuable project.

In the same way, we responded immediately to the outbreaks of avian influenza, providing critical information on waterbirds and wetlands, working alongside virologists and veterinarians. Although most of the outbreaks occurred on poultry farms, wild birds were considered by many as the most likely culprits. By having an active role at ground level in Europe, Africa and the Middle East, and at international governmental conventions such as the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) and the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar), we were able to provide analyses and advice and build consensus on response priorities. This helped correct one-sided analyses and discouraged destructive and adverse measures like culling waterbirds and destroying wetlands. The Wetlands International network contributed science-based assessments of the risks of avian influenza for the FAO and the European Commission.

In 2005, we also started a major project in Africa and South East Asia to highlight the potential for wetland conservation and wise use to contribute to improving livelihoods in some of the world's poorest regions. This Wetlands and Poverty Reduction Project, supported by the Dutch government, will build on 15 years of achievement under the previous 'Wise Use Programme', working through strategic partnerships with the development and aid sectors. By building on the results of the global Millennium Assessment, we are acting at the national level to ensure that policies and strategies for poverty reduction recognise the high value of wetland ecosystem services in supporting sustainable development. In its first year, the project supported the development of the Ramsar Resolution (No. IX 14) on Wetlands and Poverty Reduction through regional meetings and its adoption by the Ramsar Conference of Parties.

Wetlands International has also been able to demonstrate the linkages between wetland and water management and livelihood development through profiling our long-term community-based projects in Africa and Asia at numerous national and international fora.

We still have a lot to achieve, but I feel that the organisation is increasingly able to become a major player on wetland-related issues that are high on the international agenda. We will continue to build on this effort in 2006.

Introduction to our organisation

Wetlands International is a global non-profit organisation dedicated to sustaining and restoring wetlands, their resources and biodiversity for future generations. We work through 16 offices all over the world, supported by headquarters based in The Netherlands. We work at several, very different levels, ranging from projects where we literally 'get our feet wet' in wetlands, to engagement with international conventions and technical support to governments.



Inter-office team for water management on field trip in Kerala, India (photo Jane Madgwick)

We focus our work on the achievement of four 'Global Goals': Building the Global Wetlands Knowledge-base; Integrating Wetlands into Livelihood Recovery and Sustainable Development; Integrated Water Resource Management; and Biodiversity and Ecological Networks. This Annual Review explains the work we do in each of these four areas, illustrated by articles about specific projects.

In total our organisation has around 200 staff in 16 offices. Some of our offices have a regional function, such as the Africa office in Senegal, while others are country-specific, such as the Indonesia office. A full list of Wetlands International offices is given on the back page of this review.

Aside from our core staff, the organisation is supported by many external individuals and groups, in particular our Associate Experts with whom we work closely. Twenty Specialist Groups work on a variety of topics, for example on different groups of waterbirds or freshwater fish. Overall, our Specialist Group network consists of more than 2,000 people. A specialist Wetlands and Livelihood Working Group provides an invaluable source of advice and guidance for the development and implementation of our work in this field. Indirectly, we also depend on the data collected by around 15,000 volunteer birdwatchers worldwide.

Wetlands International was formed in 1995 through the merging of three organisations: Wetlands for the Americas (WA), the Asian Wetland Bureau (AWB) and the International Waterfowl & Wetlands Research Bureau (IWRB). The latter had already been addressing wetland issues since 1954. Our global organisation comprises an Association of members and a Foundation. The Association currently has 39 government and 11 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as members. Representatives of these members gather every three years to decide on the principal direction of the organisation and to appoint Directors to the Supervisory Board. The Supervisory Board of Directors meets every year to review progress in implementing the organisation's global strategy and to offer guidance and advice to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). An Executive Committee of the Board communicates and meets with the CEO more regularly. Several Standing Committees of the Board give guidance on specific topics, including Programme and Science, Resource Development and Communications, Finance and Operations, and Nominations. Dr Max Finlayson is the current President of Wetlands International, and 23 Directors govern the organisation, bringing together skills and experience from all regions.

In 2005, the Board opted for a legal structure which will establish Wetlands International as essentially a network organisation of independent, self-managing offices that work towards a common set of global goals, and with common, international operational processes and standards. This structure and the use of Joint Venture Agreements between the Foundation and local legal entities offers us the best opportunity to function as one, global organisation while ensuring that our regional and country offices have the authority and freedom to lead their own work programmes. The establishment in 2005 of 'inter-office teams' to plan and review programmatic work will be central to making this network function at the management level. Equally, connections between the local and global Supervisory Boards will be essential to achieving coherent governance.

Day-to-day direction and management of the organisation is carried out by Wetlands International's CEO, Jane Madgwick, who is responsible for appointing and guiding the heads of the offices and headquarters staff. Wetlands International offices are separate legal entities with Supervisory Boards and are connected to the Wetlands International Foundation through a joint venture agreement, ensuring that all offices work towards one global strategy and to common operational standards. The function of headquarters is to guide and support the offices.

For more information visit www.wetlands.org

Investigating the state of our wetlands

A big aspect of our work is structured around the challenge of informing decision-makers and other relevant stakeholders about wetlands, their environmental status and their wide range of values. Monitoring, analysing and organising information about wetlands are key steps towards easily accessible products. With the ambition to be the best-informed authority on the status and trends of wetlands, we took some giant strides in this direction with several exciting projects in 2005.

In a consortium led by the Canadian company Vexcel, we are collaborating with the European Space Agency (ESA) on a satellite-monitoring project on the status of 50 wetlands in 17 countries. By combining images with on-the-ground information we are able to obtain a clear picture which results in land-use maps, change maps and water cycle change analyses. The first results of this work came in 2005, showing for instance the poor state of some Kenyan wetlands and their surrounding forests. The project was presented at the 9th Conference of Parties to the Ramsar Convention in Kampala, Uganda in November 2005. For more results from this important project, visit www.globwetland.org.

In 2005 we continued to collect data about Ramsar sites and in the process were able to produce a CD-ROM containing information on the wetlands listed under Ramsar as internationally important. See the publication table in this review for information on how to obtain a free copy of the CD-ROM.

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Also for the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in 2005, we created a global website – www.wetlands.org/strp – through which global experts on Ramsar's 'Scientific and Technical Review Panel' can exchange information on wetlands and discuss their views.

For the European Environment Agency, we contributed to the wetland component of the widely cited report, *European State of the Environment 2005*. This was accomplished through our network of experts, Specialist Groups and contacts in several governmental departments throughout Europe. As a member of the European Topic Centre on Biodiversity, we supported the European Environmental Agency's work towards the Convention on Biological Diversity's 2010 targets to reduce the loss of biodiversity by producing indicators on the state of wetlands and waterbirds.

Another cutting-edge example of our work to broaden knowledge is the HimalWet Project, a contribution towards the so-called 'Himalayan Initiative'. This EU-funded project examines the management of highland wetlands in the Greater Himalayas. Here we use remote-sensing satellite techniques and water flow data to build a clear picture of the status and damage to the region's wetlands. The area provides livelihoods to 250 million people and water to a total of 1.5 billion people in downstream countries such as China, India and Bangladesh. The region is at risk from human activities including overgrazing, mining of peat and drainage, as well as from climate change. The outcomes of this project will enable governments in the region to take appropriate measures.



Lake level satellite-based monitoring at Lake Naivasha, Kenya (photo Douglas Taylor)



Royal Terns; Parc national du delta du Saloum, Senegal (photo Jan Veen)



Mangrove cutting in West Africa

Better management of four West African ecoregions

In West Africa, our offices have been advising governments on improved management of wetlands for poverty reduction. To achieve this, we collected critical information on the state of the wetlands. In 2006, this work will conclude with reports and recommendations for practical actions to be undertaken by government agencies and partners.

The project looked at three coastal wetland areas and one inland wetland system. In the inland Sahelian zone, we focused on the inland Inner Niger Delta. Here, we examined the relationship between waterbirds, fish and people – all dependent on each other in a fragile equilibrium.

Of the three coastal projects, one examined developments in the large coastal strip of the Gulf of Guinea, from Liberia to Angola. This zone has a very rich nature, including mangrove forests, turtle nesting beaches and coastal lagoons, but faces high pollution pressure from cities such as Lagos, oil extraction and coastal developments. Wetlands International prepared an inventory of the coastal wetlands, and this will form an important input for the development of a large-scale programme for the wise use of these ecologically-rich areas.

The second coastal project concerned West African mangroves and the rice cultivation zone between Gambia and

Sierra Leone. Here our investigations enabled us to develop recommendations for better ways of managing the coastal zone. Currently, coastal mangrove forests are overexploited for firewood and converted into rice fields. Such unsustainable development, with the accompanying destruction of mangroves, leads to a loss of biodiversity and many consequent problems for local people, including a lack of firewood, reduced coastal protection against floods, and the disappearance of important spawning areas for fish and crustaceans.

