THE SOURCE

2022 Annual Review of Wetlands International

Wetlands INTERNATIONAL

WETLANDS INTERNATIONAL IS THE ONLY GLOBAL NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATION DEDICATED TO THE CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION OF WETLANDS

What are wetlands?

Wetlands occur wherever water meets land – mangroves, peatlands, marshes, rivers, lakes, deltas, floodplains, flooded forests, rice-fields, and even coral reefs. Wetlands exist in every country across the world and every type of region – polar, tropical, wet, dry, high and low altitude.

Healthy wetlands are key to restoring nature and healing our climate, yet the world has lost up to 65% of its original wetlands. Urgent action is needed to reverse this decline and revive these natural wonders.

Our Vision

A world where wetlands are treasured and nurtured for their beauty, the life they support and the resources they provide.

Our Mission

To inspire and mobilise society to safeguard and restore wetlands for people and nature.

Fishermen are fishing in Yamuna river, India

ANNUAL REVIEW 2022 CONTENT

FROM OUR CEO

Jane Madgwick,
Chief Executive Officer, Wetlands International

2022 was a significant year for the world's wetlands and we are starting to see broad recognition and increased investments in wetland conservation and restoration, as a central part of efforts to address the climate and biodiversity crises. Guided by our Strategic Intent, we continued to leverage the benefits of our local presence, technical expertise and partnerships, and connected this with influencing global dialogues, policies, and investments to accelerate the transformation of major wetland landscapes for resilience.

Jane Madgwick, CEO, Wetlands International

Receiving global recognition through the UN for leading one of the first, best ecological restoration programmes – in the mangrove coast of Demak, Indonesia – is testament to the ability of Wetlands International to design and curate complex, science-based landscape transformations through equally complex local and global partnerships and finance streams. Such initiatives are increasingly becoming global models and sources of inspiration. This example proved that it is possible to turn around even the most severe wetland degradation in just a few years, provided that the plan is based on a sound understanding of the causes and that a systems approach to restoration is taken and driven by all local stakeholders.

Throughout 2022, we brought evidence, proposed science-based targets and showcased proven pathways for upscaling action for wetlands to the global policy fora of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the UN Climate Convention and Convention on Biological Diversity - to bring to the fore the role of freshwater and coastal wetlands as the critical water systems linking land and sea. The evident increased emphasis on wetlands - especially peatlands and mangroves - in the dialogues and commitments on climate mitigation and adaptation, and the inclusion of wetlands in the eventual Global Biodiversity Framework for 2030, are together an absolute triumph. Equally, the "Mangrove Breakthrough" that was announced by the UN High Level Climate Champions in 2022 will drive massive investment and mobilisation of state and non-state actors, was inspired and based on data from the Global Mangrove Watch that Wetlands International convened, as well as our work as part of the powerful Global Mangrove Alliance.

Start of the Blue Nile, Ethiopia

This shows the value of bringing together systems of actors to address global challenges – Wetlands International has an excellent track record and platform from which to convene actors in this way. The participation and dialogues in these global fora also pointed to some new opportunities, including the rapidly growing demand to better connect actions for climate and nature. Wetlands can be an excellent entry point for countries, companies, cities and citizens committed to nature and climate positive transitions, by virtue of their central role as carbon sinks, in capturing, storing and regulating water and nutrients and in adaptation to climate change.

The report on achievements in 2022, put in the context of our longer-term goals, highlight that progress is not always linear and programmes need to be highly adaptive. We are grateful to be working closely in partnership with major donors who provide a long-term financial commitment to our ambitious goals and give good space for us to innovate in driving towards our ambitions. In addition to our major donors, I am grateful to our members, partners and supporters working tirelessly to safeguard and restore wetlands for people and nature. We also invested in new staff functions and capacity development across our office network, laying a strong foundation for the work yet to be done.

As I write this piece, I recently started my new role as the first Executive Director of the Global Commons Alliance - a growing, science-based coalition that aims to engage and equip companies, countries, cities and citizens so that they become effective stewards of the interconnected systems (water, nature, land, air and ocean) on which life depends upon. There is a rapidly closing window of opportunity to avoid dangerous tipping points and instead secure an environmentally safe and socially equitable future for our planet. I believe that Wetlands International and its extensive set of collaborators and supporters, have an important role to play in this urgent transition and I am proud to continue my involvement as a Counsellor of Honour.

Thank you for your continued interest and active support.

HIGHLIGHTS

"Wetlands 4 Resilience"

A new 10-year partnership with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

In December we secured a new partnership with Sida to upscale healthy, biodiverse, and well-managed wetland landscapes globally by 2030. The ten-year ambition is to influence countries, institutions and sectors to shift approaches, policies and investments towards the regeneration of wetland landscapes. This responds to and helps to mobilise and bring substance to the existing global agendas set by Conventions and the SDGs. Specifically, we will fill the current knowledge and capacity gap on how to address wetlands and water resiliency in landscape regeneration processes, by designing and sharing a tested, accessible, step-wise approach.

By showing and sharing results from a set of major wetland landscapes in frontrunner countries for wetland commitments, we aim to inspire, mobilise and upscale the global community to drive action forward for wetland recovery and resilience building. Further, we aim to influence the global community to set a conducive environment to facilitate capacity development, policies and investments for wetland landscapes worldwide. This will ultimately bring positive impact for biodiversity and vulnerable communities that depend on healthy wetland landscapes for their well-being and climate resilience.

We will focus on large, iconic wetland landscapes and on influencing key processes - changes we would like to see happen - to create suitable conditions for wetland biodiversity and ecosystem functioning to recover, so building resilience at a landscape scale, as a foundation for sustainable development.

In the long-term, the programme will benefit tens of millions of people who live in or nearby these large wetland landscapes; vulnerable lakes, rivers and deltas. By enhancing the supply and demand for holistic wetland landscape restoration, we will enable synergies to be realised between biodiversity conservation, healthy ecosystems and human rights, resulting in greater resilience to socio-economic shocks and climate change.

Defining benchmark conditions for Voluntary Carbon Markets

We published a timely report which reflects on the larger debate of using voluntary carbon markets for land-use projects and defines benchmark conditions for channelling carbon finance to wetland interventions. Social-environmental integrity is the all-decisive touchstone for climate and market success. A supply of high-quality credits which are fair, equitable, and accepted by the leading carbon credit verification bodies needs to be secured along with the responsible corporate climate action.

Wetlands International has long supported efforts to amplify financing to safeguard and restore wetlands. There is now increasing interest among governments as well as non-state actors in using carbon finance to help innovate and roll out Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) in general, and wetland habitats in particular.

Private sector funding must be mobilised at scale and at speed, and carbon markets offer a unique opportunity to channel investment into wetlands. We are committed to securing a transparent, equitable, and just carbon market to sustain, safeguard, and restore our precious wetlands.

Read our report and position on voluntary carbon markets:

https://www.wetlands.org/publications/the-voluntary-carbon-market-for-safeguarding-and-restoring-our-wetlands/

Building with Nature in Indonesia

UN recognises Building with Nature Indonesia with World Restoration Flagship award

The United Nations recognised the Building with Nature Indonesia initiative to protect Indonesia's coast against flooding as one of its inaugural World Restoration Flagships. The project was selected as one of 10 pioneering efforts to revive the natural world, for its success in restoring mangrove forests to form a natural barrier against the sea, and improving the livelihoods of local communities.

The announcement came as leaders gathered in Montreal, Canada for the UN Biodiversity Conference, where governments from around the world agreed to a new set of goals for nature over the next decade.

The project was a joint effort between Wetlands International and the Indonesian government, and part of a larger collaboration that aims to advance the application of the Building with Nature approach, integrating Nature-Based Solutions in the design and implementation of water infrastructure practice, to boost the local economy, community resilience and biodiversity enhancement.

Instead of simply planting mangroves, the initiative applied an innovative approach using semi-permeable sea walls made of natural materials to trap mud and sediments. Mangroves then regrow naturally, with a survival rate of 70 percent – significantly higher than the 15-20 percent of planted mangroves. The work will increase the resilience of 70,000 people to impacts of climate change.

For more information:

https://www.wetlands.org/news/un-recognises-building-with-nature-indonesias-efforts-with-world-restoration-flagship-award/

https://www.wetlands.org/publications/building-with-nature-in-indonesia-restoring-an-eroding-coastline-and-inspiring-action-at-scale-2015-2021/

Facilitating sharing of best mangrove conservation and restoration practices in Africa

Wetlands International facilitated the development of strategic partnerships between the Atlantic Coast and the Western Indian Ocean region to enable collaboration and mainstream best mangrove conservation and restoration practices in Africa. The first of two learning exchanges was held in Senegal in March and the second in Tanzania in October. The exchanges so far have helped to:

- Provide a platform for peer-to-peer exchanges around strategies for mangrove conservation, including lessons and best policy practices on mangrove governance, restoration, community engagement, innovation and financing, policy, monitoring impact and community resilience;
- Disseminate best practice mangrove restoration approaches and tools, for example to inspire upscaling of Ecological Mangrove Restoration (EMR), which generally survives and functions better than conventional mass tree planting which fails in approximately 80% of all mangrove restoration initiatives. With EMR a broader set of interventions is implemented that put in place socio-economic and biophysical (hydrological and ecological) enabling conditions for mangrove to grow back naturally. It is essential to create those conditions at scale in order to yield meaningful results across wider landscapes.
- Reinforce networks developed in the first phase of the exchanges.

The exchanges brought together participants representing communities, policymakers, civil society organisations, and researchers from 11 countries (Kenya, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Madagascar, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and The Gambia). Development Partners from the Swedish International Development Agency's Africa Regional Office were also involved.

For more information:

https://www.wetlands.org/blog/wetlands-international-mangrove-conservation-and-restoration-practice-in-africa/

Plenary at COP14

Special members, partners and supporters event at Ramsar COP14

Wetlands International organised a special event for members, partners and supporters on the sidelines of the Ramsar COP14 in November in Geneva, an opportunity to meet again in-person in an informal setting and to share insights into promising initiatives and collaborations around the world that are scaling up wetland recovery for people and nature.

There was widespread recognition of the opportunity to ensure the inclusion of wetlands in the Global Biodiversity Framework to be agreed at CBD COP15 later in the year, through the Resolutions of Ramsar COP14. Speakers and participants also discussed the urgency and need for better collaboration and stronger partnerships on scaling up action for biodiverse, healthy wetlands, and the critical role of Wetlands International in convening such action.

With more than 100 people attending from government, civil society, academia and staff from around the network, we heard from André Hoffmann, prominent business leader, champion of wetlands and philanthropist; Jerker Tamelander, Director of Science and Policy of the Ramsar Secretariat; and Guangchun Lei, representative of the Chinese government and Chair of Ramsar STRP.

From the perspective of

SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

"Efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in recent decades have been insufficient and global temperatures are expected to reach or exceed 1.5°C in the next 20 years unless there are rapid, sustained and large-scale reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Similarly, the state of the world's biodiversity is rapidly deteriorating, with more species than ever threatened with extinction which, together with the increasing impacts of climate change (such as droughts and floods), threatens the livelihoods of all people, especially the most vulnerable.

One of the causes of global biodiversity loss is that for centuries the world's wetlands have been considered unusable, and have been rapidly drained for other purposes. Where wetlands still exist, they play a key role. Both for biodiversity and, as a result, the ecosystem services they provide, and for climate change mitigation.

The destruction of wetlands can lead to a net emission of greenhouse gases, but more importantly when the great capacity of wetlands to produce biomass is destroyed, they do not bind carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Wetlands International is a leading global organisation for wetland conservation through its focus on protecting and restoring these areas that are especially important to the vulnerable and often marginalised communities living in and around them."

Representatives of the Global Mangrove Alliance receive the Food Planet Prize

Global Mangrove Alliance wins the Food Planet Prize

The Global Mangrove Alliance - of which Wetlands International is a founding member - received one of two USD 2 million 2022 Food Planet Prizes, to further work towards our Alliance goal to Halt Loss, Restore Half, and Double Protection of mangroves globally by 2030 and help support on-the-groundwork linked to food security through our National Chapters initiative.

TheFood Planet Prizeawards initiatives that solve the dilemma of feeding a growing world population while saving a planet in peril, with the aim of rapidly scaling up their initiatives.

Mangrove deforestation has resulted in a steep decline in mangrove crabs and fish, hurting communities' ability to sustain themselves and their families. With support from GMA member organisations, communities around the world are taking up mangrove conservation leadership, replanting mangroves, and ensuring that resource harvesting is sustainable. As a result, crabs and fish are returning and mangrove beekeeping and other alternative livelihood programs have arisen in some communities, furthering the benefits community members can receive from the coastal ecosystems.

