

Wetlands International Annual Review 2003



Member Countries

Albania
Algeria
Argentina
Australia
Austria
Bangladesh
Belarus
Belgium
Bénin
Brazil
Bulgaria
Canada
China, PR
Croatia
Czech Republic
Denmark
Ecuador
Estonia
Finland
France
The Gambia
Georgia
Germany
Greece
Guinee, Republic de
Hungary
India
Indonesia
Iran, Islamic Rep.
Ireland
Italy
Japan
Kazakhstan
Kenya
Latvia
Lithuania
Macedonia, FYR
Malaysia
Mauritania
Mexico
The Netherlands
Norway
Pakistan
Peru
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Russian Federation
Senegal
Slovak Republic
Slovenia
South Africa
Sweden
Switzerland
Togo
Tunisia
Ukraine
United Kingdom
United States of America

50 years on!



Wetlands International has a history that goes back 50 years to the foundation of the International Waterbird & Wetland Research Bureau (IWRB) in 1954. IWRB joined forces with the Asian Wetland Bureau and Wetlands for the Americas to form Wetlands International. The new organisation continued the support of conservation and wise use of the world's wetlands and their biota, in particular waterbirds.

The combined skills and experience of the three organisations enabled the International Waterbird Census (IWC) to develop into a globally important data and information resource. The IWC was widely acclaimed during

the recent global waterbird conference in Edinburgh, Scotland. Wetlands International went on to use its new-found expertise in wetland conservation and management to establish further highly regarded projects around the world.

Foremost amongst the achievements over the past 50 years was a major collaborative effort that resulted in the development of the Ramsar Convention. IWRB and its many committed partners played a major role in the success of the Convention in its early years. Wetlands International has continued to support the Convention and has established even more partnerships in support of our common goals. Such collaboration now covers not only wetland taxa, wetland management and capacity building, but also emphasises the critical links between wetlands and human well-being.

The past 50 years have witnessed the foundation and development of Wetlands International. I now have the opportunity to express my gratitude to all those who have contributed to our many successes as, later this year during our Board of Members meeting in Bangkok, we will launch a Wetlands International medal to recognise such achievements. The medal is dedicated to Luc Hoffmann, who has unstintingly supported our organisation since its inception. I am sure that Luc would join all of us in recognition of the achievements and successes of the many people who have worked for and otherwise supported 'our' efforts in this time.

During the Waterbirds Around the World Conference, I stated that I was proud to deliver a welcoming speech on behalf of Wetlands International. I would now like to extend this statement to include all those who have worked for and supported Wetlands International and its predecessor organisations. Our history is part of our future – our achievements are only possible because we acknowledge and learn from our past.

*CM Finlayson
President, Wetlands International*

Founding Members



Luc Hoffmann



Hugh Boyd



Geoffrey Matthews



Harvey Nelson



Eckhart Kuijken

review

Wetlands International activities around the globe in 2003



Wetlands International has undergone another year of progress and development.

One significant change was the arrival of a new CEO. We are very pleased to welcome Jane Madgwick, who comes to us from WWF. With the departure of Simon Nash we recognise his long history with Wetlands International and before that with IWRB – he witnessed many developments and played a key role in responding to the decisions taken in 2001 to reshape Wetlands International. Simon and his family are now settled back in the UK and we extend a warm vote of thanks to him and best wishes for the future in his new appointment.

Throughout 2003 we continued our efforts to develop and implement globally applicable standards and procedures that reflected our decision in 2001 to form a single Wetlands International entity. These efforts have engaged the Board of Directors and many staff. There has been a huge effort on many fronts, covering legal, financial, human resources, science, programmes and resource issues. The completion of the revised legal structure in The Netherlands was a major outcome and provides a platform for legal links to all Wetlands International's offices. The implementation of standardised office procedures was accompanied by targeted training. Programme development is now in line with our Strategy for 2002–05 and there have been some big successes. All of this has been welcomed and provides a strong base for the finalisation of Wetlands International's restructuring worldwide.

Programme development and integration of the programme across all offices has proceeded and some notable success achieved, with the outcomes of others expected in the near future. Most notably was the seminal conference *Waterbirds Around the World*, 3–8 April 2004, Edinburgh, UK. Wetlands International has played a major role in waterbird conservation for many decades and we were delighted to work with the host governments of this major waterbird conference. It provided an opportunity to reflect on past work and to make future plans. It also reinforced our decision to retain a core programme on waterbirds whilst further developing our wetland habitat and capacity building programmes.

Programme development has also seen the approval of significant projects. The staff involved are to be congratulated. However, the list also shows an imbalance of activities between our programmes and the regions; this has been recognised and is being addressed in a strategic manner.

The Board of Directors met twice in 2003, working largely through a committee structure and is reviewing its own progress and operations. We are aware as anyone, that we need to look regularly at our own operations and seek improvements as needed. These meetings have been well supported by staff and we anticipate that by the time the Board of Members meets in Bangkok in November 2004 we will be able to report positively on the many changes and outcomes requested and achieved, and clearly identify our priorities for the future.

In last year's review I noted that I had enjoyed working with Wetlands International. This is true again this year. The organisation encompasses many people and it is evident that we have an excellent team and that there is a greater sense of a common purpose and awareness of our role. Our partnerships have succeeded and these bode well for the future. As we face the future it is worth reflecting that IWRB (one of our predecessor organisations) was established in 1954 – exactly 50 years ago. Our world has changed considerably in that time, but it is evident that wetland conservation and wise use are still major challenges for much of the world's population. Our organisation is showing that it can contribute and can make a difference through a dedicated science-based programme. We should be proud of our achievements and those of the many people who have worked with our organisation and its predecessors. In particular, we should acknowledge and applaud the wisdom, foresight and perseverance of these people – the stalwarts of wetland conservation and wise use.

In 2004 we will hold another Board of Members meeting. This is an opportunity not only to assess our more recent challenges and directions but also to reflect on our past and the many people who have contributed so much. I will conclude this message with a vote of thanks to all those who have contributed – the organisation and our wetlands owe you a great deal. Thank you and I look forward to a prosperous year working with you and demonstrating our faith in each other and our organisation.



CM Finlayson
President, Wetlands International

introducing ...