The new use of this land for rice fields is highly unsustainable. Freshwater flows, formerly maintained by the mangroves, are lost to the sea, and saltwater intrusion into the groundwater occurs. After two or three years, many of the rice fields have transformed into saline wastelands and been abandoned. It takes many years for the mangrove forests to recover.

The project focused mainly on Guinea Bissau. Here the government is actually promoting the destruction of mangroves for rice production, even though there are many other places left that are much more suitable. Wetlands International is investigating the loss of mangroves and the resulting decline of the rice fields due to salt intrusion. The results of our research are being used to raise awareness of the problem among coastal communities and the governments of Guinea Bissau and neighbouring countries. In this way, we aim to influence

the reform of government policies that result in the destruction of mangroves. Further measures will be needed to protect and restore these vital forests.

The third project, in the coastal zone from Mauritania to Guinea, is looking at the relationship between birds and the status of marine life. The African office of Wetlands International has developed a unique research method of investigating droppings of colonial birds, such as terns. This is revealing much about the marine life, mainly fish (identified through their ear bones), that are eaten by birds. Throughout the coastal region, staff of Wetlands International, together with local people, have been collecting bird droppings in the breeding grounds and sending them to a research laboratory. The information on fish consumption by birds can show the effects of human disturbance, for example through fishing, destruction of coastal wetlands, oil drilling and other sources of pollution. With added information about the state of the coastal waters, we can clarify the impact of these disturbances and advise on improved management. We can also predict the risks of new activities. The results of this project, led by Wetlands International and involving a large number of local partners, will be presented in 2006.

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Wetlands and livelihoods

2005 was a productive year for our work on wetlands and livelihoods. Many projects were successfully completed while several new and exciting ones have created opportunities for innovative developments. We were able to significantly increase attention for poverty-environment issues in wetlands and their importance for the livelihoods of the poor. This is shown by statements and resolutions at international governmental meetings of, among others, the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) and the Ramsar Convention.

The Wetlands and Livelihoods programme included around 15 different projects in 2005, some of which were multi-region and large-scale in nature. Among them were the Wetlands and Poverty Reduction Project, the Green Coast Project, and several others supporting community-based action for improved peatland management and restoration in Russia and North and South East Asia.

The bio-rights approach that Wetlands International has pioneered is key to this work (see www.bio-rights.org). The idea is simple: we provide the poor with investment opportunities (micro-credits) for sustainable development. They pay the interest and repay the loan by investing a small part of their capital (labour) in biodiversity conservation and restoring the environment. This "business deal" provides local communities with incentives in the form of direct revenues, while the global community receives in return the maintenance and restoration of globally important wetland resources.



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Many of our peatland projects provide good examples of this approach. These wetlands store huge quantities of carbon. The worldwide destruction of peatlands through drainage for agriculture, logging of forests, or mining leads to huge emissions of carbon dioxide which contribute to global climate change. This is a global problem. The only way to conserve these areas is by implementing a process in which local (poor) people are enabled to manage peatlands sustainably.

The Green Coast Project provides another good example of our work on wetlands and livelihoods. The project was set up in 2005 to help restore the coastal environment and natural resource base that was destroyed by the Asian tsunami in December 2004. Adopting the bio-rights approach, local communities were able to invest in restoring both their lives as well as the coastal ecosystems (e.g. lagoons and beach vegetation) on which their livelihoods depend. A separate report on the Green Coast Project appears after this article in this review.

2005 marked the start of our Wetlands and Poverty Reduction Project, financed by the Dutch government (DGIS). Its aim is to improve recognition of the importance of wetlands for livelihoods and poverty reduction, and to show the need for an integrated development and conservation approach. Whereas the development sectors can benefit from greater consideration of the values of wetlands in their planning, the work of the conservation/environment sector can benefit from improved consideration in their plans of the needs of local and poor communities. This is achieved through partnership approaches that combine the knowledge, expertise and capacity of both sectors. A large part of the overall project's funding will be invested in five demonstration projects and up to 30 seed-funding grants for enabling such partnerships. The lessons learned will provide us with a wealth of information that we will use to influence policies and train and inform people working in governments, NGOs and the donor community.

Our goals for 2006 include the continuation and expansion of projects that demonstrate solutions to poverty-environment issues in wetlands and enhancement of our influence on local, national and international policy processes that impact wetlands and their values for people. To make our ideas and lessons learned available to a wider audience, we will invest in the development of a transparent, easily accessible information channel via our website and other communication tools.



Newly planted mangroves, Aceh, Indonesia

Green Coast Project

On 26 December 2004 a devastating tsunami hit the coasts of South and South East Asia, causing the deaths of over 200,000 people and enormous environmental damage. This disaster triggered the start of the Green Coast project, aiming at restoration of coastal ecosystems that, apart from their natural values, are essential for restoring livelihoods and mitigating the impacts of future storms.

The poorest people suffered the most from the tsunami. Their fragile homes, built along the coasts, were washed away. Many are heavily dependent on coastal nature for their livelihoods and safety. Mangroves, coastal forest, coral reefs and other coastal ecosystems provide a range of benefits and resources that support people's livelihoods: fishing, agriculture, fuel, fresh water, medicines. Moreover, these natural areas provide some protection against future storm and tsunami risk. The impact of the tsunami was in most cases much less severe in areas where reefs and coastal forest were still present.

The €4 million Green Coast Project operated throughout the tsunami-hit countries during 2005: India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia. The project is led and coordinated by Wetlands International, in partnership with IUCN–The World Conservation Union, WWF and Both ENDS, an independent non-profit organisation based in The Netherlands that supports environmental work in developing countries. Local offices of these partners work together with their extensive network of community-based organisations and NGOs, bringing in specific expertise and skills. Finances are provided by Oxfam Netherlands and originate from the donations of millions of Dutch people after the Tsunami.

The Green Coast Project aims to restore coastal ecosystems that provide natural shelter and other benefits and services to people who live in vulnerable coastal regions. Three closely interlinked parts of the project are to:

- assess the situation of coastal communities and nature after the tsunami
- influence governments, aid agencies and the corporate sector towards 'green reconstruction'
- provide small grants for local communities to restore coastal natural resources that benefit their livelihoods.

In 2005, the first year of the project, emphasis was placed on the ecological, socio-economic and community-self assessments of tsunami damage. The Green Coast partners needed science-based information on the areas where important coastal ecosystems were destroyed, and about the needs, views and rights of local communities. The assessment results provided information and options on where best to restore ecosystems and local community livelihoods. In each country, a locally managed Small Grants Facility was established to provide technical and financial support to local organisations and communities for green recovery projects. These community-based restoration projects not only benefit the people involved, but also offer inspiring 'model examples' to policy-makers and governments.

Green Coast partners' efforts to influence aid agencies and decision-makers in moving towards environmentally sound reconstruction are urgent as several examples of poorly thought-out rehabilitation work have occurred. In some areas vulnerable marine habitats have been further threatened by post-

tsunami reconstruction activities. Other examples include clearance of forest for (temporary) shelters, rubble disposal on vulnerable coral reefs, establishment of coastal shelter-belts with inappropriate tree species, building of sea walls on turtle-nesting beaches and cutting primary forests to obtain timber for house construction.

Our activities within the Green Coast Project are diverse. One of the successes was the discovery of a new coral reef and fish species in Thailand, thanks to a cleaning operation to remove tsunami rubble from the sea. Such processes are a real investment in the future as healthy coral reefs will bring increased tourism, large fish stocks and protection of the coast against future storms.

Another example is the massive planting of mangrove forest. Even before the tsunami, mangroves were being cleared for the development of shrimp farms, for use as firewood and for building materials. By encouraging replanting of mangroves, we have helped restore areas that provide food and wood for coastal communities, improved protection from storm damage and secure breeding grounds for fish.

The first phase of Green Coast will run until March 2007. By then, we will have supported approximately 150 communities and advised decision-makers in the five affected countries on a more sustainable and safe coastal development. We will look to extend the Green Coast Project to ensure a better future for nature and people along these and other vulnerable coastlines.

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Integrated water resource management

Good management of water is essential for the health of all wetlands and so it features as a goal in many of our projects – whether in the restoration of coastal ecosystems for fisheries and other services for people or in supporting the conservation of wetlands for migrating birds. Our views on the vital role of wetlands as part of water quantity and quality management are increasingly recognised and regarded.