For more information:

https://www.mangrovealliance.org/news/winning-the-food-planet-prize/

https://www.wetlands.org/news/global-mangrove-alliance-wins-the-food-planet-prize/

FROM THE SUPERVISORY COUNCIL
(AND BOARD OF THE ASSOCIATION)

Jan Ernst de Groot, Chair
Miguel Ángel Jorge, Vice-Chair

Jan Ernst de Groot
CHAIR
(retired Dec 2022)

Miguel Ángel Jorge
MEMBER (VICE CHAIR)

Angelique van de Beeten
MEMBER (TREASURER)

Kazuaki Hoshino
MEMBER (SECRETARY)

Eliot Taylor
MEMBER

Adrie Papma
MEMBER

Hastings Chikoko
MEMBER
(retired Dec 2022)

Maggie White
MEMBER
(retired June 2022)

2022 was overall a very positive year for wetlands with these precious ecosystems achieving high profile attention in a series of global summits, culminating in the inclusion of targets and key language highlighting the critical importance of wetlands and inland waters in the Global Biodiversity Framework, adopted in December under the Convention for Biological Diversity. We would like to recognise the key role played by our staff and our partners who advocated tirelessly for wetlands throughout the year.

Nevertheless, this last year brought challenges, too. The world was still confronting Covid at the start of the year. The war in Ukraine meant we paused our activities in Russia, and the energy and cost of living crisis has affected staff, partners, communities and our funders alike.

The Council and Board of Association met regularly in 2022, maintaining close relations with the CEO and Management Team through our regular meetings. During our June Council meeting, held in Stirling, Scotland, we were able to see first-hand the critical roles played by peatland in preserving biodiversity, storing water and mitigating climate change.

In Scotland, we met representatives of the Government, the 'National Trust for Scotland' and engaged companies such as Diageo. The Council visited a peatland restoration site at Flanders Moss where we were guided by 'Nature Scotland' staff and saw other sites nearby where restoration is just starting as part of a national programme of action across Scotland to restore 250,000 hectares of degraded peatlands by 2030. We were pleased that Wetlands International is supporting this ambition, with knowledge and practical work on the ground. We'd like to thank Hans Schutten (Programme Head Climate Ready Land-use) who facilitated the meetings and visit for the Council.

Supervisory Council field visit to Flanders Moss, Scotland

In addition to its responsibility to supervise the implementation of the organisation's strategy, annual accounts and the annual review, the Council provided guidance to the CEO and Management Team on a range of key issues, in particular on a renewed fundraising strategy and on strengthening the organisation's human resources approach.

We were delighted to see that progress was made in our international programmes, and in our organisational capacities and systems, made possible by the support provided by the COmON Foundation, the Dutch Postcode Lotteries, and the effective giving platform Effectiv Spenden. Flexible funding is key for the organisation and enables us to take larger steps towards the goals laid out in our Strategic Intent, such as mobilising vehicles for upscaling such as the Mangrove Breakthrough. We also started a new long-term partnership on 'Wetlands for Resilience' with the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), which complements our work on the '4 Returns' approach and will make accessible knowledge and tools for wetland landscape restoration to a wide range of collaborators. On behalf of the entire organisation, we would like to thank our partners for their support and trust in Wetlands International.

In 2022 we were delighted that Miguel Ángel Jorge accepted the role of Vice Chair. We also said goodbye to two members, Maggie White and Hastings Chikoko, after three years of service. Our thanks go to them for the support and inspiration that they provided.

"I thoroughly enjoyed my return to Wetlands International this past year and was struck by the major progress the organisation has made since 2016. I unfortunately had to resign as Chair in December, due to accepting a new senior role at my company. I would like to wish the remaining members of the Supervisory Council and Board of Association all the best in helping Wetlands International succeed in its mission to inspire and mobilise society to safeguard and restore wetlands for people and nature. I will continue to support from the sidelines." ***Jan Ernst de Groot, Chair***

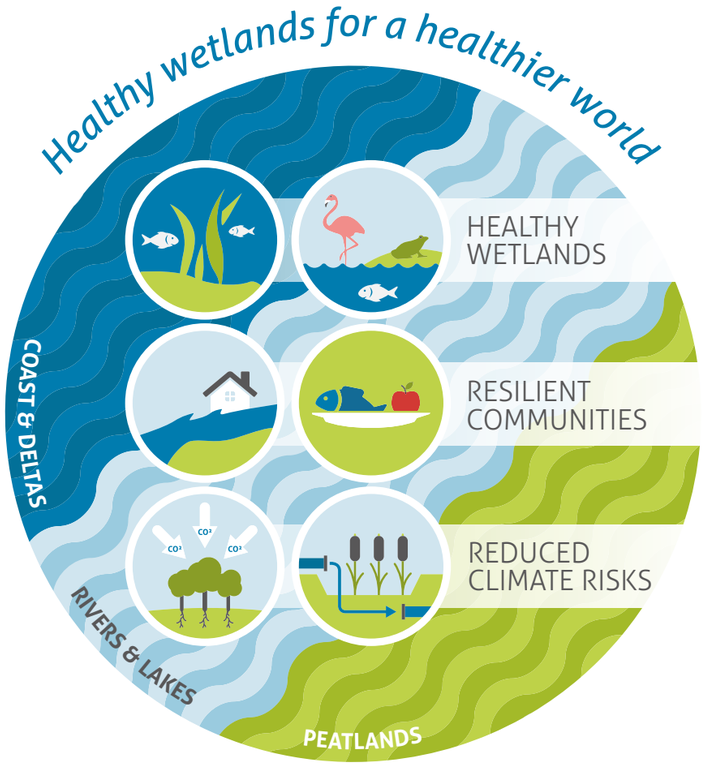
STRATEGIC INTENT 2020-2030

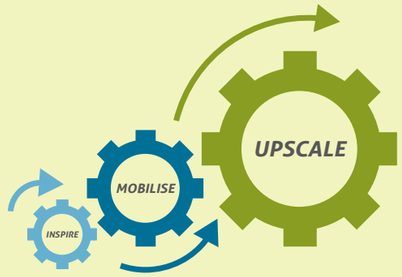
Over 2020-2030 Wetlands International aims to safeguard and restore tens of millions of hectares of wetlands, bringing multiple returns for nature and people. Our theory of change encapsulates the three main phases of our work: to inspire, mobilise and upscale. These are the key ingredients of our organisational strategy for the period 2020-2030.

For this period, we are orientating our work to achieve three, interconnected global impacts: healthy wetlands, resilient wetland communities, and reduced climate risks.

Our vision, targets and strategic interventions are shaped according to landscapes. We focus on three broad categories of wetland landscapes: Coasts and Deltas, rivers and lakes, and peatlands. *"Streams"* of work are defined according to the specific contexts of these wetland landscape types.

We measure our progress across these three streams according to the following three interconnected global impacts and six outcomes.





OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

INSPIRE

We:
- Share insights and knowledge
- Encourage innovation
- Influence agendas

MOBILISE

We:
- Enable dialogues
- Build coalitions around shared vision
- Identify and pilot landscape solutions

UPSCALE

We:
- Design integrated landscape scale plans
- Transform policies and attract investments
- Improve standards and behaviours of companies

Healthy Wetlands

Wetland habitats and functions safeguarded and restored

We aim to help conserve a selection of the most intact wetland ecosystems and restore others within a full range of wetland types across the world. We also aim to restore other freshwater systems, peatlands, deltas and coastal ecosystems for their intrinsic, cultural and ecosystem-service values. We will prioritise ecological networks that connect landscapes, such as flyways and swim-ways.

Wetland species recovered

Building on our long track record for waterbird conservation, we will contribute to the conservation of wetland biodiversity by working on selected flagship species and groups of species linked to specific habitats.

Resilient Communities

Water and food secured for wetland communities

We aim to prevent further wetland loss and degradation that undermines the natural productivity and water storage capacities of peatlands, floodplains, mangrove forests, deltas and lakes. We aim to improve and diversify the livelihoods of people dependent on wetlands, and promote best practices in agriculture and aquaculture, integrating wetland values into the local economy.

Reduced societal conflict and displacement from wetlands

We will in particular strive to resolve situations where deterioration of wetlands - caused by upstream abstraction, climate change or population growth - contributes to loss of livelihoods, human displacement, conflict and migration. Where necessary, we will use peacebuilding and conflict resolution measures to address imbalanced power relations between stakeholders, building capacity for vulnerable and marginalised people to defend their rights to water and wetland resources.

Reduced Climate Risks

Wetland carbon stores secured and enhanced

We aim to bring wetlands into activities to adapt to and mitigate climate change, which is otherwise a threat to the integrity of all wetlands. Improving the condition of peatlands, river systems and coastal ecosystems such as mangroves, salt marshes and seagrass beds will also reduce their emissions of greenhouse gases and return many to their role as carbon sinks.

Wetland Nature-based Solutions integrated into infrastructure developments

We aim to steer urban water infrastructure investment and land use planning towards using wetlands to meet challenges such as water insecurity and flooding that are conventionally addressed by civil engineering - an approach that often causes further loss and deterioration of wetlands.

ACHIEVEMENTS

This chapter presents our 2022 achievements. These are organised along our three streams of work (Coasts and Deltas, Rivers and Lakes, and Peatlands) and in relation to the ambitions laid out in our Strategic Intent 2020-2030.

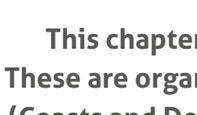
The section below summarises progress in 2022 towards the 10-year targets.

OUR SCORING SYSTEM

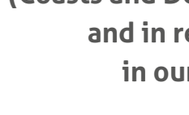
On track to exceed target (we will achieve the target before 2030)

We expect to achieve the target by 2030

Substantial progress, but more time is needed to reach our target



So far, there is no significant overall progress



The situation is deteriorating and we can't manage to make improvements

All of our achievements are the result of our Wetlands International teams working around the world with our many partners in local, national and international networks across the world. The achievements selected below are part of a long-term results framework and build partly on activities already started in previous years.

We highlight those achievements where Wetlands International's role or contribution has been significant.

Our progress

At the end of 2022, we have achieved important results building a solid foundation for future mobilisation and upscaling towards our 2030 targets. Shaping, collating and sharing knowledge, building capacity, developing partnerships with governments and non-state actors to scale up, and securing funding to support our work - are critical to our long-term success and central to our upscaling strategy.

Large-scale, partnership-based, long-term wetland landscape initiatives are now underway in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America which will ultimately secure conservation and development benefits for people and nature across millions of hectares. Sometimes the number of hectares we have directly safeguarded and restored so far is relatively small, but designed to trigger landscape-scale impact through the mobilisation of other actors. Where possible we mention the indirect landscape-scale impact we envision.

In the last quarter of 2022, we capitalised on global convention meetings (Ramsar COP14, UNFCCC COP27, and CBD COP15) to drive impact by positioning wetlands more than ever as a crucial solution to the intertwined challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss. The inclusion of wetland targets in the CBD's Global Biodiversity Framework, resulting from engaging in diverse lobby groups, makes Wetlands International more relevant than ever and provides significant leverage for public and private sector investments in the coming decade.

We are proud of the results that were achieved at global, regional, national and local level. Highlights include:

Impact Area - Healthy Wetlands

- Our influential 2022 State of the World's Mangroves report that led to the launch of the Mangrove Breakthrough at COP27 aiming to leverage USD 4 billion to secure the future of 15 million hectares of mangroves globally by 2030.
- A new 10 year partnership with the Swedish International Development Agency to upscale healthy, biodiverse, and well managed wetland landscapes globally by 2030, contributing to climate resilience and environmental, social and economic sustainability.
- A new Ramsar protected Wetland in Argentina, covering an area of 350.000 hectares of valuable peatlands, a key step towards its conservation.

Impact Area - Resilient Wetland Communities

- We reached 143,000 coastal zone and natural resource management professionals, raising awareness about the contribution of mangroves to food security and opportunities for improving production systems through large-scale mangrove restoration.
- We worked with land users to implement better management practices on more than 46,000 hectares of floodplain habitats under production (largely cattle raising / livestock) in the Paraná Delta in Argentina and the Pantanal wetlands in Brazil.
- As a result of our advocacy efforts, the EU is shifting its stance and accepting the significant role that improved peatland protection, increased paludiculture (wet peatland farming) and carbon farming can bring to the Green Deal implementation.

Impact Area - Reduced Climate Risks

- Our Building with Nature Indonesia initiative was praised by the UN and given the inaugural World Restoration Flagship award.
- We enhanced the design of a wetland offset project of a multi-billion investment infrastructure project in Manila Bay, Philippines, such that it will restore thousands of hectares of healthy mangroves while enhancing resilience and livelihoods of local communities.
- In the High Andes of Peru, we worked with the herder communities to change their land management practices, resulting in 2,400 hectares of peatlands under improved livestock grazing management offering sustainable income in harmony with nature.

Setbacks

Not everything went according to plan. The war in Ukraine directly affected our peatland restoration efforts in Russia that were put on hold. The ensuing global energy crises led to higher costs requiring us to deliver the same ambitious impact with fewer resources. Further, the tight and competitive job market is limited our ability to attract the required capacity to deliver our programmes.

"Dutch Postcode Lottery funding has had a catalytic effect on our work, enabling us to generate much larger funding, influence and impacts needed to safeguard and restore the world's wetlands"

Jane Madgwick, CEO.

DUTCH POSTCODE LOTTERY

Dutch Postcode Lottery support has enabled us, through targeted seed investments, to build strategic global and regional partnerships to mobilise and upscale the safeguarding and restoration of wetlands. In 2022, highlights include our Building with Nature Indonesia initiative recognised by the UN as one of its inaugural World Restoration Flagships, and successfully influencing the design for a large wetland offset project to compensate for a multi-billion infrastructure project in Manila Bay, Philippines.