Jane Madgwick

Jane became CEO of Wetlands International in March 2004,

following nearly seven years working for WWF. She established and directed the Freshwater Programme for Europe, North Africa and the Middle East, coordinating a multi-cultural team of 26 officers and NGO partners across the European continent. Major conservation achievements of this team included gaining adjustments to key European policy and financial instruments; successful campaigns to protect wetlands from major threats, e.g. dams and water transfers; and establishment of major, multi-stakeholder demonstration projects for integrated water and wetlands management. In this job, she played a significant role in the development and implementation of the WWF global Living Waters Programme. Jane has spent the last three years based in Western Australia where she established a major profile and platform for WWF through the development of an integrated programme to address threats to a range of globally significant marine, freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems.

With over 20 years of working experience, that has taken her to most continents, Jane has an unending passion for wetlands and their conservation. When not working she can usually be found seeking out wild places on foot or bicycle, playing tennis or kayaking.



Special Report from 2004



waterbirds AROUND THE WORLD

3–8 April 2004, Edinburgh, UK



The Waterbirds Around the World Conference took place just over 40 years after the first European waterbird conference (St Andrews 1963).

The Conference was highly successful, thanks to the participation of 460 delegates from 90 countries. That participation was acknowledged during the opening session by ministers from the host countries – the United Kingdom and The Netherlands.

HRH The Prince of Wales gave an impassioned speech on Albatross conservation during the closing ceremony. The Conference was financially supported by over 21 countries and international and national organisations.

Symposia and side events

A whole range of flyway-related subjects were presented and discussed at the many symposia and side events. Some of these are detailed here.

The symposium on *Flyway Monitoring* provided a global overview of current monitoring approaches and programmes, discussed practical ways to fill gaps in coverage and increase effectiveness, and suggested ways of linking monitoring results more closely to the needs of waterbird conservation and habitat management. A historic evening meeting of national coordinators of



IWC involved 64 participants from over 40 countries, who heard of plans to further globalise the International Waterbird Census (IWC).

The *Neotropics* Symposium focused on ornithogeography and migration of neotropical waterbird species, conservation and threats, and man-made wetland habitats (shrimp aquaculture, rice fields). Participation of the Americas National Coordinators to the IWC meeting confirmed the strong support for the Neotropical Waterbird Census.

The Asian Waterbird Census launched its latest report: *Numbers and Distribution of Waterbirds and Wetlands in the Asia-Pacific Region. Results of the Asian Waterbird Census: 1997–2001*. In their forewords, the Secretary General of the Convention on Wetlands, and the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Migratory Species called on their Contracting Parties to use this publication to promote wetland and waterbird conservation. Both conventions are major international data users.

One of the plenary presentations was dedicated to *Climate Change and Waterbirds*. Max Finlayson, President of Wetlands International, presented a global overview of predicted climate change and its impacts on waterbirds. During the symposium on this topic, modelling results of potential scenarios and their impact on climate change on Arctic-nesting geese and Common Terns were presented. Recent shifts in waterbird distribution in the UK in relation to warmer winters, suggest that similar analysis of IWC data could indicate how wintering waterbirds are responding to climate change at the continental level.

The *Sustainable Waterbird Harvest* symposium was convened by the Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC) in collaboration with the Wetlands International Waterbird Harvest Specialist Group. A key output was the call for coordinated action by both the public and private sectors, dependent local communities and other stakeholders towards ensuring the conservation and sustainable use of waterbirds and wetland resources.

Other highlights included the topical and well attended symposia on *Disease Emergence and Impacts on Migratory Waterbirds*; *Integrating Waterbird Conservation – Populations, Habitats and Landscapes*; and *Conflict Resolution*. Much attention was paid to cross-cutting issues to bring the species focus to the wider context of habitat and environment conservation and sustainable use.

The Edinburgh Declaration

The Edinburgh Declaration calls for urgent action and greater targeted investment to secure the monitoring and conservation of flyways around the world. The Declaration also highlights the need to address specific information gaps in major flyway systems.

The active participation by all delegates underlined the growing interest in and commitment to halting and reversing wetland loss and degradation. The outcomes once more highlighted the now all too familiar gap between commitment and action at national and international levels. In addition, climate change is presenting new challenges to waterbird conservation.



Importantly, the Conference and Declaration acknowledged that waterbirds have a range of intrinsic values as well as being a natural resource; and that flyways are as much about people as they are about birds. They emphasised that despite increasingly impressive global mapping and databases, which describe routes and population trends, flyway conservation also requires a bottom-up approach, raising awareness of wetland values and engaging people in their local environment through key waterbird sites. In this vein, the Declaration presents us all with a new challenge – to demonstrate the role of flyway conservation in contributing to poverty alleviation and sustainable development.

Wetlands International will make an important contribution to this call for action:

- firstly, we are committed to work with partners on the International Waterbirds Census and Waterbird Population Estimates, to further develop their coverage, resolution and value as a policy tool;
- secondly, Wetlands International will play an important role over the coming years in promoting AEWA as a model for flyway cooperation and in demonstrating how it translates into effective flyway conservation at regional, national and site levels; and
- thirdly, in response to the Declaration's call for action, Wetlands International will seek to bring together its expertise and skills through projects for wetland inventory, capacity building, wise use and species conservation in key demonstration areas. In the selection of these areas, we will seek to address poverty alleviation and sustainable development priorities.

Jane Madgwick, CEO

The results of the Conference will soon be available to the wider public through the publication of a Summary Booklet, and the full proceedings of the Conference will be available towards the end of 2005. For more information visit: <http://www.wetlands.org/GFC/>

wetland species



Asian Waterbird Census

In October 2003, the Asian Waterbird Census (AWC) coordinators met formally for the first time since the establishment of the AWC in 1987.

Thirty-five people from 20 countries and regions participated, including coordinators and their representatives from Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, India, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam.

It was a great opportunity to discuss the main achievements and issues for the development of the AWC, focusing on the support of international and regional conventions and initiatives, and challenges and opportunities for development at national level. Strategy discussions were initiated, and the AWC Strategic Plan for 2004–2006 was finalised and endorsed by the coordinators after the meeting. The focus of the Strategy is on enhancement of geographic and site coverage, improvement of data quality, development of a training and public awareness programme, fund-raising, support to decision-making and the development of a regional coordination mechanism. There was a unanimous decision to organise AWC coordinators meetings on a regular basis.

At the same time, there was a formal designation ceremony for the first corporately owned Network Site in Malaysia. The Kapar Ash Ponds, belonging to an electric power generation station, became the first site in Malaysia and the thirty-third site on the East Asian-Australasian Shorebird Site Network.