With the destruction of many natural areas including wetlands and increasing climate change from carbon emissions, many areas of the planet are increasingly at risk from floods, water shortages and pollution. Traditional engineering solutions such as dams and dykes are not always the best answer and may often create problems elsewhere. A clear example in 2005 was the destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina. This was partly a result of the destruction of coastal wetlands around New Orleans. The importance of wetlands as part of effective and sustainable water management is poorly understood but becoming more and more appreciated.

Three studies published in 2005 serve as a good example of our work. In Air Hitam Laut River basin, an area characterised by deep peatland soils in Sumatra, we were able to show how the expansion of oil palm plantations is leading to alarming changes in the area's hydrology. Oil palm needs a low water table, which in peatland soils means drainage. This leads to peat loss through decomposition (oxidation) of the now dry peat, destructive fires, water pollution (acidification and salt-water intrusion into the coastal groundwater) and increased flood risk. The threats are both regional and global. Globally, loss of peat contributes significantly to loss of biodiversity and to global carbon emissions that are widely regarded as significantly contributing to global warming. Regionally, the area's character is under severe threat, with the lives of thousands of people living in local villages being impoverished as a result of this unsustainable activity.

In Mali, we looked at the effect of dams on nature and people in the Inner Niger Delta. With our partners, we calculated the effect of current and planned dams in the Upper Niger River on the wetlands of the Inner Niger Delta. (A separate report on this project appears after this article in this review.)

Air Hitam Laut, Sumatra, Indonesia: floods due to destruction of former peatland forest (photo Alue Dohong)

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In India, we were able to influence water allocations to the Chilika Lagoon through an Environmental Flow Assessment. This was carried out in response to the construction of a barrage in the Mahanadi River upstream of Chilika, financed by the World Bank, to regulate freshwater inflows into the lagoon. The consultants engaged by the World Bank had earlier recommended a 70% reduction of the inflow of freshwater to Chilika Lake for flood control and agricultural development in the Mahanadi delta. Wetlands International, through our South Asia office, was able to demonstrate that freshwater inflow from the Mahanadi River is critical to the maintenance of a high biodiversity and rich fisheries which support the livelihoods of some 200,000 people living in and around the lagoon. Our study recommended a reduction of less than 10% of present freshwater flows to Chilika, an optimal allocation that will both maintain the lagoon's wildlife and ensure agricultural productivity in the delta. The 'Stakeholder Executive Committee', constituted by the Government of Orissa, has accepted these recommendations.

We have also been active in training and educating decision-makers and other professionals. A Wetlands International team played a key part in an international workshop organised by the Egyptian Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation addressing the role of wetlands in water quality management and biodiversity in Egypt and the Nile basin. It resulted in clear advice for wetland conservation in the basin and the use of wetland technology in water quality management throughout Egypt. Other examples include training courses in wetland management planning for the agriculture, water and environment sectors in Lake Uromiyeh basin, north-western Iran, and on sustainable coastal protection for engineers in the Malaysian Irrigation and Drainage Department.

Elsewhere, our advocacy activities were aimed at promoting integrated water management and the role of wetlands. At the Ramsar Conference of Parties in Kampala, Uganda, for example, we influenced the decision-making process leading to new Resolutions on Integrated Water Management (Resolution IX 3) and Natural Disasters (Resolution IX 9).



Fisherman in the Inner Niger Delta, Mali



Inner Niger Delta during the wet season

Inner Niger Delta Project

For many centuries, the Niger River has been a lifeline for the communities living in the semi-arid western Sahel zone of Africa. The building of dams for hydropower and irrigation has led to an even more intense use of the river's water. However, people downstream have suffered. Wetlands International and our partners have been investigating the positive and negative effects of two current dams and one planned dam in the river.

The outcomes provide guidance not only for the governments of Guinea and Mali, but also for the Niger Basin Authority and all countries along the Niger that are involved in dam-building schemes. They also serve as a good example of how to calculate and evaluate the benefits and losses associated with dams.

The Inner Niger Delta in the Western Sahel zone is a vital wetland area for people and nature. The area is seasonally flooded by the Niger River; the inundation area varies from 8,000 to 25,000 km². Such wetlands are of vital importance, especially in a semi-arid region like the Sahel where annual rainfall fluctuates considerably. The area supports more than a million people. They make their living as fishermen, cattle breeders or farmers, using the annual cycle of rising and receding of waters in the river and floodplains. The wetlands are not just important for people: nearly 4 million migratory waterbirds call the Niger delta their home, mainly during the wintering period.

Two dams have been constructed in the upper part of the Niger River basin

in Mali: The Office du Niger and the Selingue dam. Although these dams have improved irrigated agriculture and power generation, the benefits vary from season to season. In dry periods the dams can decrease water flow by up to 30%, with strong negative effects on water users downstream in the Inner Niger Delta. A third dam, the Fomi, is proposed for the Upper Niger in Guinea.

Discussions concerning the benefits and costs of these dams are now taking place. Wetlands International and the Dutch partners RIZA (Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management), IVM (Institute for Environmental Studies) and A&W (Altenburg & Wymenga ecological consultants) have provided a clear picture of the costs and benefits of these dams. The project team gathered and calculated all kinds of information, such as water flows before and after the current dams, fish production (50,000–100,000 t/year), livestock numbers (5 million) and agricultural production (170–250,000 t/year) in the Upper Niger and Inner Niger Delta. Our Wetlands International office in Mali, located near the delta, was integral to this exercise, coordinating the activities of partners and making links with relevant authorities and local organisations in the field.

The outcomes of the study show that the two existing dams in Mali appear to be economically feasible, jointly generating €26.4 million of benefits per year. Benefits in the form of electricity and irrigated land are definitely higher than the costs of the dam infrastructure and the loss of water downstream. People in the Inner Niger Delta do suffer from the

reduced water flows and there are fewer inundated areas which are crucial for waterbirds and fish. However, the gains by far outweigh these losses.

It is estimated, as a result of Wetlands International's investigations, that the construction of the Fomi dam in Guinea would reduce economic prosperity by €35 million per year. The dam would be costly in itself and the impact on the Inner Niger Delta would be disastrous, with the inundated area expected to decline by 2,000 km². The losses associated with fisheries, livestock and biodiversity downstream dominate these revenue reductions. Aside from these changes in the absolute level of welfare in the delta, the dams have other worrying effects: with each additional dam, benefits are transferred from the Inner Niger Delta to the upstream Upper Niger region, both within Mali and upstream countries.

In all, the analyses show that the costs of building a new dam would be substantial and that development efforts would be better focused on improving the efficiency of existing infrastructure and on supporting the development of economic activities in the delta, rather than investing in new river infrastructure.

The results of this study are presented in the form of a book and a beautiful film, *Niger, a lifeline*, that won acclaim at the 2005 World Water Forum. See the publication list for details.

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Wetland biodiversity

Our major activities in the field of wetland biodiversity are closely linked with our role as global coordinator of a huge network of organisations, scientists and volunteers involved in monitoring waterbirds and analysing trends. This led to key publications, projects and strong developments in the protection of migration routes (flyways) of waterbirds and their habitats in 2005. A new development was our central role in providing facts, analyses and advice on the possible role of waterbirds in the spread of avian influenza.

Our entire work programme for 2005 on wetland biodiversity was overshadowed by the outbreaks of HP H5N1 avian influenza in several parts of the world. As wild waterbirds were being implicated in new outbreaks, governmental meetings such as the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement and the

Ramsar Convention were dominated by this topic. A separate article later in this Annual Review provides a closer look at our work on avian influenza.

The basis of our strong position in the discussions about avian influenza stems from decades of monitoring waterbirds through the International Waterbird Census (IWC). Thousands of volunteers worldwide contribute to these surveys, the data from which are collected, synthesized and published by Wetlands International. The 4th Waterbird Population Estimates will appear in 2006 – one of the most valuable global outcomes of this work.

Wetlands International has long played a central role in the establishment of international governmental agreements and cooperative initiatives for the protection of the major bird flyways, including eight main global routes of migratory waterbirds. A good example is the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA). At the AEWA Meeting in Dakar in November 2005, Wetlands International provided a range of information about the status of waterbird species and supported the development of government commitments to tackle avian influenza.

2005 also marked the culmination of a decade of work under the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy coordinated by Wetlands International. This ten-year strategy involved governments, international conventions, NGOs and local people. It promoted and undertook awareness raising, capacity building and the monitoring of waterbirds across the region. The result is the establishment a network of sites of international importance for migratory waterbirds spanning 14 countries and covering 85 sites. Extension of the framework by one year will provide the basis for development of an international partnership for the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.