These results, among others, were made possible through strengthening our fundraising approaches and capacity, developing new donor relationships, investing in staff capabilities in our communications and technical teams, and creating outreach materials and tools to influence government and business.

COASTS & DELTAS 2022

**Our goal is to safeguard and restore coastal wetland ecosystems as essential features of resilient and productive coastal landscapes.
We will achieve our goal by tailoring our work to the different contexts we typically encounter in our target areas,ranging from heavily degraded or modified coastal areas to intact wetland landscapes.**

Healthy wetlands

By 2030, we aim to safeguard 2 million hectares of high value coastal wetlands, including those sites which make up vital wildlife migration corridors.

We made strong progress towards reaching our target of 2 million hectares. If we secure commitments under the GMA, we will move beyond our target in the next few years.

Through the Global Mangrove Alliance (GMA) that we co-founded and in collaboration with the UN Climate Change High-level Champions, we launched the Mangrove Breakthrough at UNFCCC COP27. The Breakthrough calls for a unified global approach towards mangrove conservation aiming to leverage USD 4 billion to secure the future of 15 million hectares of mangroves globally by 2030.

The Mangrove Breakthrough was informed and inspired by our State of the World's Mangroves reports, based on data from the Global Mangrove Watch (GMW) platform. The reports and GMW are key elements in our upscaling strategy and have also led to increased reporting on mangrove status change by Ramsar signatories and actively used by blue carbon investors.

To further promote the use and value of GMW, we organised the first massive open online course attended by thousands of practitioners, as well as the first-ever in-person training for mangrove practitioners from the Western Indian Ocean region. Consequently, mangrove management is now informed by standardised and peer-reviewed global information on near real-time mangrove losses and gains and the drivers thereof. This enables targeted and efficient interventions and improved monitoring.

We restored 850 hectares of mangroves using Ecological Mangrove Restoration in Guinea-Bissau, Tanzania, Kenya and Senegal, and mobilised others to restore a further 580 hectares. These cases encourage a paradigm shift from traditionally unsuccessful mass-planting approaches to more inclusive community-based restoration strategies than can be scaled up across coastal landscapes.

In Senegal, we helped facilitate the development of a national mangrove management plan to support community-based restoration. We also developed sustainable management plans for coastal landscapes in The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, Kenya, Tanzania and Indonesia, working with government, NGOs and community groups. In total these plans cover over 400,000 hectares.

We trained wetlands managers across the Yellow Sea on a science-based approach to monitoring and conservation. This will ultimately result in better management of 300,000 hectares of wetland sites critically important for migratory shore birds along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.

Resilient wetland communities

By 2030, we aim to integrate wetlands into 8 million hectares of coastal production systems.

We made major progress towards rehabilitating production landscapes and furthering ongoing dialogues with ASC and others.

We reached 143,000 coastal zone and natural resource management professionals, raising awareness about the contribution of mangroves to food security and opportunities for improving production systems (aquaculture, rice farming) through large-scale mangrove restoration. Building on this success, the GMA was awarded the USD 2 million Food Planet Prize, which will be used to drive mangrove restoration to enhance food security on the ground.

We advised the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) on strengthening safeguards for mangroves in its certification criteria, providing a basis for enhanced conservation and increased restoration of mangroves in shrimp farms that are or will be under ASC certification.

Together with the Global Green Growth Institute, we secured a EUR 16 million contribution from the Government of Canada to bring mangroves back in the Kayan-Sembakung and Mahakam deltas in Indonesia. Ultimately we aim to restore the ecological integrity of at least 300,000 hectares of mangroves and associated ecosystems.

Over 22,000 people benefitted from sustainable livelihood activities in mangrove areas in Africa. We provided them with training, materials for alternative income generating activities, improving value chains for their produce, and other measures. For example, our energy-efficient improved cook stoves programme in Matondoni, Kenya has decreased mangrove wood fuel consumption, improved heat retention, and reduced smoke. This initiative has brought tangible improvements to the lives of communities, contributing to a more sustainable and healthier environment.

Reduced climate risks

By 2030, we aim to mainstream Building with Nature and promote blue carbon solutions, influencing €10 billion of investments in coastal infrastructure solutions.

Our efforts to mobilise Building with Nature Asia have slowed due to difficulties in recruitment for key roles in resource mobilisation.

The UN recognised our Building with Nature Indonesia initiative to protect Indonesia's coast against flooding as one of 10 inaugural World Restoration Flagships. Building on this flagship example, Wetlands International is promoting uptake of the approach in Indonesia, Philippines, India, Malaysia and China, and other countries over time, in collaboration with the Indonesian Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, EcoShape and One Architecture.

Building with Nature Asia seeks to leverage investment in Nature-Based Solutions to increase the resilience of 30 million vulnerable people in cities and settlements along vulnerable coasts and rivers by 2030 across the continent. Potential implementation projects have been explored in Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and India to connect the regional platform with national initiatives. We have also developed a resource mobilisation strategy to raise €30-50 million for Building with Nature Asia and secure funding for the next phase of the program within a year.

We published a Policy Paper 'Voluntary Carbon Markets for Wetland Conservation and Restoration' and used it in public consultations of emerging standards, leading to improved Race2Zero Criteria and High-Quality Blue Carbon Principles. These principles are used by investors such as Mirova and Climate Asset Management that have made significant pledges to invest in 'natural capital' including mangroves.

Our Asia Times op-ed set the agenda for sustainable developmentin Manila Bay, calling for adherence to international Environmental Social Governance standards and for integration of nature in infrastructure designs. Since, we have helped public and private actors to put in place safeguards for maintaining biodiversity, we ensured community-based participative planning and identified opportunities for infrastructure and urban development that yield a net positive impact for communities. These efforts resulted in uptake of safeguards in the Manila Bay Sustainable Development Masterplan.

RIVERS & LAKES 2022

Our Goal is to catalyse investment to safeguard and restore rivers, lakes and their accompanying wetlands, as part of wider freshwater systems; and to provide water security for people and nature, climate resilience, and sustainable and peaceful landscapes.

Healthy wetlands

By 2030, we aim to safeguard 10 million hectares of high value river and lake wetlands, focusing on five basins.

Developing and implementing management plans in India and Argentina, coupled with upscaling potential in the Rift Valley, means we are on track in 2022.

We secured a new 10 year partnership with the Swedish International Development Agency to upscale healthy, biodiverse, and well managed wetland landscapes globally by 2030, aiming to achieve global influence of countries, institutions and sectors, resulting in shifts in approach, policies and investments towards the regeneration of wetland landscapes.

We prepared integrated management plans for nearly 300 wetlands in sub-basins of the Ganga River in India, covering almost 1.9 million hectares, while preparations were began for possible listing as a Ramsar Site of Ottu Lake in Haryana state.

In Argentina, we developed and began implementation of management plans for more than 2 million hectares of wetlands along the Paraná -Paraguay fluvial corridor, covering the world's largest tropical wetland in the Pantanal, together with Iberá Marshes and the Paraná Delta, while the Paraná Delta Biodiversity Corridor initiative was formally adopted by the Argentina Ministry of Environment. We also completed the management plan of the Pozuelos Biosphere Reserve covering 364,000 hectares in the High Andes.

In the Central Rift Valley of Ethiopia, we restored over 2,000 hectares of degraded watersheds, lakes and wetland areas, through our integrated landscape restoration interventions, and showcased 1,000 hectares of buffer zones protecting Lake Ziway from impacts from intensive agriculture. Further south in the Omo-Gibe sub-basin, we restored nearly 1,000 hectares of degraded high value wetlands, and started dialogues on water use and on a transboundary ecoregion vision for the area together with stakeholders across the border in Turkana Province (Kenya), where we initiated enhanced rangeland management through the re-seeding with native species benefitting 15,000 stakeholders.

Resilient wetland communities

By 2030, we aim to safeguard and restore 60 million hectares of wetlands as integral elements of productive river and lake landscapes.

While field innovations and partnership development are showing great promise in many regions, the establishment of and investment in mechanisms to drive upscaling are lagging behind our earlier expectations. Programmes to scale our work are in the pipeline and they will accelerate progress.

Our work with development, economic, and funding partners on sustainable agriculture, reduced water consumption, and integrated planning continues to break new ground, safeguarding precious wetland resources in some of the most fragile environments in the world.
We worked with land users to implement better management practices on more than 46,000 hectares of floodplain habitats under production (largely cattle raising / livestock) in the Paraná Delta in Argentina and the Pantanal wetlands in Brazil, while in the High Andes, we encouraged stakeholders to transition to improved livestock grazing on more than 21,000 hectares in the Argentinian Puna, contributing to wetlands and water resources conservation.

In Mali and Ethiopia, we piloted technological innovations for reducing the impacts of smallholder farming on wetland landscapes, including through bunding to reduce upstream soil erosion, vermiculture to reduce dependence on expensive chemical fertilisers, re-planting of slopes with indigenous and income-generating tree species, and more efficient use of water in irrigated vegetable production, leading to increased household production, improved incomes and a better environment for farmers.

In the Lake Turkana basin in Kenya, we assisted stakeholders in small-scale demonstrations – a start towards larger ambition - to switch to climate-smart farming and resilient livelihood activities, including animal fodder, vegetables and agro-forestry, and sustainable fishing.

Reduced climate risks

By 2030, we aim that €500 million is committed to enable Nature-Based Solutions in freshwater wetlands, for climate mitigation and adaptation.

We saw limited progress in terms of actual impact on the ground in 2022. We expect progress to be exponential over time as we build the foundations for scaling up. We continue to position ourselves and mobilise partners.

We focused on building both the proofs of concept and the alliances of partners required to mobilise finance for the widespread deployment of nature-based freshwater solutions.

In Sahelian Africa, we organised a Roundtable meeting in Bamako, Mali during which senior executives from 3 river basin authorities, 6 countries and 5 major bilateral donors crafted a declaration recognising wetlands restoration as a force for peace, security and stability in the region coupled with a plan of action. Important as a lever to mobilise government and donor commitment to work in the region, the declaration is an important step to mobilise commitments to wetland restoration and related programming.

We continued to build our large-scale Blue Lifelines for a Secure Sahel initiatives with partners, governments, and international organisations, and which aims to mobilise large-scale investment to restore 30 million hectares of wetland and increase the resilience of 20 million people.

In the Himalaya in India, we facilitated the economic valuation of key landscape functions to build resilience and secure EUR 5 million investments for Nature-based Solutions for climate change adaptation.

PEATLANDS 2022

Our Goal is to scale up the conservation and restoration of peatlands as a contribution to biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and sustainable development. For this, it is vital to ensure that all remaining undrained peatlands stay intact, while 50 million hectares of drained peatlands are restored by 2050.

Healthy wetlands

By 2030, we aim to safeguard over 20 million hectares of high value peatlands, including bringing 5 major peatland landscapes back into good ecological condition.

We have started work in 4 major peatland landscapes – in Peru, Mongolia, Poland and Sweden. We have also focused on building capacity and knowledge sharing, part of our strategy to mobilise towards safeguarding 20 million hectares.

We developed landscape restoration propositions for Lake Junin in Peru and central valley peatlands in Mongolia. We also developed propositions for the Oder Delta in Poland and Norrbotten in Sweden with our partner Rewilding Europe to test a commercial peatland restoration model based on carbon value. We also explored opportunities to unlock carbon finance for peatland restoration in six other European countries, paving the way for upscaling.

Shaping, collating and sharing knowledge to enable others to take action on peatlands is central to our upscaling plan, and we built partnerships such as the EU-funded WaterLANDS and Wet Horizons (EU Horizon 2020). We updated the wetlands and peatlands database for Europe, providing the evidence needed for governments and policymakers to act and track restoration progress.

We used such evidence to influence the EU Nature Restoration Law and Carbon Farming regulations under development. The former sets legally binding peatland restoration targets and now includes wetlands outside of protected sites, providing a strong basis for upscaling peatland restoration by farmers and rural communities in Europe. The latter sets the stage for mobilising carbon finance for wetlands.

To rewet 500,000 hectares of degraded peatlands in Europe, we facilitated learning and coordinated action across Europe by leading knowledge exchange on peatland restoration carbon standards, bringing together stakeholders form Germany, Poland and Lithuania. Beyond Europe, we stimulated South-South knowledge exchange and learning between Asia and Africa resulting in uptake of best practices on peatland restoration across our network and stakeholders.

We supported the Government of Argentina to designate a new Ramsar protected wetland covering an area of 350.000 hectares of valuable peatlands, by developing the Peninsula Mitre's Ramsar site Information Sheet - a key step towards securing its conservation.

Resilient wetland communities

By 2030, we aim to enable community based conservation and restoration of 10 million hectares of peatlands.

While a solid foundation to reach the target by 2030 has been set, influencing EU policy has been slower than expected. The global uptake is also not as quick as anticipated.

In the High Andes of Peru, we worked with the herder communities to change their land management practices, resulting in 2,400 hectares of peatlands under improved livestock grazing management offering sustainable income in harmony with nature.
We clarified barriers and enablers for scaling up wetland restoration and make it a part of the Green Deal transition in Europe. This information helped inform decision-makers and experts engaged in peatland restoration in Europe.