Another significant achievement for the AWC this year was the census results of mainland China. Only one year since its restart, the census now covers a total of 33 sites over 10 provinces and Autonomous Regions in mainland China and the Macao Special Administration Region. The census ran from December 2002 to February 2003 and 341,821 waterbirds of 90 species were recorded.

International Waterbird Census Central Asia

In January 2003, the mid-winter counts under the International Waterbird Census (IWC) were carried out in Central Asia and the Caucasus. The census area included territories of Russia (Northern Caucasus), Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Headed by national coordinators, nearly 40 waterbird specialists participated in these counts. The surveys covered many important wetland areas, such as the Caspian, Black and Azov Sea coasts, the Kuban, Amu Darya and Syr Darya Rivers, Lake Issyk Kul and several other large lakes and reservoirs.



Thanks to this large-scale fieldwork, the data on the distribution and the number of wintering waterbirds, as well as information on the status of their habitats, have significantly improved. The census has also contributed to the establishment of a network of regional experts – an opportunity to enhance the professional knowledge and skills of local specialists.

Later in the year, Issyk Kul Lake was the scene of a regional workshop on the *Study and Protection of Migratory Waterbirds in Central Asia: Issues of Coordination and Cooperation*. The meeting brought together IWC national coordinators, waterbird specialists and wetland managers from Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Russia. The participants agreed on a number of recommendations on wetland and waterbird conservation in Central Asia.

conservation

Census results –
Mainland China

Large-scale
fieldwork –
Central Asia

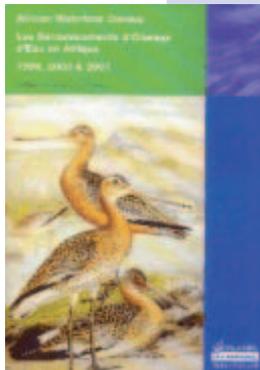
Major report
published –
Dakar



African Waterbird Census

The African Waterbird Census (AfWC) is a biannual monitoring scheme for African wetlands and waterbirds. The year 2003 was significant for the census, which saw the publication of a major report (the first since 1999), a resumption of the AfWC Steering Committee (the first meeting since 2000) and provision of support to several countries through a small grant fund. Cheikh Diagana of Mauritania coordinated the census from the Wetlands International office in Dakar, Senegal.

The report *African Waterbird Census 1999, 2000 and 2001* was published in Dakar in mid-2003, and presented data and national summaries from 36 countries. The report was in A4 format and on CD for the first time, due to the large number of tables and the three-year span of data. The bilingual presentation (French–English) was retained. In January, 2000 and 2001, around nine million waterbirds were recorded, the highest count being 3.3 million sooty terns at breeding colonies in the Seychelles in 2000. There was also comprehensive coverage of coastal and Sahelian wetlands in West Africa.



The AfWC Steering Committee met in February 2003 at the Kenya Wildlife Services Training Institute, overlooking Lake Naivasha, Kenya's second Ramsar Site. The committee made several recommendations concerning the operation of the AfWC, whilst new 1% criteria were set for each sub-region. This enables us to produce lists of wetlands of potentially international importance, which meet Criterion 6 of the Convention of Wetlands. The meeting was linked to

another concerning the new Wetland Biodiversity Monitoring Scheme (WBMS) for Eastern Africa. This scheme, established under a Darwin-funded project of WWT, has very close links with the AfWC, and Wetlands International is directly involved in its implementation. The scheme was launched later in the year at the National Museum of Kenya, Nairobi.

The AEWA Secretariat generously provided a grant for survey work in 2003. Several countries were supported, including Burundi, The Congo, Djibouti, Sudan, Tanzania, Niger, Benin and Senegal. Small grants are extremely useful to encourage network development, assist execution of regular surveys and for special surveys of large or remote wetlands.

2003 has been a crucial year for the integration of IWC data into waterbird conservation. After four years of hard work the UNEP-GEF African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Flyways proposal was approved, linking IWC data with IBA data from BirdLife International and site information from the Ramsar database and sources. Central access to this combined and improved information will be a crucial tool for site managers and conservationists which will enhance the conservation of migratory waterbirds at important sites in the African-Eurasian Flyway (see pages 12–13).

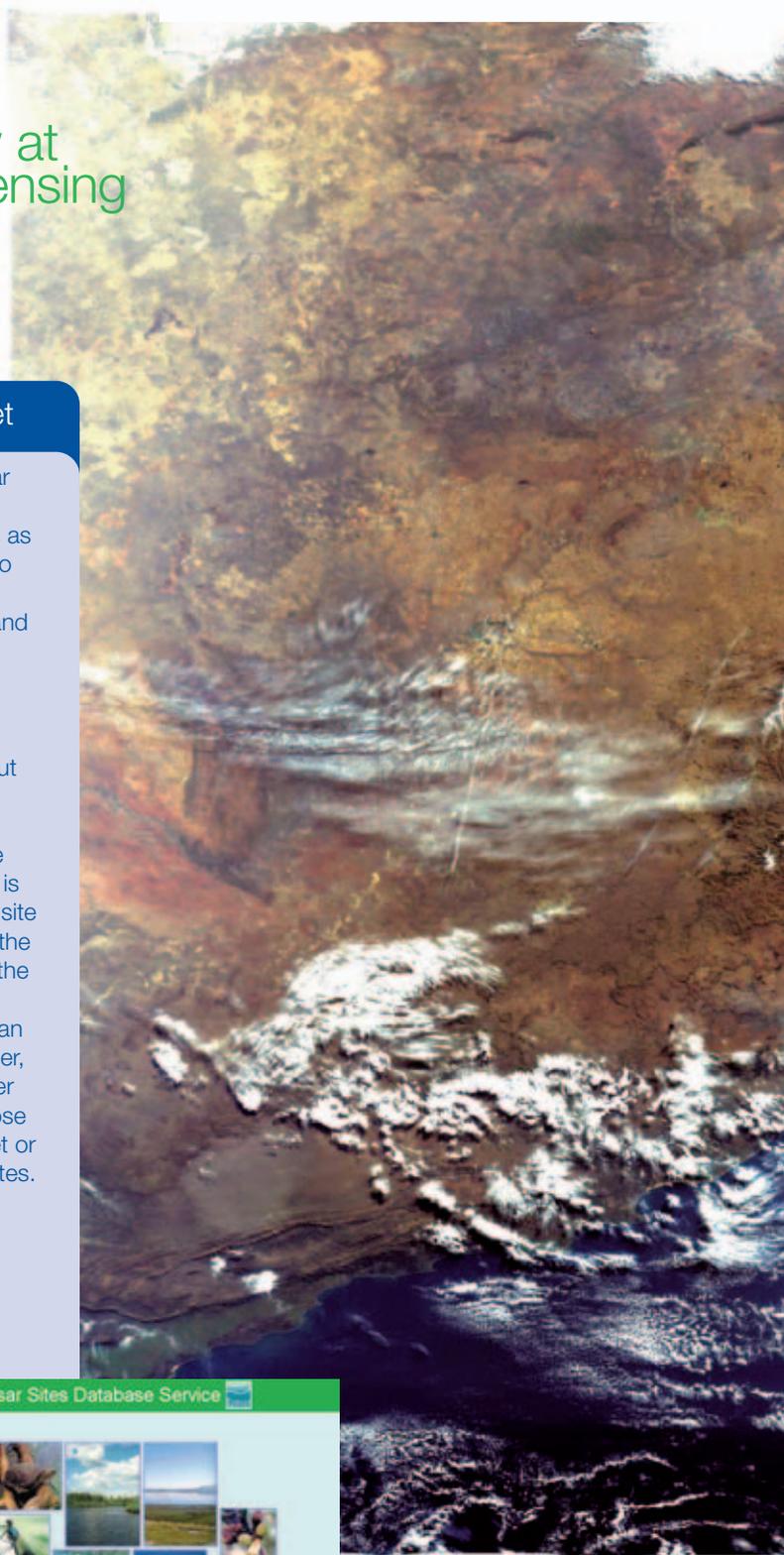
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wetland