The Central Asian flyway covers a route roughly from Russia, Mongolia and China, to central and southern Asian countries like Kazakhstan, Iran and India. While there is no formal agreement for this flyway, a meeting facilitated by Wetlands International in Delhi in June 2005, attended by representatives from 23 countries and many international organisations, agreed on a Flyway Action Plan promoting the conservation of species and their habitats. Securing the Action Plan within an international agreement is the next step. Wetlands International will facilitate the process, providing the interim secretariat on behalf of the Convention on Migratory Species and the Government of India.

An interesting example of our work aside from waterbirds in 2005 has been to register the 'living pharmacies' in the Tasek Bera Ramsar site in Malaysia. Together with the indigenous *Semelai*



Monitoring waterbirds in Malaysia
(photo Taej Mundkur)



people and especially the Shaman community, we scientifically identified and catalogued plants and their medical uses.

Some of our work on biodiversity is presented in a wide range of publications. In 2005, we published the *Atlas of Movements of Southwest Siberian Waterbirds*, based on eight decades of bird banding (ringing) and recovery work involving more than half a million waterbirds by Russian scientists.

Unfortunately far fewer birds are involved in the study of the globally threatened Milky Stork in Malaysia. Our staff, working with local government agencies and NGOs, have investigated the last remaining population in Malaysia and have published proposals to try and halt the decline in this species' population.



Avian Influenza

Since 1997 there have been several outbreaks of the deadly form of avian influenza, HP H5N1. First found in domestic poultry in East Asia, the disease has now not only spread to other regions, but has also been detected in wild waterbirds. Since this discovery, Wetlands International has been involved in the development of science-based analyses, and in providing advice about the possible role of wild waterbirds in the new outbreaks. In 2005, the year in which the disease spread westward across Eurasia, we were able to play a major role.

The highly pathogenic form of avian influenza spread rapidly in 2005. In early August 2005, the virus was detected in poultry in southern Russia and Kazakhstan, indicating that it had spread in a north-westerly direction from the initial areas of infection in East Asia. On 15 October, dead swans infected with H5N1 were found on a lake in Croatia. Only two days later, an outbreak was reported in Romania on a poultry farm near the Danube Delta. The location, close to a major wetland area, suggested that wild birds might be implicated in the spread of the virus. On 20 October, the first case of H5N1 was found on a poultry farm in Turkey. The disease spread rapidly among poultry, and some 20 people died in eastern and northern Turkey; all had been in close contact with poultry.

The initial cause of all these outbreaks remains unclear. Although most of the outbreaks occurred on poultry farms, and trade in poultry or manure from infected areas was evident, many pointed at migrating waterbirds as the major culprits.



Taking samples during field research on Avian Influenza (photo's Hichem Azafaf, Sergei Khomenko)

Wetlands International has always accepted that waterbirds might play a role in the spread of avian influenza. However, we have also made it clear that it is unlikely that wild birds are involved, and that measures taken against the possible spread of the disease by wild birds may be ineffective or even counterproductive. In our view, additional research and monitoring is urgently needed. By keeping our analyses and advice science based, we have become an authority in this field, and we are highly regarded by all involved in addressing this problem.

Several intergovernmental meetings dealing directly or indirectly with waterbirds and wetlands took place towards the end of 2005. Most important were the African-European Waterbird Agreement meeting in Dakar, the Convention on Migratory Species meeting in Nairobi and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands meeting in Kampala. Delegations from Wetlands International played a very active role at all these meetings. We provided facts on the role of migratory waterbirds and the likelihood that waterbirds would contribute to a further spread of the disease, and we provided advice on the best ways to limit the risk of new outbreaks among infected waterbirds. Partly thanks to our efforts, ineffective and adverse measures such as culling

waterbirds or destroying wetlands were condemned by these international meetings – not only because such measures would be extremely destructive, but mainly because aggressive measures would frighten the birds off. In the event of infection, this would only spread the outbreak further. The meetings called for research to investigate the risks and monitor the spread of HP H5N1.

Thanks to our expertise built up over many years of monitoring and investigating wild waterbirds, Wetlands International was asked to research the possible spread of the disease. At the end of 2005, we began an investigation into the risks for the European Commission. And, together with the French organisation Centre de Cooperation Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement (CIRAD), we began a field research project on HP H5N1 for the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), investigating thousands of waterbirds in Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe. Both projects will be finalised in 2006.

For more information contact
Ward Hagemeijer
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Projects in 2005



Leading office, donor, project, description

HEADQUARTERS (The Netherlands)

African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) Contribution to the AEWA -meeting in Dakar, Senegal

To provide information and organisational input.

Belgium: Flemish Ministry for the Community Wader Flyway Atlas

To produce an atlas for the African and Eurasian region for wader flyways, to be published in 2006.

Convention on Migratory Species (CMS); African- Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA)

Task Force on avian influenza and wild birds

To support the taskforce on Avian Influenza that was installed at the Convention on Migratory Species in Nairobi, 2005.

Convention on Migratory Species (CMS); Canada: Canadian Wildlife Service; Finland (Government); Netherlands: Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food quality; Sweden (Government); United Kingdom: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra); United Kingdom: Scottish National Heritage

Global Flyways Conference: proceedings

To develop published outputs from the Global Flyways Conference organised by Wetlands International in 2004.

Core-Funding

Development of the bio-rights principle

To develop a principle to reward local communities for wetland conservation and restoration work with global or regional benefits, such as preventing carbon and biodiversity losses.

Egypt, Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation Workshop on constructed wetlands, Egypt

To hold a workshop on constructed wetlands for the Egyptian Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, in order to provide clear advice on the conservation of wetlands in the Nile basin.

European Commission

Avian Influenza (HPAI): Mobilising data on wild birds relevant to its spread in Europe

To compile data on wild birds and avian influenza and analyse risks for Europe. A report on our work on avian influenza appears on page 13.

HimalWet project

To study the management and state of the highland wetlands of the Greater Himalayas using remote-sensing satellite techniques and water flow data, and to present outcomes to enable governments to take mitigating actions.

Technical support to the European Commission for implementation of the Birds Directive

To provide information and support for implementation of the Birds Directive, especially concerning waterbirds.

European Environment Agency

Work for the European Environment Agency

To develop, as part of the European Topic Centre consortium, indicators on biodiversity and data systems on protected areas, and to deliver input for the publications European State of the Environment 2005 and Progress towards halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010.

European Space Agency, France

Globwetland project

To investigate the status of wetlands by using remote-sensing satellite techniques. Headquarters (The Netherlands) and Africa office.

Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)

Avian influenza (HPAI): Readiness of countries in Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe

To gather information, partly by catching and investigating wild birds, in order to monitor the spread of avian influenza, and to prepare countries in the regions mentioned. A report on our work on avian influenza appears on page 13.

Netherlands Embassy, Vietnam

Vietnam National Wetlands Strategy and Action Plan

To develop a National Wetlands Strategy and Action Plan.

Netherlands: Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food quality; Switzerland: Bundesamt für Umwelt Wald und Landschaft (BUWAL)

Coordination Unit, Avian Influenza

To supply information on the possible relation between waterbirds and avian influenza (HPAI). A report on our work on avian influenza appears on page 13.



**Netherlands: Ministry of International Cooperation
Wetlands and Poverty Reduction Project (WPRP)**

To increase the ability of the development sector to take into account the values of wetlands while also influencing the conservation and environment sector to consider the necessity of poverty reduction. One of our biggest projects, it works globally to develop five major demonstration projects in developing countries, supply seed funds, advocate our message among decision-makers, NGOs and foundations at national and international levels, and create capacity by training people.

Central Kalimantan peatland project

To restore the water table in logged and drained peat swamp forests, to be achieved by closing drainage canals and preventing oxidation of the peat and wildfires in the dry season that would eventually lead to the irreversible destruction and flooding.

**Netherlands: Ministry of International Cooperation
(Partners for water)**

Air Hitam Laut, Indonesia

To improve the understanding of the hydrological and ecological functioning of South East Asian lowland peat swamp forests, and contribute to an enhanced science base for policy and decision-making.

Training course, Uromiyeh, Iran

To hold a training course in wetland management planning for the agriculture, water and environment sectors around Lake Uromiyeh Basin, north-western Iran.

**Netherlands: Ministry of International Cooperation
(PIN Matra)**

An Atlas of Movements of Southwest Siberian Waterbirds

Development of a publication based on thousands of ringing recoveries of migrating waterbirds.

Northern Livonian

To contribute to policy advice (to be published in 2006) on the transboundary Baltic region of Latvia and Estonia.

Oxfam-Novib

Green Coast

To restore and manage coastal ecosystems to increase livelihood security for people in tsunami-hit regions. Together with the offices of Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and South Asia. A report on this project appears on page 9.