As a result of our advocacy efforts, the EU is now shifting its stance and accepting the significant role that improved peatland protection, increased paludiculture (wet peatland farming) and carbon farming can bring to the Green Deal implementation. Including these aspects in the Common Agriculture Policy is key for upscaling since it will drive the largest farm-subsidy stream in Europe and help ensure that peatlands are recognised in the new EU Carbon Farming initiative.

Reduced climate risks

By 2030, we will reduce the impact of peat-based industries in 10 million hectares of peatlands, with a focus on palm oil, pulp and timber.

Through the RSPO, we worked to influence and reduce the impact of oil palm plantations (as well as pulp and timber) on vast areas of peatlands. We are on track in 2022 to deliver by 2030.

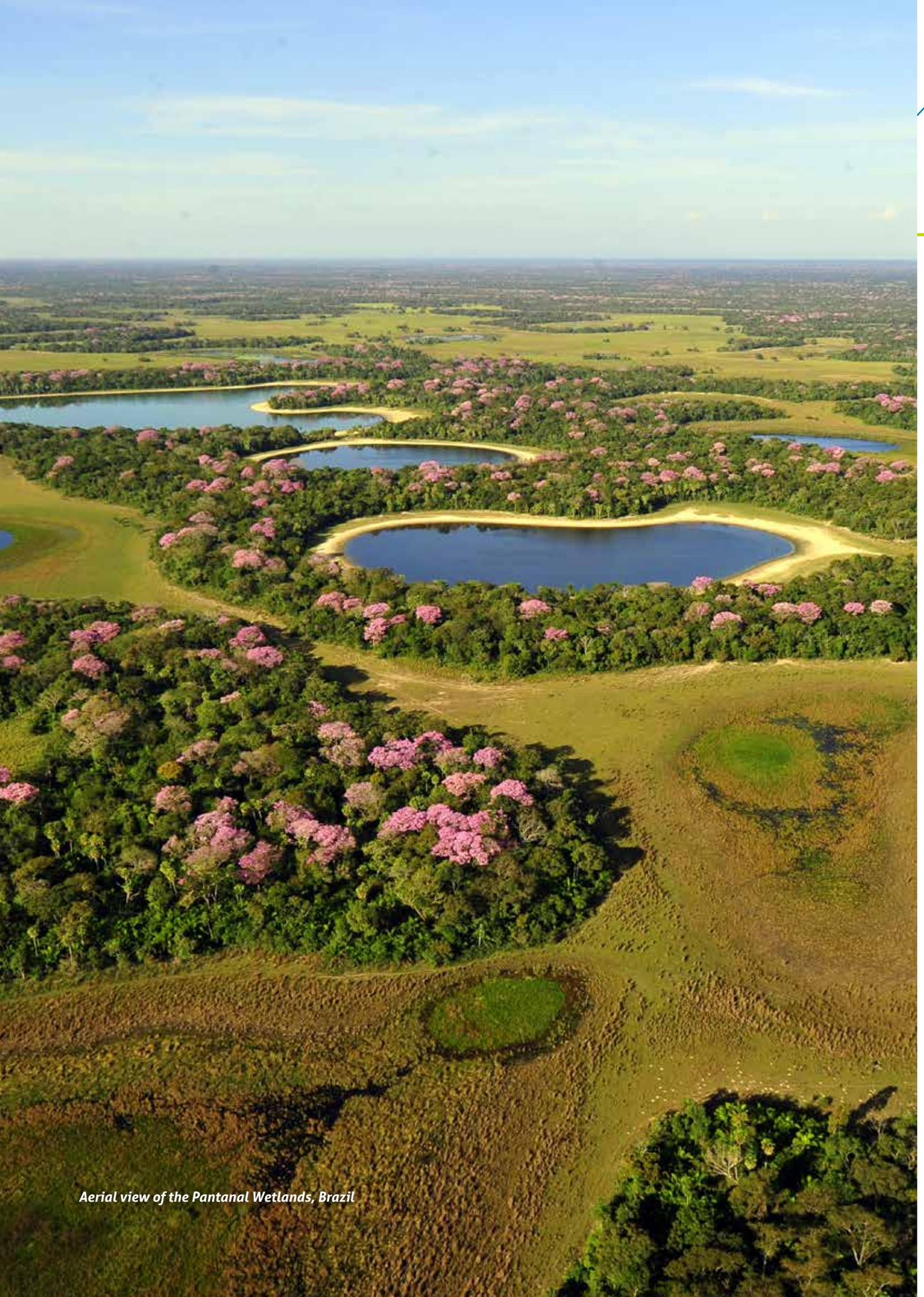
We reduced the climate impact of peat-based industries by influencing commodity chains that produce on peatlands to change practices, such as palm oil, pulp and timber, and by promoting sustainable commodities.

Through the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil, we developed Drainability Assessment training modules and delivered training in East and West Kalimantan (Indonesia) for RSPO members. The training has the potential to influence practices on 4.5 million hectares of plantations under the RSPO scheme.

We advocated on the EU's external trade policy that reduces the import of 'deforestation' related commodities, including deforestation for palm oil and pulp plantations. We see this as a major upscaling mechanism which can result in real impact.

Playing the role of critical friend on the Board of Responsibly Produced Peat, we pushed to transform the industry from excavating peat for growing media to growing peatmoss and rewetting the underlying peatlands. Financially supported by the Dutch government, RPP is recognised in the Dutch Growing Media Covenant signed in 2022 to phase out extracted peat in the short-term for the domestic market and in medium-term for the professional market while ensuring that all peat used in this transition comes from least environmentally impacting methods.

In Brunei, we supported the Biodiversity Action Plan developed for a corporate in rehabilitating degraded wetland areas within the Belait District, one of the last almost intact peat swamps and an important bird area.



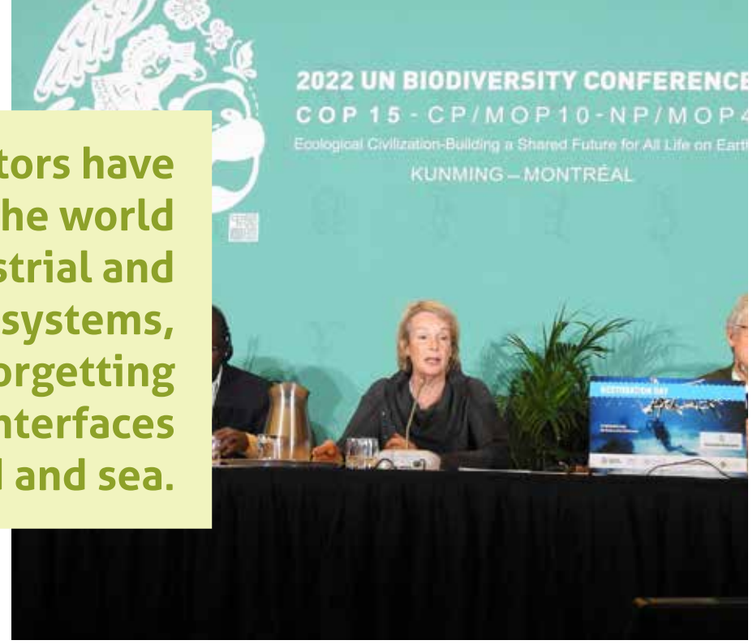
Aerial view of the Pantanal Wetlands, Brazil

GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

By Fred Pearce

Was 2022 a watershed moment for the world's wetlands? We may have entered a new era for wetland restoration and conservation. Because, for the first time, a global agreement aimed at halting and reversing biodiversity loss has put inland waters and coastal ecosystems centre-stage.

Negotiators have divided the world between terrestrial and marine ecosystems, largely forgetting the crucial interfaces between land and sea.



Jane Madgwick, CEO, Wetlands International speaking at COP15 in Montreal, Canada

Since the Convention on Biological Diversity was signed at the Earth Summit thirty years ago, wetlands have often been sidelined in its agreements. Negotiators have divided the world between terrestrial and marine ecosystems, largely forgetting the crucial fluvial interfaces between land and sea, and the flowing waters that lubricate almost every other ecosystem, while being home to an estimated 40 percent of the world's biodiversity.
Largely as a result, wetlands have been disappearing faster than other biomes, with freshwater species becoming extinct twice as rapidly as terrestrial and marine species.
But hopefully no longer.

Global Biodiversity Framework

The Global Biodiversity Framework, adopted by 196 parties to the Convention meeting in Montreal in December 2022, is the most important global ecological agreement for a decade.
It commits nations to *"halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030, including by protecting 30 percent of the planet by 2030. It specifically targeted wetlands – 'inland waters' and 'coastal ecosystems'* in the language of the Convention, and for the first time agreed targets for their restoration.
Its Target 2 commits the world to ensuring that *"by 2030, at least 30 percent of areas of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and coastal and marine ecosystems are under effective restoration."* And Target 3, on conservation, promises that *"by 2030, at least 30 percent of terrestrial, inland water and coastal and marine areas... are effectively conserved and managed."*

The breakthrough comes after many years of lobbying by a group of wetlands-focused conservation groups, including Wetlands International, which was present at the culmination of negotiations in Montreal.
The agreement is also notable for its explicit recognition of the importance of Indigenous and traditional ownership and stewardship of wetlands to meeting the targets. This is crucial. Wetlands International has long argued that buy-in from local communities that use and manage wetlands is essential to successful and equitable conservation.

Not everything we hoped for is included in the new agreement. We pushed for the restoration target to be expressed in absolute numbers rather than percentages, and for conservation and restoration of rivers to be singled out with a target based on the length of rivers.

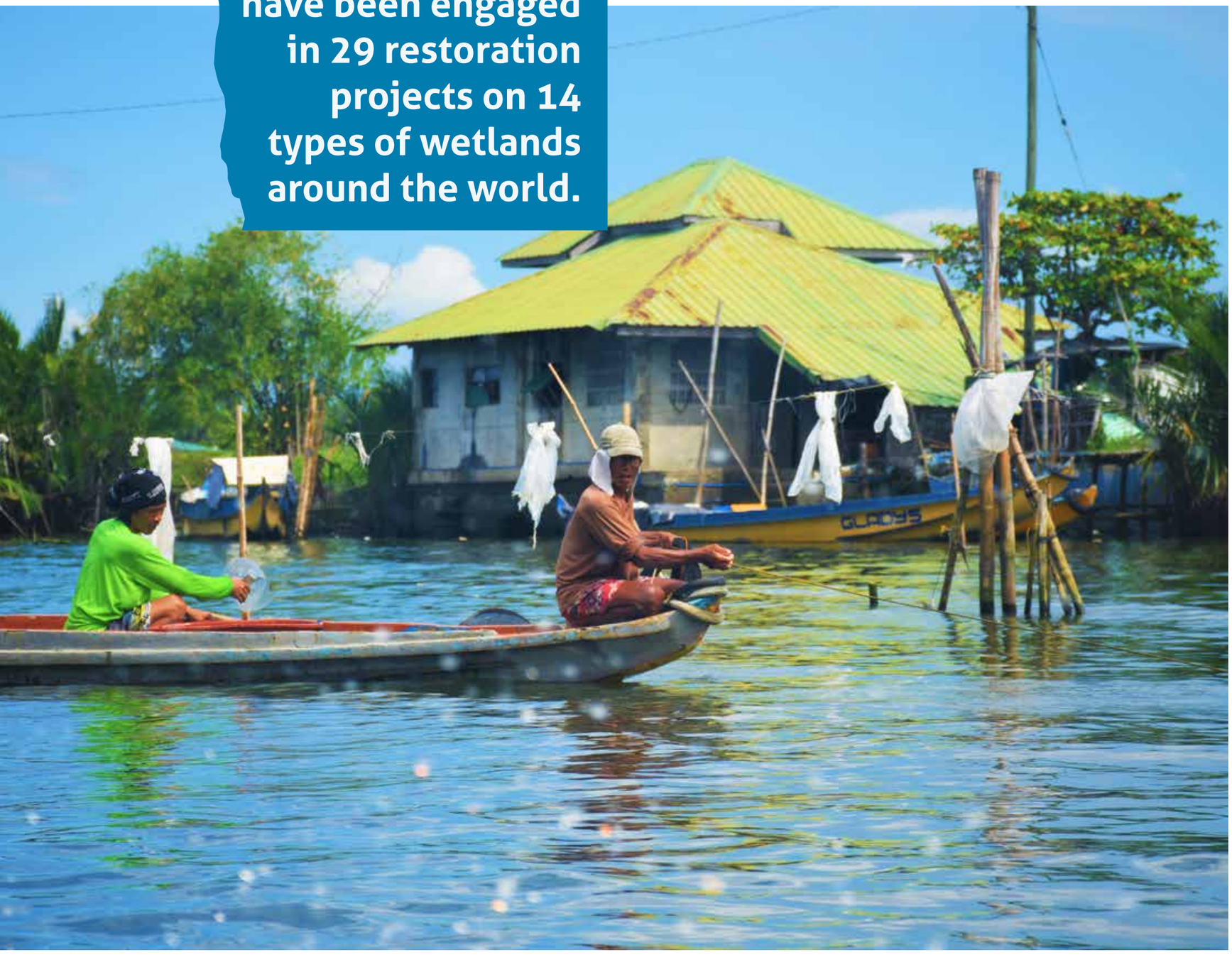
Ramsar Convention

Rivers link up wetlands and should be seen as wetlands in their own right, as they are by the Ramsar Convention. Their fragmentation – through dams and as their floodplains are drained – is a major threat to the planet's biodiversity. A specific target for them would have underlined the importance of connectivity in maintaining the health of wetland ecosystems.