A year of major achievement

Wetlands International is now at the cutting edge of remote sensing

Further capacity building



Ramsar Sites Database Team and the internet

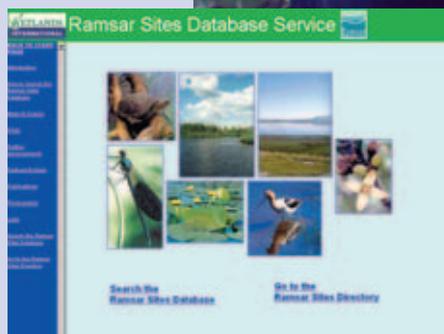
Since its inception at the beginning of the 1990s, the Ramsar Sites Database has been the primary tool to manage all the information about designated Ramsar Sites, and also serves as the main index to the Ramsar Information Sheets (RIS) and to the Directory. It is managed by Wetlands International under contract to the Ramsar Secretariat, and copies of all maps and RIS documents are maintained on their behalf.

The completion of the new database enables sophisticated online searching of data about Ramsar Sites and is a major milestone on the road to making all relevant information about Ramsar Sites and their context publicly available.

A massive amount of data sits behind the home page for the new service (see www.wetlands.org/rsdb/default.htm), yet it is presented in a user-friendly way, and includes summaries of site information. Users can directly access our premier product, the Ramsar Sites Directory, consisting of concise summaries of the content of the full Ramsar Information Sheets (supplied by Contracting Parties to the Convention). Alternatively, users can enter the database to find sites by name, Ramsar Site number, country or region. Additionally, a search can be made on over 35 different characteristics of sites, and then users can choose to read a directory entry, the latest Ramsar Information Sheet or download the full content of the database for one or more sites.

The team plan to upgrade the service further to provide:

- all the official Ramsar Information Sheets in the popular downloadable pdf format
- a map server module with GIS functionality to standards agreed with the global partners which will serve all available site maps
- key floral/faunal species recorded at the Ramsar Sites
- baseline condition and change analysis features
- connectivity with the International Waterbird Census (IWC) dataset.



inventory



European Space Agency – GlobWetland Project

Following the successful ESA TESEO project¹, the European Space Agency (ESA) announced *GlobWetland* – an open competition for a €1 million project to produce satellite-derived and geo-referenced products. This was to include inventory maps and digital elevation models of wetlands and the surrounding catchment areas. These products will aid local and national authorities in fulfilling their Ramsar obligations, and should also function as a helpful tool for wetland managers and scientific researchers.

Wetlands International (with Synoptics of The Netherlands) made a successful bid as part of a consortium led by Atlantis Scientific of Canada, and the project was started in November 2003. The countries (known as Users) that have agreed to participate are in four regions: North America, South America, Europe and Africa. Over 60 sites, most already designated as Ramsar Sites, have been proposed by the Users. The consortium will make available all its results in due course through a dedicated web site, www.globwetland.org, which will also host an internet-based 'web mapper' with satellite photographs and other products produced for the User countries. This provides an exciting opportunity for Wetlands International to be at the cutting edge of wetland detection and assessment of condition using remote sensing, and will also enhance our ability to present maps and other services over the internet, linked to our Ramsar Sites Database Service.

For further details, please contact:
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African-European cooperation