ProForest (company)

Evaluation of Acacia plantations in Sumatra

To support environmental impact assessments of Acacia plantations on Kampar Peninsula peatlands, Sumatra, Indonesia.

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

Ramsar Database

To continue collection of data on all wetlands on the Ramsar List; and to use the information to develop a CD-ROM on all Ramsar sites.

Support for the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP)

To create a global website as a communications tool for specialists on Ramsar's Scientific and Technical Review Panel.

United Kingdom: Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC); AMPO, French hunting organisation

International Waterbird Census / Waterbird Population Estimates

To collect and analyse global data from the monitoring of waterbirds in order to produce the fourth edition of this annual publication.

United Nations Environment Programme - Global Environmental Fund (UNEP-GEF)

Peatlands – Do You Care? (booklet)

To highlight the global problem of peatland degradation in order to motivate concern and action among policy-makers, specialists and stakeholders; also to explain the 'wise use' principles and make recommendations for action.

United Nations Environment Programme - Global Environmental Fund (UNEP-GEF); Russian Academy of Sciences

Integrated management of peatlands for biodiversity and climate change

To assess peatland management practices and impacts on biodiversity and climate change. With projects in several countries, it also advises on how peatlands can be best managed on a global scale. Together with the offices in North Asia, Russia and Indonesia.

Projects in 2005



Leading office, donor, project, description

AFRICA

Africa Office (Senegal)

Chester Zoo

Black-crowned Crane Conservation

A joint monitoring project with the International Crane Foundation.

European Commission

Freshwater biodiversity assessment

To assess the conservation and sustainable use of freshwater biodiversity throughout Africa to enable decisionmakers to integrate information on freshwater biodiversity into the development process.

Fondation Internationale pour le Banc d'Arguin (FIBA)

Support for transboundary management of the Saloum-Niumi Complex

A joint programme with IUCN in two natural parks (Saloum and Niumi) to optimise resources as they are located in two countries Senegal and Gambia.

Netherlands: Ministry of International Cooperation

Research and wise use in four wetland ecoregions of West Africa

To carry out studies for improved management of three West African coastal regions and the Inner Niger Delta. A report on this appears on page 7.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); Regional Coastal and Marine Conservation Programme, West Africa (PRCM)

Conservation of the West African Manatee *Trichechus Senegalensis*

To develop and implement a regional conservation plan for the conservation of the Manatee along the West African coast.



Mali Office

Mali, Ministère de l'environnement et Assainissement

Capacity building for the Malinese National Wetlands Action Plan

To implement the capacity building component of the National Wetlands Action plan in the four northern regions of Mali.

Netherlands: Ministry of International Cooperation (Partners for water)

The Niger – A lifeline, West Africa

To finalise a major study to support decision-making on dams on the Niger River by evaluating all direct and indirect social, economic and ecological effects of these infrastructures. See the publications list with details about book and film and see the special article about this project on page 11.

WWF West African Regional Programme Office (WARPO)

Support for the local dialogue on water, food and environment in Mali

To set up a dialogue on water, food and environment in Mali with the aim to establish or revitalise local fishery councils that will provide better management of fish stocks and wetlands.

Guinea-Bissau Office

Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation

Waterbird monitoring in the Bijagós Archipelago, Guinea-Bissau

To produce a report (see publication list) based on monitoring of waterbirds in the in the Bijagós Archipelago.

LATIN AMERICA

Latin America office (Argentina)

Canadian Wildlife Service

Neotropical Waterbird Census

To continue monitoring wetlands and waterbird populations in South America; specifically to increase knowledge on waterbirds and wetland habitats within the Neotropics.

United States: Fish & Wildlife Service

Shorebird conservation and rice cultivation in southern South America

To assess the value of rice fields and potential threats to Nearctic shorebirds in southern South America (Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay).

Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network; National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (United States)

Conservation of wintering areas of Buff-breasted Sandpipers in Argentina and Uruguay

To protect key wintering habitat of Buff-breasted Sandpipers in Argentina and Uruguay.



NORTH ASIA

North Asia Office (China)

World Bank

Natural wetlands study, Eastern China

To scale up investment in land-based pollution reduction, designate wetlands and propose coastal management options in order to reduce degradation of marine ecosystems.

Australia: Department of Environment and Heritage **Northward shorebird migration surveys**

To compile reports on shorebird surveys as part of the East Asian-Australasian Shorebird Action Plan, thereby contributing to shorebird conservation in the Yellow Sea.

Australia: Department of Environment and Heritage **Training programme in Australia and New Zealand 2005–2006**

To run a training programme aimed at providing staff from Yalujiang Shorebird Network Site and the Wetlands International China Office with skills in shorebird studies and site management.

Japan Fund for Global Environment **Awareness campaign for children and teachers in China, Japan and Korea**

To promote wetland conservation and increase awareness on wetlands conservation and wise use among schoolchildren and teachers in the East Asian region.

Shell China **Wetland conservation and public awareness in Hangzhou Bay, China**

To create greater capacity and awareness in the conservation and sustainable use of ecologically rich coastal areas of the East China Sea.

Japan Office

Japan: Ministry of the Environment **Monitoring of Japanese coastal ecosystems**

To monitor Japanese coastal ecosystems, based on the national survey of tidal flats, seaweed and sea-grass beds.

Keidanren Nature Conservation Foundation **Illustrated seaweed and sea-grass guidebook**

To develop a guidebook on seaweed and seagrass for publication in 2006.

River Environment Fund **Lecture series: the network of riparian ecosystems (Japan)**

To undertake a series of lectures on riparian ecosystems in Japan.

SOUTH EAST ASIA

Thailand Office

Canada Fund, Canadian Embassy, Thailand; Global Environment Center (GEC), Malaysia

Poverty and conservation of peat swamps at Phru Toh Daeng, Thailand

To build local awareness of and capacity for conservation in order to secure a sustainable future for the Phru Toh Daeng Peat Swamp Forest.

Denmark: Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA)

Livelihood options for Langda community in Thailand

To assist the communities in conducting projects on crab aquaculture in mangroves, thereby generating local income and conserving mangrove forest.

Netherlands: Embassy, Bangkok, Thailand **Supporting community-based conservation at Krabi Estuary, Thailand**

To ensure the sustainable use and conservation of the Krabi Estuary wetlands.

Indonesia Office

CARE International Indonesia **Strengthening local NGOs in mangrove rehabilitation techniques on Simeuleu Island, Aceh, Indonesia**

To enhance the capacity of local NGOs and activate knowledge in implementing and managing a small-scale mangrove rehabilitation programme in the coastal area of Simeuleu Island.

Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) + core funding

Fieldguide on mangroves of South East Asia

To produce a guide to the identification of mangroves and associated beach species of South East Asia, covering over 250 species, and including chapters on the status and ecology of mangroves and associated species, identification tables, line drawings, detailed species descriptions and notes on distribution.

IUCN

Developing capacity of environmental NGOs in Indonesia.

To run training courses at several locations throughout Indonesia aimed at enabling NGOs to implement wetland programmes.

Wildlife Habitat Canada

Climate change, forests and peatlands in Indonesia

To support management of two core peatland areas in Indonesia, and build national capacity to participate in evolving climate change mitigation initiatives such as carbon storage and sequestration.

Projects in 2005



Leading office, donor, project, description

Malaysia Office

Australia: Department of Environment and Heritage Waterbird conservation events, Malaysia

To run two awareness-raising events largely comprising local people.

Johor National Park Corporation, Malaysia Ecological assessment of potential Ramsar sites in south-east Johor, Malaysia

To conduct rapid ecological assessments of potential Ramsar sites in order to develop an updated picture of their current status and management.

Malaysia: Department of Irrigation and Drainage Training workshop on wetlands and conservation for staff of Dept of Irrigation and Drainage

To run a training workshop on sustainable coastal protection for engineers in the Malaysian Irrigation and Drainage Department, with particular reference to mangroves and their rehabilitation.

Malaysia: Department of Irrigation and Drainage; Darudec international consultants (Denmark) Training course on integrated river basin management

To contribute to a training course on wetlands and water quality for representatives of government departments and NGOs from all Malaysian states.

Malaysia: Department of Wildlife and National Parks; Nagao Natural Environment Federation (NEF); Tan Kean Cheong Bird Conservation Memorial Fund, Malaysia

Ecological assessment of Milky Stork

To reassess, jointly with PERHILITAN, the status and population size of Milky Stork in Malaysia through field surveys from August 2004 to January 2006.

Shell – Malaysia; Kapar Energy Venture; Australian Government Department of Environment and Heritage

Waterbird conservation events, Malaysia

To raise awareness among local people on several locations by a mangrove eco-hunt game, coloring contests, wetland and bird exhibitions, public talks and bird watching.