Still, with partners we calculated that the agreement's 30-per-cent restoration target should, if properly implemented, bring back to full ecological health at least 350 million hectares of inland water ecosystems, and 300,000 kilometres of rivers.

Close up of a young Jaguar standing in shallow water in Pantanal Wetlands, Brazil

In recent years, we have been engaged in 29 restoration projects on 14 types of wetlands around the world.



Wetlands International, To Plant or Not to Plant (TPNTP) project site in Bulacan Province, Phillipines

Improvement of Agriculture as part of the SaWel project, Mali

Halt the loss of wetlands

But while pushing for wetland restoration, we must also halt their loss. In many places, their demise continues, regardless of international declarations. In 2022, Brazil's Pantanal, the world's largest tropical swamp, suffered an epidemic of wildfires, mostly set by invading ranchers. And China's largest freshwater lake, the Poyang on the floodplain of the River Yangtze, all but dried out because it continues to be degraded by sand mining and agricultural drainage.

The year also saw the government of South Sudan seek to revive plans to divert the River Nile so it no longer maintained the Sudd swamp, Africa's second largest freshwater wetland. And it ended with large areas of the Mesopotamian marshes of southern Iraq turning to dust as Turkey impounded new dams far upstream on the rivers Tigris and Euphrates.

Optimistic

Still, we remain optimistic. We believe our extensive wetlands experience – from local water projects in the African Sahel to continental-scale river management in South America's four-nation Corredor Azul; and from the salt marshes around the North Sea to the forest swamps of Borneo – gives us the technical, social and political expertise necessary to halt losses and restore lost wetlands to meet the new targets.

Protests at UN Climate Change Conference COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt

Good intentions mean nothing without action on the ground.

We have in recent years been engaged in 29 restoration projects on 14 types of wetlands around the world. We work with a wide range of community and financial partners, and local and national governments, to scale up successes. For instance, in 2022, China, India, the Philippines and Malaysia signed up to replicate techniques we piloted in our award-winning Building with Nature project in Indonesia that used natural coastal processes to restore mangroves lost to shrimp ponds.

But unless we tackle the root causes of wetland destruction – by transforming agriculture, ending harmful subsidies, and reorienting economic and financial systems to be positive for nature – the goals of this historic biodiversity agreement will not be met.

African Sahel and Ethiopia's Rift Valley

Wetlands International's current work in the African Sahel and Ethiopia's Rift Valley, which we report on elsewhere in this review, exemplifies how we convene stakeholders to find new, more equitable ways of sharing water to protect wetlands and maximise local wellbeing. The challenge is to take those lessons to a global scale.

Growing recognition

The place given to wetlands in the new Global Biodiversity Framework underlines and reinforces the critical advances that wetlands have made in environmental agendas – in part because of the growing recognition of their importance in achieving climate and sustainability goals. Days before the Montreal conference, signatories to the long-standing Ramsar wetlands convention met in Wuhan and Geneva and reinforced the need for wetlands targets, and UN climate negotiators meeting in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, for the first time gave wetlands equal prominence with forests as carbon stores that can deliver Nature-Based Solutions to climate change. And the conference, with the Global Mangrove Alliance, launched the Mangrove Breakthrough, a call to action for conserving mangroves to both capture carbon and protect low-lying coastlines from rising sea levels and worsening storms.

Wetlands have long been seen by many in the conservation world as the poor relations of conservation. But in 2022 they perhaps finally took their rightful place as critical ecosystems in the fight to head off climate change, halt biodiversity loss and achieve a sustainable world. But good intentions mean nothing without action on the ground.
The hard work starts now.

LAURA MACKENZIE

SENIOR ADVOCACY OFFICER

I'm Laura MacKenzie and I joined Wetlands International in May 2022, as a Senior Advocacy Officer based in the global office in the Netherlands. Working closely with the team and colleagues across the Wetlands International network, my role is all about influencing global policies and processes, building powerful coalitions, and advocating for increased investment in wetlands, with an emphasis on freshwater and biodiversity. Wetlands International has a wealth of outstanding expertise, knowledge, and success stories of wetland conservation and restoration for the benefit of people and nature, all of which are powerful ingredients for impactful advocacy.

My focus in 2022 was engagement with the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and influencing around the Global Biodiversity Framework, which was adopted in Montreal in December and included hugely positive provisions for the future of wetlands. Meeting and collaborating with colleagues from all across the network, especially during the Ramsar Conference of Parties in November, was a highlight of the year. Our challenge now is to ensure wetlands receive the attention they deserve as countries translate the new global biodiversity targets into tangible national action plans and policies.

Growing up on a Scottish island, a connection with nature has shaped my perspective and career. With previous roles across a range of environmental NGOs, and as a senior adviser and speechwriter in the UK Parliament specializing in climate, nature, and economic policy and legislation, I bring extensive policy and advocacy experience and expertise to the role.

Looking ahead, we need wetland protection and restoration to become a higher priority for decision makers in all sectors, alongside action to address the underlying causes of wetland loss, and a shift towards nature-positive economic and financial systems. It's exciting to be part of an organisation that encompasses initiatives such as the Rights of Wetlands, which can also contribute to the transformative changes that the science shows are urgently needed.

Inverpolly, Scotland

GLOBAL VOICES FOR WETLANDS

Professor Johan Rockström

Joint Director of the Potsdam Institute
for Climate Impact Research

"To tackle the climate, food, nature, and energy crises, water availability is of the essence. It is urgent that the world focuses all attention on the double facts that water is the number one challenge for climate adaptation due to droughts and floods, and a key challenge for mitigation, as there is no safe climate future well below 2 degrees Celsius without a functioning hydrological cycle."

https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2022/11/221109085743.htm

Annie Proulx

American novelist, short story writer,
and journalist

"The problem with destroying the fens, bogs and swamps is they are holding in carbon dioxide and methane gas. And the more we rip them up, the more carbon dioxide and methane comes floating into the atmosphere and the faster the Earth will be warming."

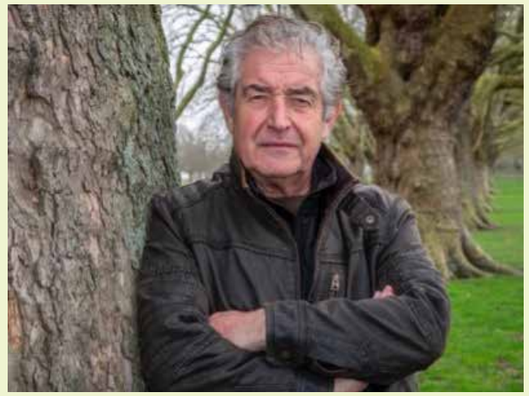
https://www.npr.org/2022/10/11/1127959575/annie-proulx-book-wetlands

Dr Musonda Mumba

Secretary General
of the Convention on Wetlands

"The science is clear, any scenario of meeting our global climate goals means radical protection and restoration of wetlands – the fastest disappearing ecosystem on the planet. Take peatlands, our most efficient land-based carbon store, we need to restore 25 million hectares of lost peatlands before 2030 to achieve the level of mitigation action we need to keep the Paris goal in reach."

https://ramsar.org/news/cop14-opens-with-a-hybrid-ceremony-in-wuhan-and-geneva



Tony Juniper

Chair of
Natural England

"Wetlands can help to keep rivers flowing, even when rain is scarce, thereby protecting the living, shimmering threads that bring life to the landscape. Water standing on the land also helps recharge the aquifers that underpin much of our public water supply. Holding more water in the environment through the restoration of wet ecosystems can reduce flood peaks and protect us from the misery of the flooding that periodically affects communities across the country."

https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/aug/12/britain-wetlands-drought-wildfires-floods-climate-change

Inger Andersen

Under-Secretary-General of
the United Nations and Executive Director
of the UN Environment Programme

The way our food systems work puts huge pressure on wetlands. We need to move to peat-free, drainage-free and deforestation-free supply-chains, through investing in nature-positive agriculture and sustainable land-use financing. As individuals we need to change our lifestyles and consumption patterns.

https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/speech/wetlands-important-tool-build-resilience

LILIAN NYAEGA

REGIONAL PROGRAMME OFFICER

I am Lilian Nyaega, currently serving as the Regional Programme Officer at the Eastern Africa Office of Wetlands International. Over the past six years, I have had the privilege of working closely with communities that directly interact with the ecosystems we strive to conserve and restore.

Working at Wetlands International brings me immense satisfaction as our efforts have a tangible and measurable impact on wetland conservation. Witnessing the positive outcomes of our work fuels my passion for protecting these crucial ecosystems. Moreover, the collaborative and diverse nature of our team fosters an environment that challenges and rewards personal and professional growth.

My expertise lies at the intersection of environment, development, and policy, with a specific focus on understanding the dynamic relationship between people and nature. I have dedicated my career to comprehending and strengthening the intricate interactions and interdependencies between human and natural systems, which ultimately shape environmental outcomes. I am deeply committed to managing projects that promote a holistic understanding of environmental issues, considering the social, cultural, economic, and ecological aspects. This knowledge informs evidence-based policies and practices that foster sustainability and resilience for both people and nature. Currently, my focus is on contributing to the integrated management of socio-natural systems, acknowledging and leveraging these complex relationships for the benefit of both communities and the environment.

This past year, I have been entrusted with additional responsibilities, which I view as a testament to the increased trust and confidence placed in me by our team.

Based on our experience in conserving and restoring wetlands at scale, we have identified the importance of strong policy and governance frameworks that prioritise wetland restoration while engaging local communities in decision-making processes. In addition, fostering partnerships and alliances among diverse stakeholders, where resources and knowledge can be shared, can lead to more effective restoration outcomes. The recently established Global Mangrove Alliance Kenya Chapter seeks to achieve precisely this!

African Wetlands

Reseeding exercise taking place in Todonyang, Turkana County, Kenya

TRANSFORMING FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS

By Fred Pearce

Groundwater springs are recovering their flows and gushing onto mountainsides; native seedlings are sprouting as the soils hold more moisture; lakes are refilling; migrating birds are returning; and so too is hope among farming communities, where once there was despair at the state of their land.

Jane Madgwick, CEO, Wetlands International visits the Ziway-Shalla sub-basin, Ethiopia

Ziway-Shalla sub-basin

The scene is the Rift Valley in Ethiopia, a region whose lakes and water resources have been stressed to breaking point by growing human populations, climate change and industrialised farming, including huge greenhouses that irrigate more than a billion roses sold in Europe every year. But over the past three years, there has been an impressive transformation in part of the valley known as the Ziway-Shalla sub-basin - thanks to our work to reverse the land degradation that comes from tree clearance on hillsides and the overuse of scarce water. Instead, there is a cycle of regeneration.

Centered on Lake Ziway, the basin's only freshwater lake and a vital source of water for more than two million people, our projects work with smallholder farmers, livestock herders, major water users and local administrators to democratise water use, capture rains to percolate underground; improve water allocation; boost irrigation efficiency; and end deforestation in the surrounding hills that has been silting up the lakes.

"What we see here is a small beginning, but one that brings immense hope for the future" said Wetlands International CEO Jane Madgwick after a visit in mid-2022. *"Thousands of community members have put their energy and effort into rejuvenating their landscape. They have trusted our advice and they are proud of the results. Now they own it, and we are thinking about how to scale it up. Because the need is vast and the demand is huge."*

Agriculture is a major driver of wetland destruction and the biggest user of the world's water. The water troubles of Ethiopia's Rift Valley are a microcosm of its broken relationship with the water cycle. Too often, farmers destroy wetlands by draining them to provide land for crops, then empty rivers and lakes to provide irrigation. Combined with pollution from agricultural nutrients and chemicals, the result is less clean water for everyone and long-term food insecurity undermined. What we are attempting around Lake Ziway is one aspect of what needs to be achieved everywhere: protecting water resources by enhancing the natural processes that capture and sustain water in the landscape. In so doing, we help rural communities advance their needs while simultaneously protecting and restoring nature.

Blue Lifelines for a Secure Sahel

Elsewhere in Africa, our Blue Lifelines for a Secure Sahel (BLiSS) project aims to restore 20 million hectares of vital wetlands in the arid landscape on the fringes of the Sahara. At the small scale, BLiSS is helping communities from the delta of the River Senegal through the Inner Niger Delta to Lake Chad to manage their scarce water better.

Round table in Bamako

And at the large scale, in July 2022 we convened a high-level round table in Bamako, under the chairmanship of Mali's minister for mining, energy and water, which gave political endorsement to safeguarding and restoring the region's degraded wetland ecosystems. That means, for instance, managing flows through hydroelectric dams to ensure that

"What we see here is a small beginning, but one that brings immense hope for the future"

CEO Jane Madgwick

The Ziway-Shalla sub-basin

We need to sustain wetlands as natural sponges to soak up floods and mitigate droughts that are intensifying with climate change.