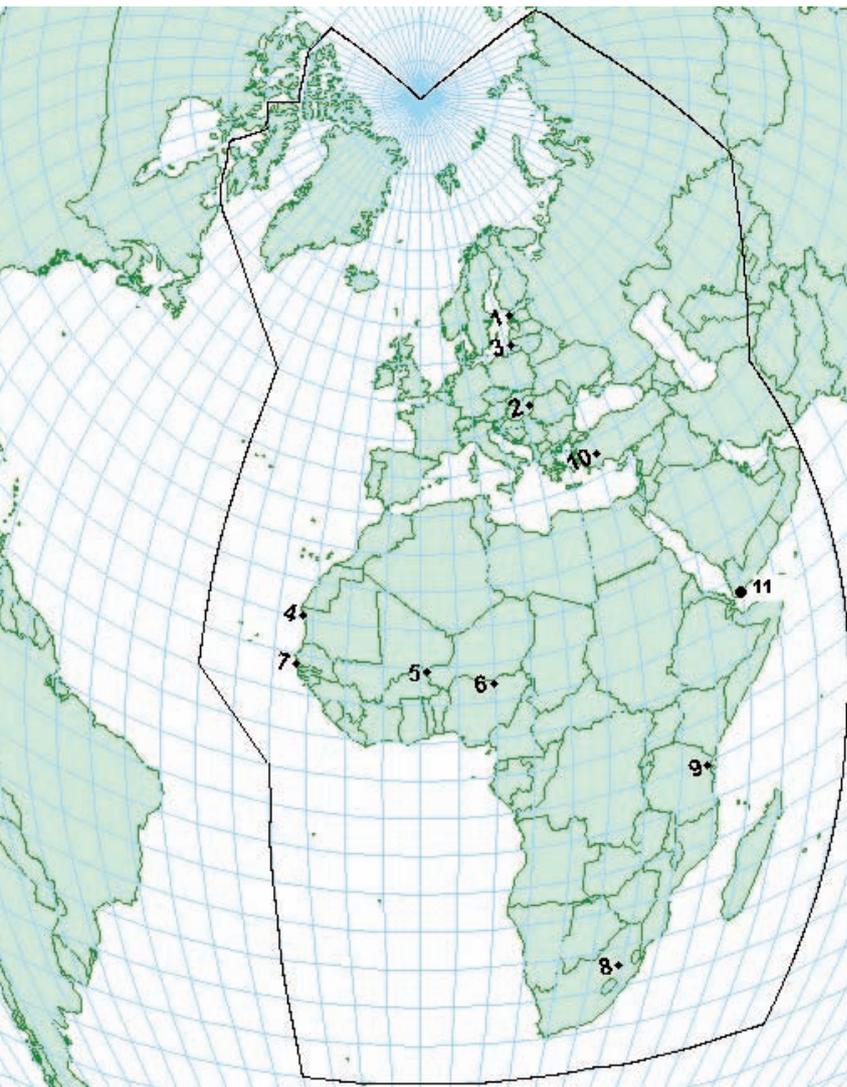
For our Africa team, the GlobWetland project is a real opportunity to build capacity in this demanding scientific area and will include work in Algeria, Egypt, Chad, Cameroon, Kenya, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa. The primary objectives are the training of African Users in ground data collection and the effective application of the many remote sensing products. In collaboration with Netherlands-based staff, our capacity building officer in Dakar, Senegal will provide Francophone and Anglophone participants with expert field-based skills training using the Global Positioning System to delineate wetland types and their hydrological status.

A pilot study in field techniques will be tested in one of Wetlands International's ongoing projects near Moscow. Peat fires are a frequent hazard in the Central Meschera and Dubna Lowland Wetlands, Russia. Remote sensing will be used to pinpoint present and past fires and to correlate these with any drainage impacts. Students working from Dubna University will go to pre-defined sites and collect definitive vegetation and hydrological status information to calibrate the remote sensed images. A practical field manual will be written for use in Africa and elsewhere.

¹ Treaty Enforcement Services using Earth Observation, see <http://styx.esrin.esa.it:5000/teseo/about.htm>

spotlight

UNEP-GEF African/Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Flyways Project



Map of the AEWA Area and location of demonstration sites

1. Haapsalu-Noarootsi Bays, Estonia
2. Biharugra's Fishponds, Hungary
3. Nemunas Delta, Lithuania
4. Banc d'Arguin, Mauritania
5. Kokorou and Namga wetlands, Niger
6. Hadejia-Nguru wetlands, Nigeria
7. Saloum-Niuni, Senegal/The Gambia
8. Wakkerstroom, S. Africa
9. Dar es Salaam wetlands, Tanzania
10. Lake Burdur, Turkey
11. Aden Lagoons, Yemen

Progress and commendations in 2003

This year the Project Brief was completed, comprising an Executive Summary, Project Brief and 13 annexes – totalling in excess of 300 pages! It underwent technical review by the GEF Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel, the GEF implementing agencies and was submitted to the GEF Council in November for approval. The proposal was approved at all stages and even received commendations from the Council.

What the project will do

Overall the project will enhance the conservation status of migratory waterbirds across the African/Eurasian flyways. A series of strategic and catalytic activities will be executed that enhance the capacity available to carry out conservation activities that benefit these species. This will include: improving individual skills and competence, the range of tools available to individuals, the information base on sites and best practices, and the ability for practitioners to communicate with one another on flyway-relevant issues. Some of the key project outputs are:

- a critical site network tool available on the internet, providing information on the most important sites which migratory waterbirds depend on across the African/Eurasian area. This will target decision-makers and site managers who need this information for planning and management
- best practice wetland management will be showcased in 11 demonstration projects in 12 countries (see map)
- enhanced technical capacity of waterbird counters in key sub-regions¹ through classroom and field-based training
- identification of additional improvement to the knowledge base on existing critically important sites for migratory waterbirds
- stakeholder-owned *Wetland and Waterbird Training and Awareness Raising Programmes* in four sub-regions
- resources for *Wetland and Waterbird Training and Awareness Raising Programmes*
- exchange programmes developed and initiated across the project area and a sustainability strategy for their long-term implementation developed, and
- an electronic discussion forum for migratory waterbird issues.

¹ Central Asia and the Caucasus States, the Middle Eastern States, Western Africa, Eastern Africa.



The project partnership

The partnership from the PDF-B phase of the project has been enhanced – the United Nations Office for Project Management (UNOPS) will take the role of Executing Agency for GEF-funded activities in the project. This will reduce the administrative load on the technical partners. UNEP remains as the Implementing Agency. The main technical partners are Wetlands International (WI) and BirdLife International (BLI) who are named contractors, with WI taking the lead technical role. The 11 demonstration projects will be executed by the local executing agencies that developed them in the PDF-B phase. UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre is a key technical partner who will be developing the internet portal for accessing information on the critical site network. The UNEP-African Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement Secretariat (AEWA) and the Ramsar Convention Secretariat retain their engagement as the key multilateral environment agreements whose action plans are supported by the project.

Project endorsement

The project has been endorsed by the governments of Estonia, Gambia, Hungary, Lithuania, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Turkey, Yemen.

Project donors

There are currently more than 40 donors that have committed funds to the implementation of the project. The main donors are GEF, the German Ministry of Environment, the UNEP-AEWA Secretariat and Wetlands International.

Activities in 2004

The project documentation will be prepared for implementation based on the GEF Project Brief and then endorsed by the GEF Chief Executive Officer. Following this, the key project staff (the Chief Technical Officer and Junior Operations Manager) will be recruited through an international process by UNOPS. It is anticipated that the project will start in the autumn.



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wise

Integrated wetlands and river basin management

Wise use of wetlands in Senegal

In this, WI cooperated with the Protection of Coastal and Marine Resources (PRCM) group, which consists of national and international NGOs, regional bodies, government structures and research institutes. A first meeting was held in 2003 to discuss the protection and wise use of coastal and marine resources along the West African seaboard.

In the framework of the Niger Basin Initiative (a joint initiative of WWF, Nigerian Conservation Foundation and Wetlands International) an agreement was signed between the Ramsar NGO Partners (WWF, BirdLife International, IUCN and WI) and the Niger Basin Authority, to promote the implementation of the Ramsar Convention in the Niger Basin.