United Kingdom: British High Commission in Malaysia

Coastal ecosystems and livelihoods after the tsunami

To assess the damage to the ecosystems and livelihoods in the north-western coast of Peninsular Malaysia.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); European Commission; Malaysia: Small Grants Programme promoting tropical forests Enhancing forest-related ecotourism for the Semelai in Tasek Bera, Malaysia

To stimulate ecotourism activities by the Association of Indigenous Semelai people in the Tasek Bera wetlands area through the training of guides, supporting the development of ecotourism packages and implementing a marketing strategy.

Whitley Laing Foundation-Rufford Small Grant, United Kingdom

Conservation of living pharmacies in Tasek Bera, Malaysia

To scientifically identify plants, together with indigenous Semelai guides and community Shaman and produce a report on their medicinal uses.

WWF-Malaysia

Ecological assessment of Kubang Badak mangroves, Malaysia

To carry out an ecological assessment aimed at providing updated information on the status of threatened mangrove areas on Langkawi Island on the west coast of Malaysia, in support of a conservation plan by WWF.



SOUTH ASIA

South Asia Office (India)

India: Punjab State Council for Science and Technology

Action Plan for ecotourism in Ropar wetland, Punjab

To support the Government of Punjab in its aim to plan and promote ecotourism in and around Ropar wetland, taking into account its ecological, socio-economic and cultural importance.

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands; World Bank; India: Chilika Development Authority

Several projects around Chilika Lagoon, Orissa, India

To assist with hydrodynamic lake modelling, rainfall-runoff and sediment loading models and stakeholder surveys; using economic valuation as a tool for integrating wetlands into development planning and for minimising the impacts of developmental activities; and developing a framework for integrated management planning for Chilika Lake in order to restore water quality.

United Nations Environment Programme - (UNEP); Netherlands: Embassy, New Delhi, India; Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)

Central Asian Flyway: Action Plan development

To facilitate a meeting in Delhi, India in June 2005 of representatives from 23 countries and international organisations in order to agree on conservation actions for this important flyway for migratory bird species and their habitats, and to provide the interim secretariat.

United States: Fish & Wildlife Service; Japan: ministry of the environment

Conservation of migratory waterbirds in the Asia-Pacific

Conservation programme in the East Asian-Australasian and Central Asian Flyways, primarily through awareness raising, capacity building, monitoring and management support at networks of sites of international importance.

EUROPE

Russia Office

Netherlands: Ministry of International Cooperation (PIN Matra)

Conservation of peatlands of Central Russia

To demonstrate implementation of the 'wise use' approach for peatland ecosystems in Central and European Russia.

WWF-Germany

Study on mires in the Baltic ecoregion

To provide informational background for conserving biodiversity and freshwater quality in the Baltic ecoregion.

Black Sea Office

Netherlands: Ministry of International Cooperation (PIN Matra)

National Wetland Strategy and Action Plan for Ukraine

To provide strategic planning and policy development for the conservation, restoration and wise use of wetlands and wetland resources in Ukraine, and to submit a plan to the Ukrainian Ministry of Environment for signature.

River Network, Ukraine

To support local governments, communities and NGOs with training and advice in order to conserve and sustainably develop small rivers and streams throughout Ukraine.

Establishment of a management approach for the Sivash, Ukraine

To establish a management system for the entire Sivash River ecosystem in order to achieve the conservation and wise use of wetlands for the sustainable development of the local economy.

Wetlands biodiversity conservation in Ukrainian agricultural lands

To improve agricultural landscapes in Ukraine for biodiversity and wetlands conservation through development of a methodology, an action plan and awareness raising; includes facilitation of a meeting with 70 representatives of sectors, scientists and decision-makers.

Projects in 2005

Leading office, donor, project, description

OCEANIA

Australia: Queensland Environmental Protection Agency

Compiling profiles for wetland types, Queensland, Australia

To provide the senior author for five of 15 wetland management profiles compiled for wetland types in Queensland (e.g. saltmarsh, coastal grass-sedge wetlands).

Canberra office (Australia)

Australia: Department of Environment and Heritage Implementation of the East Asian-Australasian Shorebird Action Plan.

To develop a new 'Waterbird Flyway Partnership' for the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, aimed at winning greater commitment from governments and new partners to waterbird conservation issues in sustainable and economic development initiatives.

Assisting development of the Australian National Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Shorebirds

To provide expert advice and facilitation in the development of a draft document and to conduct a series of national stakeholder consultation workshops to assist the Australian Government develop its first National Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Shorebirds.

Fitzroy Basin Association

Wetland awareness in the Fitzroy River basin (Australia)

To assist with compilation of fact-sheets on waterbirds in the Fitzroy River basin, in order to help the local community recognise wetland assets.

Fiji Office

Moore Foundation & Packard Foundation

Managing Fiji's Vatu-i-Ra World Heritage Seascape

To manage Tropical Coastal Marine Ecosystems through ecosystem-based community management of traditional land and sea areas.

MacArthur Foundation

Strengthening local capacity to monitor, and manage coastal and freshwater ecosystems in Papua New Guinea.

To provide training and assistance to communities in the Madang Marine Area, Papua New Guinea, to establish protected areas, monitor and assess coral reef resources and freshwater ecosystems

Brisbane Office

Australia, Queensland Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Wetland awareness and management fact-sheets for the Condamine River basin

To assist with compilation of fact-sheets for four wetland sub-types in the Condamine River basin, Queensland, in order to help the local community to recognise wetland assets and manage threats (to be published in 2006).

Australia: Department of Environment and Heritage Great Barrier Reef Reference Group (Australia)

To carry out a pilot programme to improve water quality in the lagoon of the Great Barrier Reef and protect wetland biodiversity. (Wetlands International provided a member on the Minister-appointed panel to advise and make recommendations on proposed wetland restoration projects for sites in the catchment of the Great Barrier Reef.)

Management of important wetlands in Australia

To build the local capacity of more than ten regional organisations responsible for natural resource management across selected river basins in Australia.

Australia: Government of New South Wales Ecological character descriptions of four Australian Ramsar sites

To develop a framework for ecological character descriptions of Ramsar Sites in Australia by consultation with wetland managers, site visits and compilation of images for four sites.



Publications in 2005

A Guide to the Blocking of Canals and Ditches

Suryadiputra, Dohong, Waspodo, Mu slihat et al
ISBN 9799937353
Obtainable from: Indonesia office

An Atlas of Movements of Southwest Siberian Waterbirds

Veen et al
ISBN 9058829529
Obtainable from: NHBS.com

Effet de l'accumulation des nutriments en dessous des colonies d'oiseaux d'eau sur la reproduction et la croissance de poisson Delta Niger

Kersten, Diallo, Fofana, Kodio
Obtainable from: Africa office

El censo Neotropical de Aves Acuaticas 2004

Lopez-Lanus, Blanco
ISBN 9058820262
Obtainable from: Latin America office

Environmental monitoring guidelines for wetlands in the Uromiyeh Basin (Language: Farsi)

Chris Baker
Report made for the Iranian sectors

Irrigational agriculture and conservation of biodiversity of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea

Edited by Kostyushin, Fesenko
ISBN 9660238193
Obtainable from: Black Sea office

Le Niger, une artere vitale - Gestion efficace dans le bassin du Haut Niger

Zwarts, van
Beukering, Kone, Wymenga
ISBN 9080715077
Obtainable from: Headquarters

Manual for the Control of Fire in Peatlands and Peatland Forest

Adinugroho, Suryadiputra, Saharjo, Siboro
ISBN 979993737X
Obtainable from: Indonesia office

Manual on Peat Swamp Forests Rehabilitation and Planting in Thailand

Tanit Nuyim
ISBN 9833377017
Obtainable from: Thailand Office

Panduan Pengelolaan Lahan Gambut Untuk Pertanian Berkelanjutan (Peatland Management for sustainable Agriculture)

Najiyati, Muslihat dan, Suryadiputra
ISBN 9799737329
Obtainable from: Indonesia office

Panduan Rehabilitasi dan Teknik Silviculture di Lahan Gambut (Manual for Rehabilitation and Silviculture in peatlands)

Wibisono, Siboro dan, Suryadiputra
ISBN 9799937302
Obtainable from: Indonesia office

Pemberdayaan Masyarakat di Lahan Gambut (Community development in Peatlands)

Najiyata, Asmana, Suryadiputra
ISBN 9799937361
Obtainable from: Indonesia office

Practical Guidelines on biodiversity in agricultural lands

Black Sea Office
Obtainable from: Black Sea office

Public Participation on the Conservation of Small Rivers: A Training Manual

Black Sea Office
Obtainable from: Black Sea office

Review of Policies and Practices in tropical peat swamp forest management in Indonesia