Fisherman of Parana-Paraguay corridor at work

Round table in Bamako, under the chairmanship of Mali's minister for mining, energy and water

floodplains, wetlands and smallholder farmers downstream get the water they need. To succeed, this work requires changing minds as well as engineering and agricultural practices. But we are making progress.

South America

In South America, on the Paraná delta in Argentina and the Pantanal in Brazil, we have begun negotiating agreements with livestock ranchers to encourage alternative livestock-raising practices - including replacing cattle with water buffalo - which protect these wetlands and guard against a growing epidemic of wildfires. So far, these agreements cover some 34,000 hectares. We are also developing wider management plans for the Paraná delta and both the Kadiweu Indigenous Territory and SESC Ramsar site on the Pantanal, covering nearly 900,000 hectares. This work forms part of our ten-year Corredor Azul initiative to protect the entire floodplain of the Paraná -Paraguay river system through the heart of the continent, one of the world's last large and largely free-flowing rivers.

Germany

A key task in many landscapes is to change farming methods to slow down the movement of rainwater and eroded soils flowing off hillsides, through fields, to rivers. We need to sustain wetlands as natural sponges to soak up floods and mitigate droughts that are intensifying with climate change. Germany is learning this lesson after Europe's worst flood disaster in decades in the Eifel Mountains in 2021. The flood, in which more than 220 people died, was initially blamed on extreme rainfall due to changing climate. But peer-reviewed research published by the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology in 2022 confirmed Wetlands International's initial assessment that a major underlying factor was land-use changes, including enhanced drainage in the upper catchments of the swollen rivers. With their capacity to hold water drastically diminished, the rain rushed rapidly downstream.

Asia

Degraded wetlands caused other similar disasters in 2022. The September floods across Pakistan were made worse by poor agricultural practices that had silted up wetlands on the floodplain of the River Indus. Lake Manchar, one of South Asia's largest lakes, was so clogged that it rapidly burst its banks, engulfing dozens of villages.

Spain

Such follies continued. In Spain, the Andalusian parliament retrospectively legalised the widespread abstraction of underground water by strawberry farmers, which is drying up the Doñana wetland, one of Europe's most important wintering grounds for waterfowl.

Paludiculture offers bankable reasons for protecting and restoring our wetlands.

Paludiculture in Bederkesa, Germany

South Sudan

And concerted opposition from Wetlands International and others helped dissuade South Sudan from resuming construction of a canal to divert the River Nile away from Africa's second largest freshwater wetland, the Sudd. The idea was to reduce evaporation in the swamp and so release more water for agricultural irrigation, both locally and downstream in Egypt. But draining the Sudd would have decimated wildlife, altered local climate, and wrecked millions of livelihoods that depend on the swamp.

"The Sudd needs to be recognised as a massive natural asset, vital to future peace and prosperity", said CEO Jane Madgwick, before the plan was put on hold. *"Its loss would permanently undermine the climate resilience of the region."*

Paludiculture

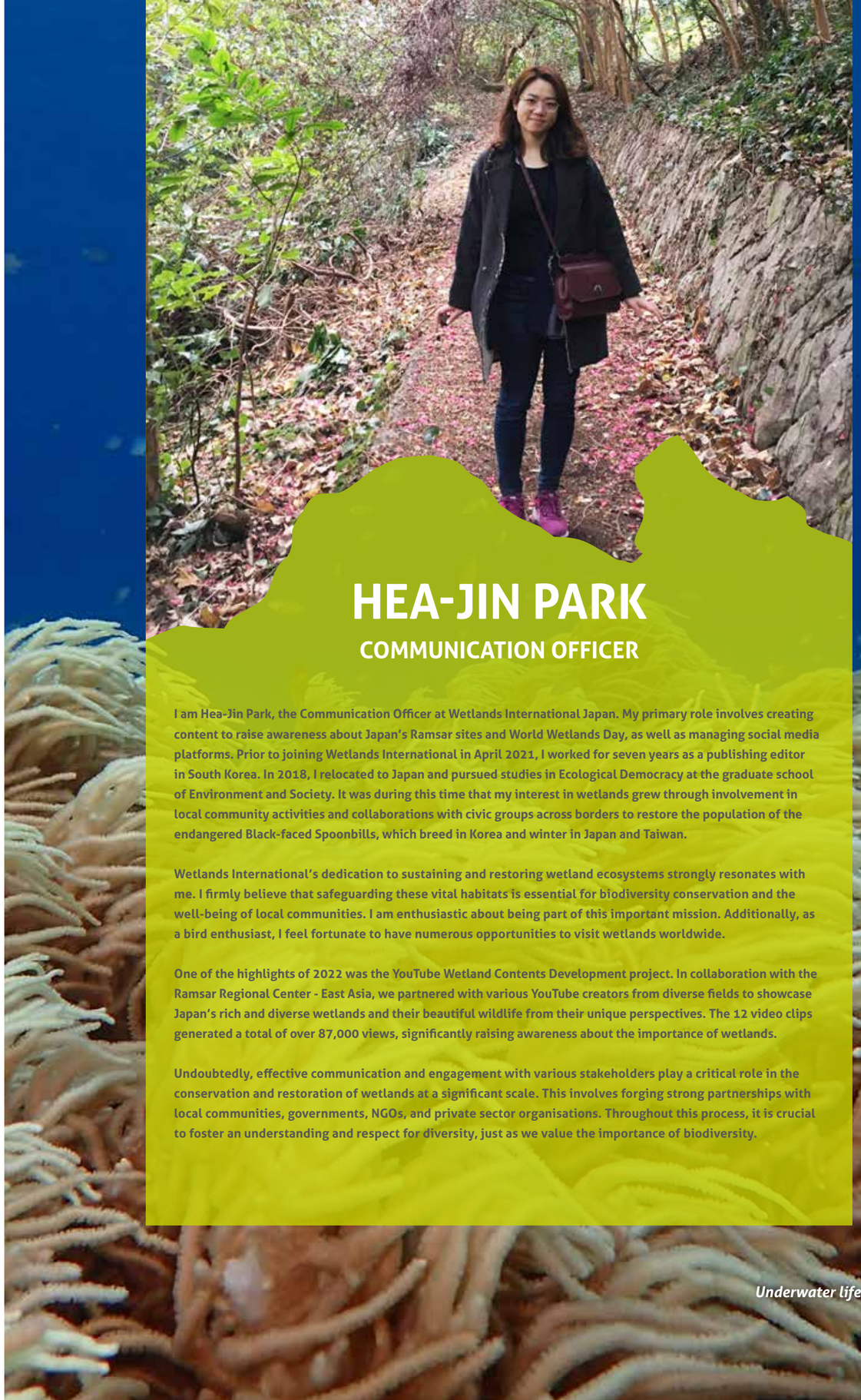
Luckily, there is good news for those seeking to end the constant battles for water between wetlands and agriculture. Researchers at Wetlands International, the Greifswald Mire Centre and elsewhere are developing and promoting ways of farming within wetlands, particularly peatlands, known as paludiculture.

In July 2022, we took German parliamentarians to see an EU-funded project near Malchin in Northeast Germany, where farmers cultivate Typha, a flowering wetland plant also known as cattail or bulrush, which can be sold to make construction materials such as boards and insulation. Other potential high-value paludiculture activities include harvesting peat moss, for use in horticulture as an alternative to mining fossil peat, and herding water buffalo. The parliamentarians concluded that such commercial wetland activities could be vital in meeting targets for conserving and rewetting peatlands to be set by the new EU Natural Restoration Law. Paludiculture may not feed the world any time soon, but it offers good bankable reasons for protecting and restoring our wetlands.

Climate change

Meanwhile, there are wider issues in the agricultural and food systems that urgently need to be addressed. Climate change is affecting food and water security. If we want to transform food and agricultural systems to become more resilient and reduce their environmental and climate footprints, we need to connect these efforts to the conservation, sustainable use and restoration of wetlands. For this, a better integration of the different policy agendas is necessary. In 2022, during UN climate negotiations at COP27, we engaged in events aimed at accelerating action on the food system, water and climate, and in doing this, also enabling global biodiversity recovery.

Our work in Ethiopia's Ziway-Shalla basin shows on a small scale what is needed – and what can be achieved. The good news is that solutions exist. What we need now is to scale up impact.



HEA-JIN PARK

COMMUNICATION OFFICER

I am Hea-Jin Park, the Communication Officer at Wetlands International Japan. My primary role involves creating content to raise awareness about Japan's Ramsar sites and World Wetlands Day, as well as managing social media platforms. Prior to joining Wetlands International in April 2021, I worked for seven years as a publishing editor in South Korea. In 2018, I relocated to Japan and pursued studies in Ecological Democracy at the graduate school of Environment and Society. It was during this time that my interest in wetlands grew through involvement in local community activities and collaborations with civic groups across borders to restore the population of the endangered Black-faced Spoonbills, which breed in Korea and winter in Japan and Taiwan.

Wetlands International's dedication to sustaining and restoring wetland ecosystems strongly resonates with me. I firmly believe that safeguarding these vital habitats is essential for biodiversity conservation and the well-being of local communities. I am enthusiastic about being part of this important mission. Additionally, as a bird enthusiast, I feel fortunate to have numerous opportunities to visit wetlands worldwide.

One of the highlights of 2022 was the YouTube Wetland Contents Development project. In collaboration with the Ramsar Regional Center - East Asia, we partnered with various YouTube creators from diverse fields to showcase Japan's rich and diverse wetlands and their beautiful wildlife from their unique perspectives. The 12 video clips generated a total of over 87,000 views, significantly raising awareness about the importance of wetlands.

Undoubtedly, effective communication and engagement with various stakeholders play a critical role in the conservation and restoration of wetlands at a significant scale. This involves forging strong partnerships with local communities, governments, NGOs, and private sector organisations. Throughout this process, it is crucial to foster an understanding and respect for diversity, just as we value the importance of biodiversity.

Underwater life, Japan

Mangrove restoration along the coastline of Demak, Indonesia

RESTORING WETLAND NATURE

By Fred Pearce

We knew it was a great project.
Now the United Nations has recognised it, too.

At the global biodiversity conference in Montreal in December, the UN made our Building-with-Nature initiative to restore mangroves and protect rapidly eroding coastline in Indonesia one of its ten inaugural World Restoration Flagships. Now we plan to scale up this best practice to save coastlines and help millions more people across Asia.

Mangroves in Indonesia

"A stellar example of smart and forward-looking adaptation work in action"

Inger Andersen, Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP)

Shrimp ponds

Building with Nature integrates Nature-Based Solutions with more conventional water infrastructure. On the northern coastline of Java, Indonesia's most densely populated island, we have been restoring a coastline that has been badly damaged by people removing a green barrier of mangroves to create room for shrimp ponds. Without this protection, the sea has been invading for several decades, washing through the ponds into rice fields in the ancient regency of Demak. Former coastal villages such as Timbulsloko have become islands, connected to the shore by narrow causeways several kilometres long that must be constantly raised to keep them above water.

Local communities planted new mangroves to hold back the water, but they were washed away. So we worked with them to install permeable bamboo structures along the coast, which create slack water between them and the shore, where silt accumulates, allowing mangroves to seed naturally and grow once again.

We also brought in local partners to train more than 270 village shrimp farmers in how to incorporate mangroves into redesigned ponds, while adopting organic methods of aquaculture. The results have tripled pond yields. And with the revived mangroves once again acting as nurseries, local wild fish catches have improved too, benefiting both villagers and bird populations.

World Restoration Flagship

Marking the World Restoration Flagship award, the director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), Inger Andersen, called the project *"a stellar example of smart and forward-looking adaptation work in action"*, and a beacon for the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, which got under way in 2021.
For the villagers of Demak, Building with Nature has turned the tide against an encroaching ocean. They now own the bamboo structures, and will maintain them until they become redundant as the mangroves grow and collect more silt amid their roots. Meanwhile, the village networks created by Wetlands International during the project have formed a new permanent local representative body called Bintoro (Javanese for *"to manage the sea"*).

"The programme offers a triple win: for nature, communities and economies," says Yus Rusila Noor, Director of Wetlands International in Indonesia. *"It meets local needs, while boosting benefits such as fisheries, carbon sequestration, recreation and biodiversity."*

And it is set for expansion. *"The project has created a formula that can be used in other locations,"* says our Programme Head of Coasts and Deltas, Pieter van Eijk. *"Already, the Indonesian Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, a partner in the Demak project, has replicated the structures along more than 20 kilometres of vulnerable coastline in 13 districts. And we are developing similar schemes with the Ministry to help prevent flooding and erosion on the nearby islands of Lombok and Sumbawa."*

"The programme offers a triple win: for nature, communities and economies."

Yus Rusila Noor, Director of Wetlands International Indonesia

Village shrimp farmer in Demak, Building with Nature

"The project has created a formula that can be used in other locations."

Pieter van Eijk, Programme Head, Coasts and Deltas of Wetlands International

Over the past two decades, our projects have restored wetlands in 16 countries, including rewetting 22,000 hectares of drained peatlands and rehabilitating 26,000 hectares.