A partnership was developed between Wetlands International and DPN (Direction des Parcs Nationaux) for the elaboration of a national policy and development of integrated actions on wetlands.

Regular follow-up was provided to sites in Senegal, Guinea-Bissau and Mali that were previously involved in the Local Initiatives Programme (2001–2002). This included the monitoring of income generation and support for a range of field activities.

Community-based sustainable development and water resources management of Loktak Lake, India

The Loktak project aims to enhance livelihood security for local communities while ensuring conservation of the lake. It promotes participation of local communities in all sectors of natural-resources management. In 2003 activities included:

- a) participatory Rural Appraisals in 22 villages
- b) management planning and pilot projects
- c) construction of community owned fish hatcheries to restock the lake
- d) integrated watershed management, soil conservation, agro-forestry measures, handicraft and handloom projects with various indigenous communities
- e) improving sanitation through low cost community toilets and construction of pond-based safe drinking water units
- f) development of an intersectoral water management plan
- g) Environmental Flow Assessment of Chilika Lagoon, and
- h) the design of a wetland interpretation centre and eco-tourism development of the Harike wetland, Punjab.

The Berbak-Sembilang project, Indonesia

This five-year project started in 2000 with a focus on two major wetlands areas in Sumatra comprising of some of the most significant peat swamp forests and the largest protected mangrove forest of South-east Asia. It aims to achieve their long-term conservation through spatial planning, assessment and monitoring, capacity building and environmental awareness.

Achievements so far include:

- a) the establishment of the Sembilang National Park (202,000 ha) on 19 March 2003
- b) integrated management and buffer zone planning of the Sembilang NP, involving also the Merang-Kepahyang Peat Swamp Forest (MKPSF) which forms a corridor between the Berbak and Sembilang NPs
- c) recent approval of a Strategic Action Plan for the MKPSF
- d) facilitation of local NGOs meetings to discuss conservation activities in south Sumatra, and
- e) an exhibition on the Sembilang NP at the Sriwijaya Expo 2003 in Palembang.

An economic valuation model was developed for decision makers, to clarify the actual economic benefit derived from the Sembilang NP, which totals at least US\$15 million per year (mainly from fisheries). It provided the justification for local government to recommend Sembilang as a national park, and to support ensuing policies and actions.

use



The **Ukrainian** River Network

Under its Small Grants Programme *Save Your River*, WI supported 26 NGOs active in the field of small river conservation.

Within the framework of the Ukraine Small Rivers Project, a third Workshop of the Ukrainian River Network was held, involving representatives of 38 environmental NGOs from all regions of Ukraine and representatives from local authorities, business and academia. It was organised with the Carpathian Ecological Club *Ruthenia*.

A web site of the Ukrainian Rivers Network was launched. To enhance the capacity for cooperation and information exchange, e-mail equipment and payments for internet services were granted to 28 NGO members of the Network.

Proceedings were published with the results of various meetings held by the Ukrainian Rivers Network, including material on *Public Participation in Conservation of Small Rivers in Ukraine*.

Community based and integrated wetland development initiatives in **Malaysia**

- An Environmental Education Programme was developed for Semelai school children in Tasek Bera Ramsar Site. Community-based eco-tourism was developed with the local Semelai Association for Boating and Tourism.
- In the Kuala Gula mangrove forests, a very important location for migratory waterbirds and fisheries, local Chinese community groups were trained in eco-tourism development. Training materials were in Mandarin.
- The Kota Kemuning Wetland was constructed to treat storm water and highway runoffs. It constitutes a cheaper alternative to large, underground, engineered drainage pipes and is probably the first time housing developers have been able to use this environmentally friendly technology to treat storm water in Malaysia.

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Integrated wetlands, biodiversity and river basin management in **China**

China's largest and most important wetland systems in arid environments are the Tarim and Peacock basins in the middle of China's largest desert. WI implemented a project addressing issues related to water conservation and wetlands restoration providing a case study for such arid regions. It promotes the conservation of freshwater biodiversity using an integrated river basin management approach. Activities include rapid assessments, inter-sectoral workshops, establishment of local, national and international partnerships, and information exchange.



Climate change and peat swamp forests in Indonesia

The project *Climate Change, Forests and Peatlands in Indonesia (CCFPI)* is integrated with the global UNEP-GEF project on Peatlands, Biodiversity and Climate Change. It is a carbon sequestration initiative jointly implemented with Wildlife Habitat Canada. It promotes the sustainable management of peat swamp forests in Indonesia to increase their capacity to sequester and store carbon, and to improve local livelihoods. Activities are based on a multi-stakeholder approach with strong involvement of local community members.

Nationally, it aims to strengthen technical capacity to manage peatlands for the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) investment, and to enhance the understanding of climate change mitigation values of peatlands. Locally, it pilots community-based approaches to peatland management which are supported by:

- a) cost-effective livelihood alternatives;
- b) analysis of needs and capacity of local stakeholders; and
- c) scientific studies for measuring carbon stores in project locations.

Demonstration activities focus in Sumatra on the buffer zones of the Berbak and Sembilang National Parks; and in Central Kalimantan at the Sungai Puning and the Mentangai ex-Mega Rice areas. The project has a national Steering Committee, and is guided locally by Working Groups involving universities, government departments and NGOs.

wise

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Wise use of peatlands

Integrated Peatlands Management for Biodiversity and Climate Change in Ruergai, Tibetan Plateau, China

The Ruergai area is located in the upper catchment of the Yellow and Yangtze rivers and includes over 500,000 ha of peatlands, some of which are heavily degraded as a result of drainage and overgrazing. The Integrated Peatlands Management for Biodiversity and Climate Change project evaluates the impact of different management options on peatlands in relation to climate change and biodiversity, and helps to demonstrate peatland rehabilitation. It also facilitates intersectoral cooperation.

Activities include field trips for government officials, workshops on integrated conservation and use of peatlands, community-based restoration of peat hydrology (e.g. blocking of drainage channels) and monitoring of restored areas. The project has received high praise from government officials, and has resulted in increased investments from national and local authorities in peatland restoration.

Wise use of peatlands in South America

To gain an overview of the values and conservation priorities of South American peatlands, the Global Peatland Initiative* supported two inventory projects:

- a) *Los Turbales de la Patagonia: Bases para su inventario y la conservación de su biodiversidad* – an inventory of Patagonian peatlands; and
- b) *Los Páramos del Mundo* – an inventory of high-mountain peatlands (paramos) of the world, in particular the Andes, by IUCN-SUR and Grupo Paramos.