Silvius, Suryadiputra
Obtainable from: Headquarters

Status and Conservation of Shorebirds in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway

Straw
ISBN 9058820270
Obtainable from: NHBS.com

The Air Hitam Laut River Basin; Life Support functions of a black water river for people and biodiversity

Silvius, M.J. (ed)
ISBN 9070785153
Obtainable from: Headquarters

The Nature of Sivash Region and Human impact on it

Wetlands International, Kyiv
ISBN 9058829537
Obtainable from: Black Sea office

The Niger, A Lifeline – Effective Watermanagement in the Upper Niger Basin

Zwarts, van
Beukering, Kone, Wymenga
ISBN 9080715069
Digital version available on wetlands.org

Ukrainian Rivers Network: Contribution of NGOs to Conservation of Small Rivers

Black Sea Office
Obtainable from: Black Sea office

Waterbird Monitoring in the Bijagos Archipelago, Guinea Bissau

Dodman, Joaozinho
ISBN 9058829596
Obtainable from: NHBS.com

The Niger, A Lifeline –Film

Wetlands International
ISBN 9058820297
Obtainable from: NHBS.com

Wetlands International Specialist Groups Report (1999-2004)

Ojei
ISBN 9058829561
Obtainable from: NHBS.com

Wetlands in Russia. Volume 4: Wetlands in Southern Far-Eastern Russia

Chief Editor: V. N. Bocharnikov
ISBN 9058829545
Obtainable from: NHBS.com

All publications are freely downloadable from our global and office websites (see www.wetlands.org).

Financial report of the Board of Directors

General financial developments

During the year 2005 the total global income increased with 16% from €6.7 million to €7.8 million. This increase was mainly due to a rise in project income of €1 million, to which the Green Coast project contributed the most. Income remained in line with expenditure, with an increase of project costs for the same amount of €1 million.

Income

Like in the previous year the income consisted mainly of project income (91% in 2005 compared to 90% in 2004), which grew with €1 million. This is shown in figure 1. Wetlands international obtained this income from project grants from institutional donors. The increase can be mainly attributed to an increase of the income through Wetlands International headquarters. The income of the regional offices remained at par with the previous year. As a consequence in 2005 the income via the headquarters amounted 58% of the overall-income as compared to 50% in 2004, which is shown in figure 2.

Income from membership dues, donated by the Association Wetlands International, increased by €100 thousand to a total amount of €495 thousand. Membership dues are paid by the members of the Association Wetlands International, being governments of approximately 60 countries and a limited number of NGO's active in nature conservation.

Other income virtually remained at par with the sum received in the previous year: €267 thousand. Beside interest and exchange differences an amount of €66 thousand has been allocated from the special fund received in 2001 to restructure the organisation to become a strategy driven global organisation with a clear governance and management structure.

The projects are categorized under four global goals. The goals are global outcomes that Wetlands International aims to achieve in order for its mission to be fulfilled. In figure 3 the division of our global activities according to these four goals are shown.

Expenditure

Project costs increased by €1 million. In general projects vary in length and in size, but as of 2005 a tendency can be observed to gain support for larger and longer term projects, such as the Green Coast Project and the Wetlands Poverty Reduction Project. This trend will continue in 2006. Some projects were very labour intensive, while other projects were sub-contracted to partners to a significant extent, thus carrying less salary costs and more direct project costs. Some of the projects of the headquarters have been sub-contracted to the Wetlands International regional offices, while these offices also independently acquired project grants and sub-contracted local partners.



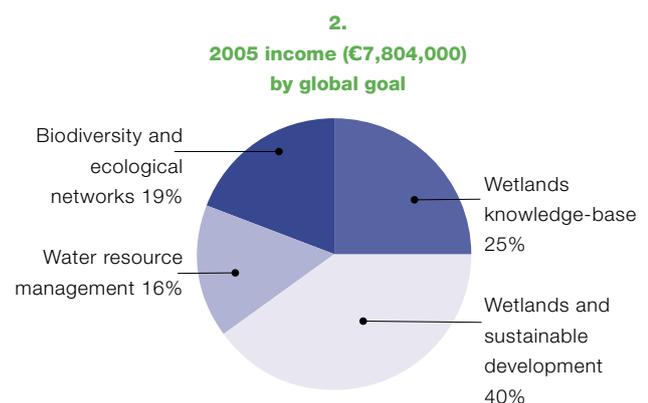
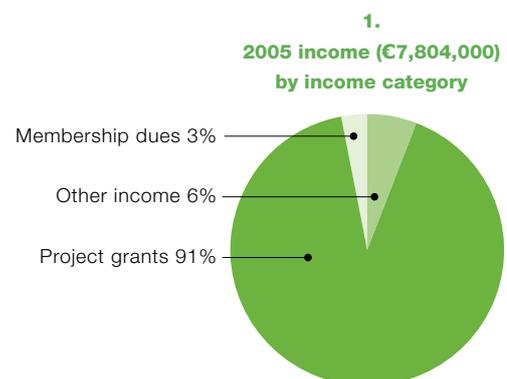
Summarized financial statement

The summarized financial statements 2005 are shown in figure 5. They have been derived from the audited Report and Financial Statements of the Foundation Wetlands International and the provisional financial statements of the regional offices.

The corresponding figures of the Foundation Wetlands International the Netherlands are more specified in figures 6 and 7. The complete Report and Financial Statements of the Foundation including the auditors' report is available at the Wetlands International headquarters.

Budget 2006

For the year 2006 a total income of €13 million is expected which means a growth of more than €5 million. The majority of this growth is expected to take place through Wetlands International headquarters gaining additional income for projects that will be implemented through our regional offices and a large number of local partners, active in wetland conservation and sustainable development.



Summarised financial statements Foundation Wetlands International Headquarters (Netherlands)

5. Balance sheet at 31 December 2005

All amounts in thousand EUR

	Debit	Credit
ASSETS		
Fixed assets		
Computers and equipment	15	
Current assets		
Bank accounts	2,594	
Deferred project costs	374	
Accounts receivable	457	
LIABILITIES		
Reserves		
General reserves		35
Restructuring fund		94
Current accounts		
Current account with Association Wetlands International	445	
Creditors		
Deferred project income		3,279
Argentina funds		11
Accounts payable		464
Total	3,884	3,884

Result this year 1

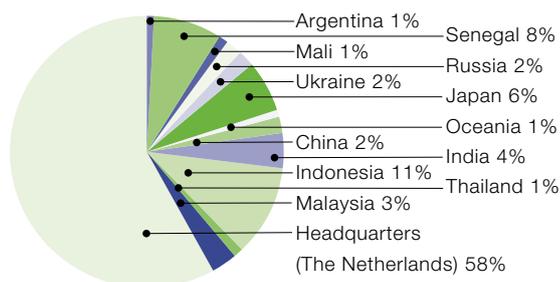
6. Statement of income & expenditure 2005

All amounts in thousand EUR

	2005	2005 budget	2004
INCOME			
Project income	3,819	4,663	2,714
Membership fees	495	510	386
Contribution from Netherlands office	54	156	21
Contribution from regional offices	10	29	
Contribution from restructuring fund	66	66	105
Allocation reservation			60
General Assembly 2004			
Exchange rate results	28		-13
Other income	27		10
Total income	4,499	5,425	3,283
EXPENDITURE			
Project costs			
Salary costs –	507	453	314
Other project costs –	2,951	3,709	2,117
Operational costs			
Salary costs –	584	656	440
Other operational costs –	402	454	390
Contribution to International Secretariat	54	156	21
Total expenditure	4,498	5,428	3,283
Overall result	1	-3	0

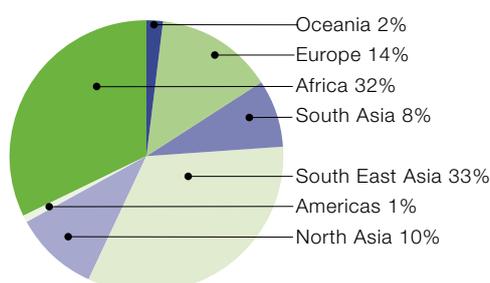
3.

2005 income (€7,804,000) by Wetlands International offices



4.