Woman involved in oysterfarming Saloum delta, Senegal

Women doing oysterfarming in between the mangroves in the Saloum delta, Senegal

Building with Nature Asia

Next stop: the rest of Asia. We have created Building with Nature Asia to partner India, China, the Philippines and Malaysia and others to address a range of coastal problems previously only achieved by *"hard"* engineering. And we have joined the coalition for mainstreaming Nature-Based Solutions (NBS), a collaboration that puts NBS first among the options for infrastructure. Within a decade such projects could be protecting 10 million or more people, at a fraction of the cost of sea walls.

Recognition

The value of restoring wetlands for maintaining biodiversity, improving livelihoods and protecting against the impacts of climate change is increasingly recognised internationally. Of the ten World Restoration Flagships announced by the UN, five involved wetlands, from Gulf seagrasses and Indian rivers to wet grasslands in Central Asia.

Growing value

This rising awareness makes our expertise in wetland restoration of growing value. An internal analysis of our work over the past two decades, completed in 2022, identified 29 projects that have restored wetlands in 16 countries. They ranged from small water channels supplying villages in Mali's Inner Niger Delta, to rewetting 22,000 hectares of drained peatlands in Russia, and rehabilitating 26,000 hectares in and around Lake Loktak in northeast India.

Many involved local communities as active partners, something we see as central to success. And in almost all cases, those communities were the main beneficiaries. Recently, our attention has focused on peatlands. They hold roughly a third of all the planet's soil carbon, and their continuing loss is reckoned responsible for around 4 percent of human-induced greenhouse gas emissions. Stemming and reversing this loss was highlighted as a critical task in fighting climate change by a new Global Peatland Assessment, published in 2022 by UNEP and the Global Peatlands Initiative, of which Wetlands International is a leading member.

We are working on it. In 2022, we pushed forward new projects in several countries. With funding from Greenchoice, a Dutch green-energy supplier, we are developing community-based peatland restoration across 180,000 hectares of two very different landscapes: around Lake Junin, high in the Amazon watershed of Peru, and across the steppes of Mongolia.

Collaboration on Peatland Restoration with Stella McCartney

In the Brazilian Pantanal, the world's largest tropical wetland, we began collecting data for a five-year project with Greenchoice to reduce wildfires that in recent years have spread from cattle ranches and consumed up to a third of the wetland, threatening its jaguars, giant otters, caymans and blue macaws.

Meanwhile in Europe, we have been lobbying for a tougher EU Nature Restoration Law that can catalyse wetland recovery. A draft of the law published by the European Commission in June planned, among other things, to restore the free flow of at least 25,000 kilometres of rivers by 2030, but had weak targets for rewetting peatlands as a means to meeting EU climate and biodiversity commitments.

We continue our work in the field to show how it can be done. 2022 saw new funding from the US philanthropic Grantham Foundation to kick off a second phase of our work with Rewilding Europe, developing commercially-based peatland restoration in Poland's Oder delta and Norrbotten county in northern Sweden. And we launched a collaboration with French luxury goods company LVMH to restore 200 hectares of blanket peat bog in northwest Scotland, funded by donations from purchasers of skincare products developed by Stella McCartney.

It's the new wet look.

Our partners working for a better conservation of wetlands at Junín, Perú

JULIO FERNANDES

PROGRAMME OFFICER

I am Julio Fernandes, a Brazilian dedicated to my work at Wetlands International for the past five years. Growing up in the Brazilian countryside, I have always had a deep appreciation for the intricate relationship between people and nature. This passion led me to pursue a BSc in Geography and currently, I am a candidate for an MSc in territory management and planning.

The intersection of people and nature finds its true essence in wetlands, and working for a global network dedicated to conserving and restoring these precious ecosystems for the benefit of both people and nature brings me immense joy and fulfillment.

Cooperation is the cornerstone of my work. I find myself in spaces where I can connect and foster collaboration among partners. The challenge of bringing people together, united by a common goal, is what truly inspires me.

After two challenging years of remote work, last year, we were finally able to reconnect with partners and people in person for project implementations in the region. Returning to the field reignites our ambition and reinforces the mission we have ahead of us in safeguarding wetlands for the well-being of both people and nature.

Engaging people with wetlands is a priority for me! Facilitating dialogues across different scales, from grassroots community-based organisations (CBOs) to multilateral agreements and multinational companies, is crucial. Mobilizing people and sharing knowledge about the importance of wetlands allows individuals to recognise the vital role these ecosystems play in their lives.

ANDRÉS FRAIZ

TECHNICAL OFFICER

My name is Andrés Fraiz, and I am a biologist deeply passionate about coastal ecosystems and their conservation. Working at Wetlands International allows me to pursue my true calling and address the issues that ignite my enthusiasm. The conservation of nature and the realisation that we must learn to coexist with it while harnessing the benefits of ecosystems and their services are crucial, especially in the face of climate change. Contributing to this cause brings me immense gratification.

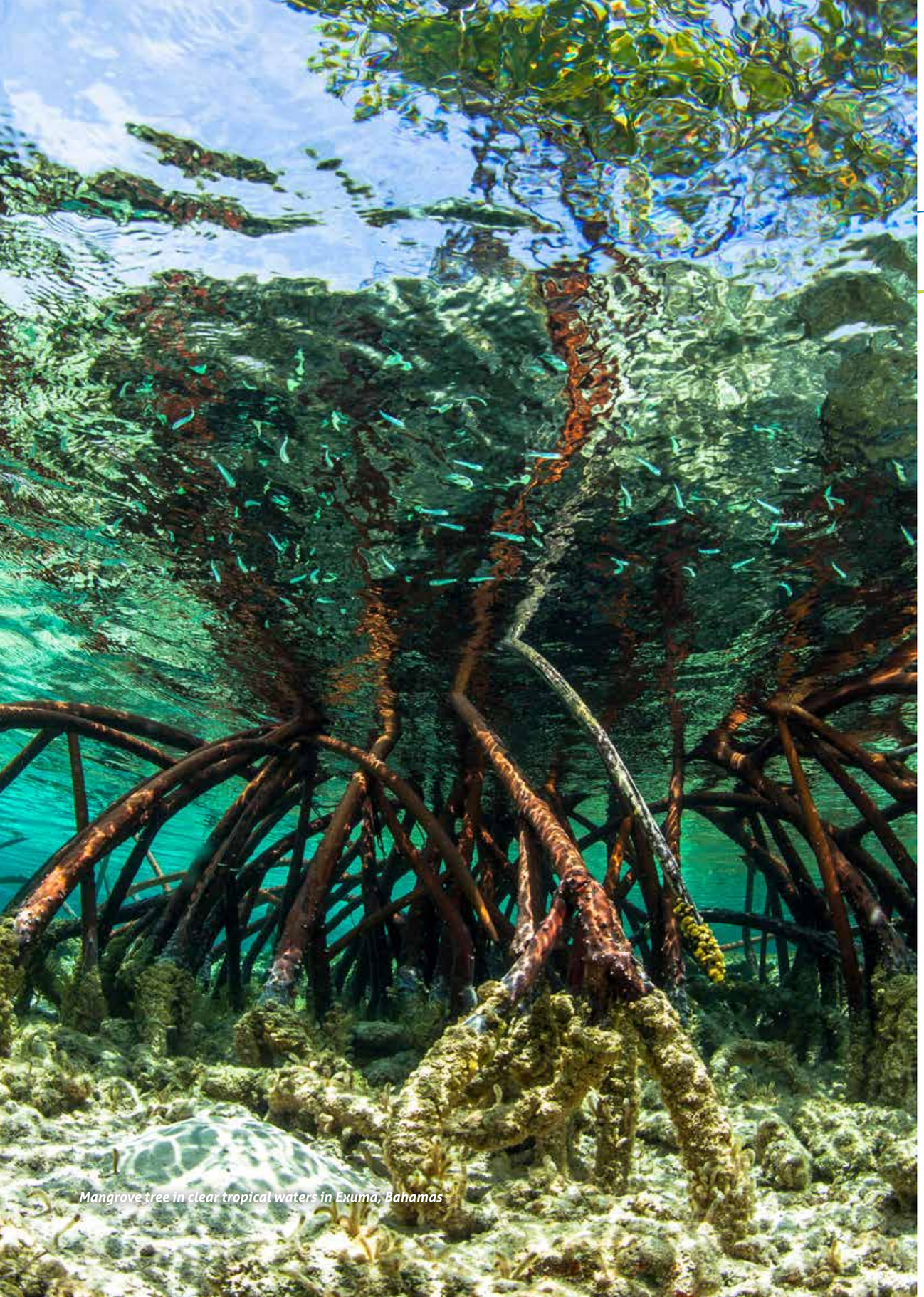
My specialisation lies in environmental management, but my greatest expertise revolves around aquatic and marine ecology as well as the restoration of coastal ecosystems. Over the years, I have witnessed firsthand the significance of these ecosystems and the urgent need to protect and restore them.

Leadership and organizing work teams to address various challenges concerning wetlands have become a central part of my role. Resolving these issues is a constant source of motivation, driving me to connect with partners and build bridges among stakeholders. By bringing people together and fostering collaboration toward a common goal, I find great fulfillment.

Water is the essence of life, yet we often fail to appreciate its value until we face its scarcity. Wetlands, being fragile ecosystems, cannot withstand the relentless onslaught of pollutants and debris. Climate change further emphasises the urgency of maintaining the well-being of wetlands, as they provide essential ecosystem services that protect us and provide vital resources.

As a devoted conservationist and a lover of fish, I consider myself fortunate to have abundant opportunities to visit wetlands across the globe. These journeys allow me to witness the wonders of these ecosystems and deepen my appreciation for their significance.

Aerial view of the Parana Delta, Argentina



Mangrove tree in clear tropical waters in Exuma, Bahamas

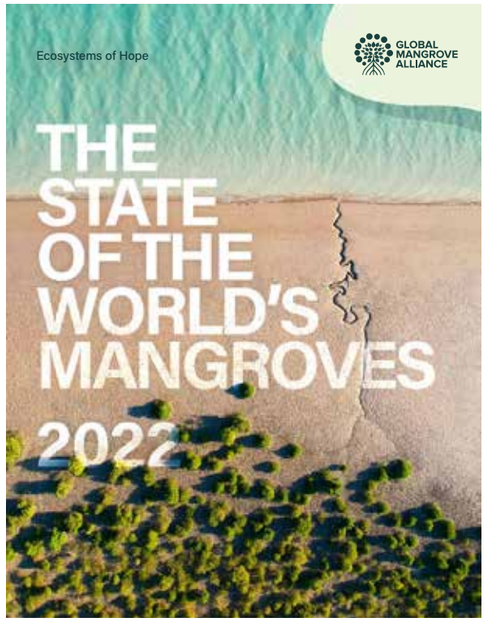
MANGROVE BREAKTHROUGH

By Fred Pearce

Amid the rise in international attention given to wetlands during 2022, no ecosystems have featured more prominently than mangroves – as storers of carbon, nurturers of marine wildlife and protectors of coastlines from storms and rising tides.

A major new boost for this agenda came during the year with the announcement of the Mangrove Breakthrough at the UN Climate Change Convention COP27 in November in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, aimed at mobilising billions of dollars for mangrove conservation and restoration.

A game-changer for mangrove conservation and restoration



In 2022, the GMA published the second edition of its groundbreaking The State of the World's Mangroves report

Old mangroves in the Saloum delta, Senegal

Wetlands International has been central to the rise of mangroves, through our collaborations with other environmental NGOs under the umbrella of the Global Mangrove Alliance (GMA), which we co-founded in 2018 with Conservation International, IUCN, The Nature Conservancy and WWF, and which now has more than 40 member organisations and a growing number of national chapters. In 2022, the GMA published the second edition of its groundbreaking The State of the World's Mangroves report. Compiled by researchers from Aberystwyth University, with The Nature Conservancy and Wetlands International, it identifies 147,000 square kilometres of mangroves, pinpointing gains and losses in the past quarter-century and identifying more than 8,000 square kilometres of recently lost mangroves that the researchers identify as potentially restorable.