The publications also contain much information on the importance of these peatlands for people. Both projects helped to establish regional networks.

* The GPI is a partnership between IUCN-Netherlands Committee, the International Mire Conservation Group, the International Peat Society, Alterra and the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage, managed by Wetlands International.

use

Mainstreaming wetlands in international development cooperation

The **bio-rights** approach

The bio-rights approach is a concept developed in cooperation with a number of environment and economic experts, presenting an innovative financial mechanism for reconciling poverty reduction and sustainable use of natural resources in developing countries. The system involves payments by the global community to local stakeholders for biodiversity conservation services, thus compensating for the opportunity costs of sustainable use of their natural resources. Conditions are that both donors and local stakeholders endorse the system and that compliance with environmental goals is monitored and made transparent to the global community. See www.bio-rights.org

Wise use delivery by conventions, agreements and regional initiatives

Wetland Strategy Development **Ukraine**

To support the implementation of the Ramsar Convention, the conference *National Strategy for Conservation of Wetlands of Ukraine* was organised with the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources, Kiev, Ukraine. More than 120 participants representing a wide range of government and non-government stakeholder groups made their contribution to the elaboration of a strategic vision for wise use of wetlands in Ukraine.

The socio-economic value of wetlands

The socio-economics of integrated river basin management in **Mali**

Within the framework of the Netherlands-financed project *Water for Food and Ecosystems*, a socio-economic database on the Upper Niger River and Inner Niger Delta was created. It included data on human population; rice, fish, millet and sorghum production; livestock production and electricity supply, to determine the positive and negative impacts of dams both up and downstream. A presentation *Towards a wise use of scarce river water of the Upper Niger* was given at the World Water Forum, Kyoto. Other supporting studies in 2003 included:

- the use of chemical products in the Dead Delta and Inner Niger Delta; and
- an inventory of dams in the Niger River. (See publication: *List of hydro-electrical devices on the Niger river*).

People and waterbirds, waterbirds and people

In different parts of the world, Wetlands International has been initiating community-based projects to curb and support alternatives to the uncontrolled hunting and harvesting of waterbirds, including Pattani Bay (southern Thailand, since 1983), Indramayu-Cirebon (Java, Indonesia, since 1992), Inner Niger Delta (Mali, since 1998) and also in the Pampas wetlands of Argentina since 2001. In 2003, we published the Spanish language publication *Primer taller sobre la caza de aves acuáticas (Workshop on Waterbird Harvest)* in cooperation with national and provincial agencies in Argentina.

These projects include detailed investigations of species composition of harvests, local trade structures, stakeholder analysis and socio-economic analysis.

In West Siberia, Wetlands International is implementing a project aimed at developing environmental profiles and community-based management plans for Lake Chany (Ramsar Site) and Lake Kuludinskoye, which have important waterbird colonies (including the endangered Greater Black-headed Gull). The project aims to find ways to combine biodiversity values of the wetlands with the agricultural use of the areas. In 2003, several stakeholder meetings and a workshop were held, and fieldwork was carried out to collect information on the colonies and local socio-economics, including fisheries.

The socio-economics of peatland conservation in **Russia**

Wetlands International started the project *Conserving Peatlands of Central and European Russia: the wise use approach to peatlands ecosystem management*. It is targeted at decision-makers and scientists at both federal and regional level, as well as regional NGOs and local stakeholder groups. It aims to introduce an internationally standard method for socio-economic valuation of wetland ecosystems. It will implement case studies and demonstration projects in two key peatland regions (Mladimir and Moscow) which have different land use regimes and socio-economic conditions. Cost-benefit analysis of peatland restoration, different management practices and a long-term plan for wise use of peatlands will be developed. This will involve calculations for different scenarios of peatland restoration and management in the pilot areas, development of an overview of the social aspects of peatland management, and a better understanding of the economic role peatlands.

After testing, it will further promote the socio-economic valuation methodology and arrange for its official endorsement and dissemination to other regions. The project will raise the awareness of decision makers and local communities to the potential benefit of integrated land-use planning in peatlands.

capacity



Chilika and Loktak Lakes, eastern India

For the past six years, Wetlands International has been working in partnership with the Chilika Development Authority (CDA) and the Loktak Development Authority (LDA) to promote the conservation and sustainable development of these two Ramsar Sites. Over 200,000 people depend on Chilika Lake and over 50,000 on Loktak for their sustenance. These people are mainly farmers, reed gatherers and small-scale entrepreneurs.

One of the major objectives of the WI initiative has been to build technical and managerial capabilities within LDA and CDA to undertake the implementation of various activities for conservation and wise use of Loktak and Chilika. To achieve this, 38 needs-based training programmes were organised to build capacity of wetland managers, concerned state government agencies and communities. Infrastructure has been established at both sites for the assessment and monitoring of wetlands and their resources using remote sensing and GIS techniques, and database management systems. During 2003, the following key activities were carried out:

- WI played a key role in supporting the Ministry of Environment and Fisheries in organising four regional workshops across India. The main objective was the development of the capacity of wetland managers in the formulation and implementation of management action plans on those priority wetlands identified by the Indian Government. Case studies on Loktak and Chilika Lakes were presented in the workshops to demonstrate the design and implementation of various activities for the integrated management of wetlands.
- Newsletters on Loktak and Chilika were produced, serving as key awareness tools in disseminating information to various stakeholders and wetland managers in the region, at both national and international levels. Over 2,000 copies of the newsletters were published in both English and the local language.
- A training course on the use of GIS as a management tool was organised. This will aid the assessment and monitoring of wetlands and its resources for CDA and LDA.
- Training workshops on integrated fish farming, hatcheries operation, and the formation and management of self help groups for Chilika and Loktak fisher communities were also held.



Capacity building for river basin management in western China

The Tarim River Basin is the longest interior river in China, with a total length of 2,100 km. The basin supports 8.3 million people, many depending on the pasture and crops from irrigation. Water management issues have become critical and the national government has called for the restoration of the Tarim River.

Funding from the Netherlands Directorate General for International Cooperation enabled Wetlands International to develop a demonstration project within the Konqi River Basin. A key element of the project was to conduct training workshops on Integrated River Management with local agencies. Government agencies are the key decision-makers on water allocation in the Konqi River.