2005 expenditure (€7,650,000) by region



Wetlands International all offices

7. Statement of income & expenditure 2005

All amounts in thousand EUR

	2005	2004
INCOME		
Project income	7,042	6,024
Membership fees	495	386
Contribution from restructuring fund	66	105
Allocation reservation		60
General Assembly 2004		
Other income	201	137
Total income	7,804	6,712
EXPENDITURE		
Project costs		
Salary costs –	1,094	1,119
Other project costs –	5,041	4,187
Operational costs		
Salary costs –	815	713
Other operational costs –	700	676
Total expenditure	7,650	6,696
Overall result	153	16

Investing in partnerships

In 2005, we worked hard to explore and strengthen the role of partnerships with intergovernmental conventions and treaties and other organisations. The partnership approach is a central philosophy of, and a practical necessity for, Wetlands International.

Partnerships are an important tool in our work, both at the international and national levels with governments and at the project level with fellow NGOs, corporates and research institutes. They bring unique combinations of complementary skills, networks and specialised areas of study or work.

Wetlands International is an 'International Organisation Partner' (IOP) for the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar). As such, we support the convention in a variety of ways, for example by providing new priorities for action and vital analyses on the status of wetlands. Our initiative to stimulate closer collaboration with the other Ramsar IOPs – WWF, BirdLife International, IUCN–The World Conservation Union and the International Water Management Institute – (IWMI) for the 9th Conference of Parties to the Ramsar Convention in 2005 resulted for the first time in strongly influential, joint side-events at the meeting. Similarly, while IOP positions on key Ramsar Resolutions often differed slightly, we were able to join forces to work with Contracting Party delegates to encourage and negotiate key governmental commitments.

We play a similar role for the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), for which we are also an International Organisation Partner, providing strong technical support on waterbirds. In particular, we play a central role in agreements and initiatives on migratory bird routes (flyways) that are developed under the CMS umbrella, such as the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA). In 2005, we were a leading player at the governmental meeting on the Central Asian Flyway – a first step in the development of coordinated transboundary governmental actions. We now provide the secretariat for this flyway.

A commitment to establish a global partnership to help develop and fund science-based and policy-relevant outputs from Wetlands International's waterbird monitoring was triggered by AEWA and Ramsar Resolutions in 2005. This very welcome step will help ensure that the end-user group,

including governmental Contracting Parties, the European Union and others, will guide the strategic direction of Wetlands International's waterbird programme more closely in future. In addition, by working with this global consortium we will increase our outreach to decision-makers and other stakeholders.

The Green Coast project provides a good example of partnerships at the project level, and I hope that the partnership principles that underlie it can be used as a model for international environmental NGO collaboration. The award of funding for this project in 2005 to a group of environmental NGOs was seen as experimental by Oxfam Netherlands. We hope that its success, at community, ecosystem and policy levels, will help to build the case for further collaboration between the aid and development sector and NGOs. Whilst the project certainly revealed some tensions between the partners, all have agreed that our close teamwork approach to the Asian tsunami response during 2005 was both successful and enriching. Recognition and use of the complementary skills, networks and specialisms of Wetlands International, WWF, IUCN and BothENDS at the country level and internationally was key.

We are pursuing similar collaboration in our partnership with WWF, IUCN and 'Fondation Internationale du Banc d'Arguin' (FIBA) under the framework of the 'Programme Régional de Conservation des Ressources Marins et Côtières' (PRCM) for the conservation and wise use of wetlands along the West African coast. In 2005, Wetlands International increased its participation in the PRCM, placing emphasis on the development of partnership projects within the joint strategy for this vulnerable and valuable coastal region.

Judging by the growing level of interest expressed in 2005 among key development sector organisations in working alongside Wetlands International in its new Wetlands and Poverty Reduction Project, it is likely that several new, global partnership agreements will emerge during 2006. I anticipate that the learning from these partnerships – bringing our expertise together in practical ways to address key issues in particular countries and ecoregions – will result in some permanent shifts in thinking and behaviour for Wetlands International. These are exciting times!

Outlook for 2006

2006 has already thrown up some new challenges and opportunities for Wetlands International. Growing concern over outbreaks of the lethal form of the avian influenza virus across Asia, Europe and Africa has meant that our expertise on the patterns of migration of wild birds has been in high demand. We have been able to put our International Waterbird Census database and the knowledge of our vast network of waterbird specialists to good use. The sudden spotlight on wetlands and waterbird data has provided a useful reality check – it has highlighted for many governments the importance of improving and maintaining their wetland inventories. There has been a realisation that in many ways waterbirds can act as ‘sentinels for global change’.



Consulting local people in Nepal for the Himalaya Project (photo Douglas Taylor)

Over the next few years, we are keen to progress our work to develop policy-relevant waterbird and wetland indicators and to evaluate the socio-economic implications of changes in wetland status, working with a number of research partners. In order to advise decision-making at the landscape scale, we need greater predictive powers to understand the capacity of waterbirds to react to extreme weather events, major changes in wetland disturbance, incidents of disease and the impacts of climate change. The five-year UNEP-GEF African-Eurasian flyway project that starts in 2006 provides a unique opportunity to bring together wetland and waterbird data and to apply these

to establish transboundary wetland ecological networks.

While we were encouraged that the 5th World Water Forum revealed a stronger recognition for the need of an ecosystem approach to addressing the demands of the poor for water and sanitation, we are mindful that real shifts in thinking and investment in integrated water resource management are moving relatively slowly at the intergovernmental level and in the water sector. At the same time, Wetlands International is finding it possible to influence major water management strategies and decisions at the basin and national levels. Working with a number of partners, Wetlands International is therefore seeking to extend its experiences in water resource management at the basin level in Africa, India, the Himalayas, China, South East Asia and South America and to use these experiences to influence relevant national policies and strategies.

Water availability and use will be a central issue in the five major demonstration projects that will kick-off in 2006 under our Wetlands and Poverty Reduction Project in Africa and South East Asia. These innovative projects, managed by a range of partner organisations, aim to make a real difference on the ground and to influence key policies and plans in at least ten countries. 2006 will also see the start up of new partnership initiatives to secure biodiversity values and livelihoods linked to mangrove ecosystems and other coastal wetland habitats in South East Asia, West Africa and South America.

Recognising that Wetlands International is still a relatively small organisation in terms of staff resources, we will increase our investment in 2006 in internal capacity building and strengthen our presence in Africa and South America in particular. We will continue to build our capabilities in policy and communications through our network of offices, to ensure that we maximise the impact of our work. Through closer engagement with governments and increased outreach to national and local NGOs, we anticipate increasing our membership base over the coming years. These regional membership networks will help to keep us even better informed and responsive to regional needs. Additionally, they will serve to increase the mandate of the organisation to speak and act for the good of wetlands.

Thanks to all our partners and donors for your continued support and encouragement.



Jane Madgwick
CEO, Wetlands International

Organisation

Chief Executive Officer Jane Madgwick	Giuseppe Raaphorst <i>Permanent observer of the host country</i>	Pelicans Alain Crivelli <i>(Old World)</i> , Daniel Anderson <i>(New World)</i>	Non Governmental members BirdLife Denmark / Danish Ornithological Society Denmark BirdLife Netherlands / Vogelbescherming Nederland Netherlands	Governmental members Australia Austria Belgium Bulgaria Canada China Czech Republic Denmark Ecuador Estonia Finland France Germany Greece Hungary India Indonesia Ireland Japan Kenya Latvia Malaysia Netherlands Norway Pakistan Poland Portugal Russia Senegal Slovakia Slovenia Sweden Switzerland Tunisia Ukraine United Kingdom
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Wetlands International wishes to thank the following donors for their generous support during 2005:

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United Nations Environment Programme - (UNEP)
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Other International bodies

African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA)
Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)
European Commission
European Environment Agency
European Space Agency, France
Ramsar Convention on Wetlands
Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation
World Bank

Governmental

Australia: Department of the Environment and Heritage
Australia: Government of New South Wales
Australia: Queensland Environmental Protection Agency
Belgium: Flemish Ministry for the Community
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Canada: Canadian Wildlife Service
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Malaysia: Department of Wildlife and National Parks
Malaysia: Small Grants Programme promoting tropical forests
Mali, Ministère de l'environnement et Assainissement
Central Asian Flyway: meeting in India
Netherlands' Embassy, Vietnam
Netherlands: Embassy, Bangkok, Thailand
Netherlands: Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food quality
Netherlands: Ministry of International Cooperation
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Switzerland: Bundesamt für Umwelt Wald und Landschaft
United Kingdom: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
United Kingdom: Joint Nature Conservation Committee
United Kingdom: Scottish National Heritage
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NGOs

AMPO, French hunting organisation
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United States: Fish & Wildlife Service
Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network
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WWF-Germany
WWF-Malaysia
WWF West African Regional Programme Office (WARPO)

Other

Chester Zoo
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Fitzroy Basin Association
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Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network
Whitley Laing Foundation-Rufford Small Grant (United Kingdom)

Mission:

To sustain and restore wetlands, their resources and biodiversity for future generations.

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