The review of the information on water management of the Tarim River and the Konqi River showed that there were some major problems with water allocation decisions. The lack of an integrated approach was resulting in the diversion of the Konqi River into the Tarim River. While this was having some positive impacts in the Tarim River it had resulted in major problems in the Konqi River.

The demonstration project ran a series of workshops for government offices involved in water planning and natural resource management. This enabled participants to see the broader implications of their management actions, in particular the impacts on biodiversity. The workshop called for:

- the establishment of a new Protected Area on the Tarim River
- an upgrade of the importance of the Populans Nature Reserve
- a strengthening of coordination and linkage among the related agencies
- a strengthening of scientific research on water resources and wetlands
- an improvement of local capacity through additional training activities.

Following the completion of the project, the local and prefecture governments have requested ongoing assistance from Wetlands International. This assistance is required to help build local capacity and obtain further international assistance to address the water management issues of the Tarim Basin.

building



Kuala Gula coastal wetland

Kuala Gula is a major coastal wetland on the west of Malaysia, south of Penang. The coastal mangrove forest, mudflats and shallow waters are an important fishery and feeding area for migratory waterbirds. The Malaysian Government has identified the area as a priority eco-tourism site and has proposed nomination for listing under the Ramsar Convention.

In early 2000, the Danish International Development Agency conducted a workshop with non-government organisations in Malaysia to develop cooperative environmental activities. Out of this, a partnership developed between Wetlands International and the Danish Hunting Association (DHA). This partnership addressed wetland conservation in Malaysia, with an initial focus on the internationally important coastal wetlands of Kuala Gula.

Wetlands International and DHA are now involved in a two-year capacity building project, funded by DANIDA, that will:

- equip local communities with skills, knowledge and understanding in order to be involved in eco-tourism
- enhance appreciation of the value and importance of wetlands among the local community
- strengthen cooperation between government agencies, local communities and NGOs.

Activities in the project address three key interest groups; schoolchildren and teachers, the general community and government officers.

Special school activities provide a foundation component for the project as it enables teacher-child-parent learning about the environmental values and importance of the coastal wetlands. With the support of the Malaysian Nature Society, a school Nature Club has been developed. The club provides weekly nature-based activities for the children. Teachers are supported through special environmental education activities.

Activities for the general community have focused on the development of local eco-tourism skills. Two community-based organisations are being established to cater for the increasing demand for eco-tourism activities. Members of these groups have been involved in a range of training activities that included a study tour to the Tasek Bera Ramsar Site to see how the local people there have responded to eco-tourism opportunities.

Activities with district, state and national government agencies have increased awareness of the values of the Kuala Gula area and enabled a coordinated approach to the future management of the area. A study tour to one of the existing Ramsar Sites in southern Malaysia was particularly successful in enabling agencies to understand the implications of Ramsar listing.

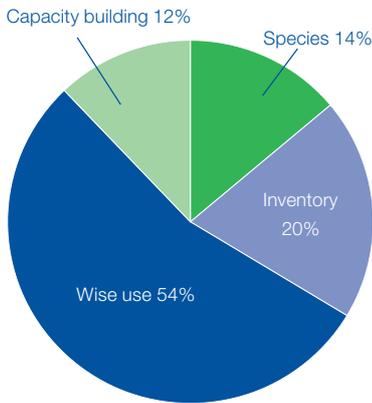
Further capacity building activities will continue in 2004. These will improve the ability of local people to take advantage of eco-tourism opportunities, while at the same time ensuring appropriate management of the Kuala Gula coastal wetland site.



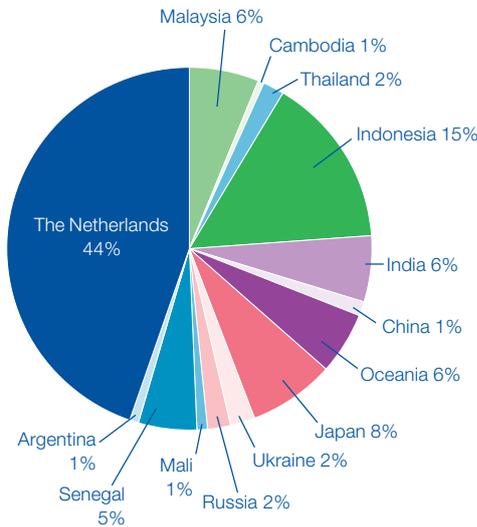
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finances

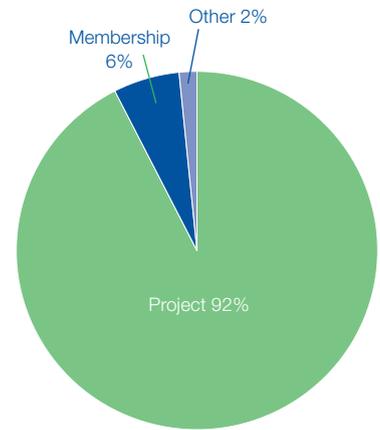
2003 turnover by programme area



Office turnover as % of total turnover



Total income by category



Finance committee statement

During 2002/2003 the administrative organisation of Wetlands International was examined by PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PWC). In 2003 this examination resulted in the presentation of a report *Wetlands International – Management Control*, which offers a blueprint for a new financial control system for the whole organisation. This blueprint will guide the organisation in assuring adequate and transparent financial management.

The Board of Directors agreed to implement the intentions and recommendations of this report throughout the global Wetlands organisation by the end of 2004, subject to funding availability. A plan and budget were prepared and potential donors were approached, resulting in funding being secured for implementation in early 2004.

Some recommendations from PWC had already been adopted to improve systems. The planning, budgeting and reporting cycle, introduced in 2002, was extended and shown to be a good tool for steering our activities.

In 2003, after a period of comparatively large increases, the total turnover of Wetlands International more or less stabilised. Ninety-two percent of turnover consists of project income. With this income Wetlands International needs to cover the full costs of the organisation (staff and overheads) that are not covered by membership or other income. PWC recommended that each office uses tariffs designed not only to cover the overhead costs of the office but also to contribute to the cost of international staff. The board fully approved this.

In 2003, global income and expenses were in balance. With minor exceptions this holds true for the individual offices. Most of the WI offices have been audited. The reports are available on request from Wetlands International, The Netherlands.

Willem I.J. Aalbersberg
Treasurer, Wetlands International



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26–27 November 2004
Bangkok

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three year Global Strategy 2005–2008

Consideration of needs and approaches for
Strategy implementation –
at global and regional levels

Election of President and Board of Directors

Wetlands International Awards Ceremony

For registration and logistics
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