Game-changer

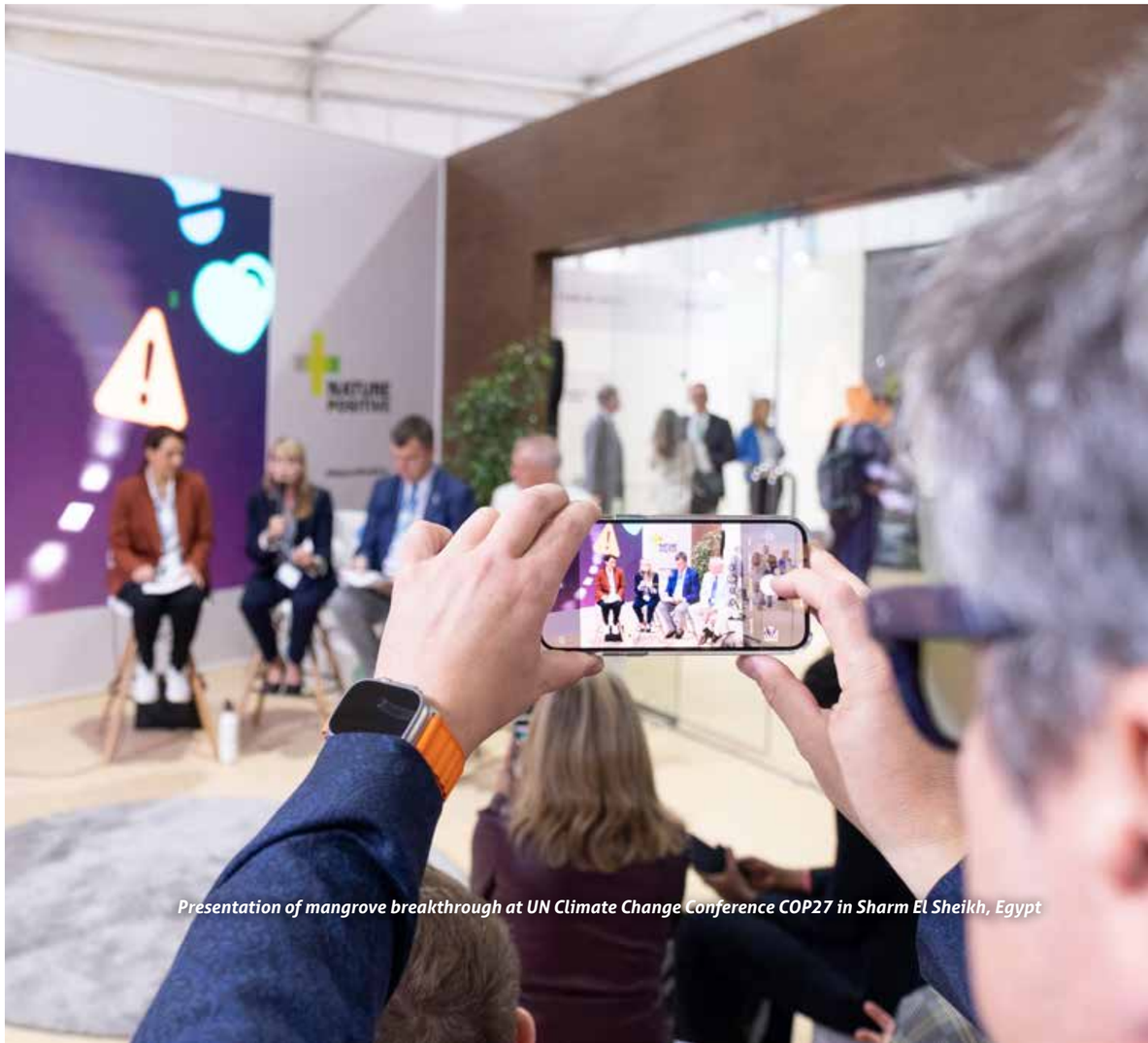
The report is proving a game-changer for mangrove conservation and restoration. The first edition, published in 2021, using data from the Global Mangrove Watch, an online platform of remote sensing information, underpins the Mangrove Breakthrough, announced by the UN High-Level Climate Champions, with the GMA and others, at COP27. The Breakthrough will *"unlock public, private and philanthropic finance at scale,"* says Climate Champion and UN Special Envoy on Financing the 2030 Agenda, Mahmoud Mohieldin. It aims to catalyze the investment of USD 4 billion by 2030 to halt any further mangrove loss, to restore half of recent mangrove losses, and to double the area of mangroves within protected areas.

Capturing carbon

The GMA estimated during 2022 that achieving these targets should capture and secure more than 40 million tonnes of carbon dioxide in the biomass of mangroves and a further 190 million tonnes in the soils and silt that their roots hold firm. *"The Breakthrough could not be more timely,"* said Wetlands International's CEO Jane Madgwick. *"Mangroves are now widely valued, the potential for conservation and restoration is clear, and the knowledge base is there to drive successful implementation. The opportunity to create momentum for mangrove action at scale and unlock the required finance is now."*

Adapting to climate change

Besides capturing carbon to mitigate climate change, the Breakthrough will help tropical countries confronted by rising sea levels and more intense storms to adapt to climate change -- what Mohieldin calls the *"race for resilience"*. The GMA says it should be able to reduce flood risks for 15 million or more people in coastal communities, while boosting their incomes by providing extra nursery habitat for an estimated 37 commercial marine species.



Presentation of mangrove breakthrough at UN Climate Change Conference COP27 in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt

'To plant or not to plant'

Bankable returns

Raising billions of dollars will also require delivering bankable returns for investors, in terms of carbon capture or other environmental benefits, through developing a portfolio of *"investable mangrove projects"*, says Wetlands International's Programme Head for Coasts and Deltas, Pieter van Eijk. Those projects must employ good science, while safeguarding the rights of the communities that host them. The aim is to showcase the first Breakthrough portfolio at the next UN climate conference in Dubai at the end of 2023.

The actions implemented under these projects will take many forms. But based on our experience, Wetlands International is keen to steer the global community away from its focus on single-sided large-scale planting of mangroves, which has a high failure rate. Instead, we find better outcomes from stimulating natural mangrove regeneration via the principles of *"ecological mangrove restoration"*.

Our *"To Plant or Not to Plant"* campaign is demonstrating best practice, while influencing and inspiring mangrove initiatives worldwide. In 2022, we submitted proposals for scaling up mangrove restoration on the Mahakam and Kayan Sembakung deltas in Indonesian Borneo; provided technical advice on a project to offset losses of mangroves during the construction of the New Manila Airport in the Philippines; convened stakeholders in Tanzania's Rufiji delta to protect East Africa's largest area of mangroves; and pushed ahead with our own groundbreaking restoration work in and around the Cacheu National Park in Guinea-Bissau, a candidate to become a UNESCO biosphere reserve.

The new initiatives will build on existing agreements, especially the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance. The 2022 Conference of the Parties to this 50-year-old treaty advanced its mangrove agenda by approving the creation of a new International Mangrove Centre in southern China at Shenzhen, home of the Futian mangrove reserve. China is one of only a handful of countries to increase its mangrove cover in the past two decades.

The Ramsar resolution establishing the centre *"encourages close communication and cooperation with other organisations and ongoing mangrove initiatives"*, indicating that it should become an international focus, and draw on the expertise of the GMA in its work.

ANTENEH WORKU

PROGRAMME OFFICER-CRV

I am Anteneh Worku, an experienced professional with an MSc in Integrated Watershed Management and a BSc in Forestry. I have worked with governmental, national, and international organisations in the conservation field. At Wetlands International Ethiopia, I lead restoration and livelihood support projects in the Central Rift Valley landscape.

I've cherished wetlands since my college days studying wetland ecology. Working at Wetlands International Ethiopia is a dream come true, allowing me to pursue my passion and contribute to wetland preservation. With a great team and inspiring leaders, I have the opportunity to engage communities and partners, raising awareness about the significance of wetlands.

One of my key projects, Source to Sea, focuses on restoration and climate-resilient livelihoods. This involves implementing restoration measures, securing water resources at the catchment level, promoting income-generating activities, and introducing climate-smart agricultural practices. Collaborating with community-based organisations, NGOs, religious leaders, and government entities, we have achieved remarkable outcomes, such as reduced runoff, rehabilitation of degraded watersheds and wetlands, increased bird populations, sustainable fuelwood off-take, and the establishment of climate-smart villages.

To ensure tangible restoration success, I emphasise public awareness, advocacy, integrating restoration efforts with livelihood enhancement, creating wetland buffer zones, implementing water use permits, mitigating overgrazing and unsustainable agriculture, and promoting integrated wetland management plans. A well-coordinated approach that harmonises agriculture and grazing management with wetland conservation is essential.

My work has inspired me, enhancing my leadership skills and confidence in engaging stakeholders, partners, and the community. I deeply appreciate the recognition and support received from Wetlands International and the local community. Together, we strive to make a lasting positive impact on wetland ecosystems.

Aerial shot of fishermen from Matondoni Village in Lamu, Kenya

Wetlands International Offices

1 Latin America & Caribbean Panama
2 Brazil
3 Latin American & Caribbean Argentina
4 Global office
5 Europe
6 Russia
7 West Africa Coastal
8 Guinea-Bissau
9 Sahel
10 Ethiopia
11 Uganda
12 Eastern Africa
13 Tanzania
14 South Asia
15 Malaysia
16 Brunei
17 China
18 Philippines
19 Indonesia
20 Japan

FUNCTIONING OF THE ORGANISATION

Fortunately, the risks of Covid eased in the first months of the year allowing for a more normal operation than we have had for the previous two years. Although the war in Ukraine and the resulting hike in energy and other prices rose as external risks, the effects were only felt by the organisation to a limited degree, except for our office in Russia where our operations came to an effective standstill. In other parts of the network, we faced security issues due to local unrest, for example in the Sahel region. However, we are accustomed to addressing these kinds of challenges and this caused only minor disruptions. Overall, the environment where we work has improved in comparison with a year before.

Strategic Intent

This was the second year of implementing the Wetlands International's Strategic Intent (2020-2030) since its approval by the organisation's governance in December 2020. Our teams were focused on advocacy and implementing big ideas, while also developing new program concepts and generating new resources to meet the challenges of our strategic ambitions.

Achievements

In the past year, positive progress was made across all three workstreams: Deltas and Coasts, Peatlands, and Rivers and Lakes. Results contributing to the goals set out in the Strategic Intent have been delivered collaboratively by our network teams through programmes and projects, in line with the local context in which they operate. A summary of achievements is provided in our Achievements chapter. A list of the main projects carried out in 2022 is provided in Annex 3.1.

Wetlands International network

Wetlands International is an independent, global network of offices with shared values, brand and purpose that implement a joint strategy to safeguard and restore wetlands in more than 100 countries worldwide. Our offices and locations are shown before this chapter. There were no changes to the number of our presences in 2022.

Global Office

The Global Office, based in the Netherlands, facilitates work across the network and provides leadership and support in representation, programme leadership, communication and fundraising. The office is responsible for facilitating the daily work of the network and ensuring it is aligned with decisions taken by the Network Management Team and Global Board. A social report for the Global Office in 2022 is presented at the end of this chapter.

Communications and advocacy

Building our advocacy and communications is a key part of scaling up our impact at landscape, national and global levels. In 2022 we strengthened our team capacity, with the recruitment of a new Senior Advocacy Officer, and two Communications Managers, focusing on Brand & Content and Digital Engagement. This has allowed us to make a bigger impact.

2022 presented an ideal opportunity for Wetlands International to raise its profile, and to put wetlands at the centre of global action on climate and biodiversity. With Ramsar COP14, UNFCCC COP27 and CBD COP15 happening in quick succession, we brought policy coherence around global wetland targets and evidence that healthy wetlands are a key solution to the dual crises of climate change and biodiversity loss.

Project Cycle Management training with global staff at Global Office in Ede, The Netherlands

PROJECT CYCLE MANAGEMENT TRAJECTORY AND TRAININGS

At Wetlands International we started reviewing and refreshing our internal processes. The project management cycle and systems needed to strengthen cooperation, efficiency, standards and good practices across our offices. We completed a survey involving more than 70 project managers across our offices and worked very closely with our office teams and MDF Training & Consultancy to develop our Project Management Guidelines and a tailor-made training on results-based project management. A pilot training with participants from our Kenya, Ethiopia, Europe and Global Offices took place in April 2023, and at least two more trainings are planned for 2023.

These trainings are already helping us to improve a common approach and understanding to Project Cycle Management that will strengthen cooperation and efficiency among network teams working on joint and complex projects.

ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting, held from 31 October to 4 of November 2022 in Tour du Valat, France, was the first opportunity for senior leaders and Heads of Offices to meet face-to-face since the last in-person Annual Meeting in Brazil three years ago, before the Covid pandemic. Tour du Valat hosting the Annual Meeting was symbolic due to its connection with the International Waterfowl and Wetlands Bureau (predecessor of Wetlands International) and its role in promoting the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. Wetlands International has grown significantly in the last three years and the Annual Meeting was an opportunity to sharpen our priorities and deep dive into our upscaling ambitions to further accelerate our impact. We looked into how best to deliver our strategic goals and mechanisms for scaling up, such as sharing science and knowledge, stimulating public and private funding, working with value chains, building capacity, and influencing policy. On the last day of the Annual Meeting, the CEO and Heads of Offices met as the Global Board to confirm the key decisions and actions of the meeting. It set the basis for resetting our Business Planning process, defined a pathway to work on our scaling strategy, helped us understand how far along the way we are toward the achievement of the nine goals within our strategic intent and set minimum standards for our organisational development and financial exchange of information and reporting.

Workshop at the Annual meeting in Tour du Valat, France

Delegation of Wetlands International at UN Biodiversity Conference COP15 in Montreal, Canada

We sent a delegation to Montreal to influence the UN Biodiversity negotiations at CBD COP15. The inclusion of inland waters and coastal ecosystems in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework targets on restoration and conservation represents a big win for wetlands, and now provides a global mandate for urgent action for wetlands in every country.

Partnerships and Philanthropy

In 2022 we created a new network team to drive our work on partnerships, philanthropy and general fundraising. The team conducted a comprehensive audit of our fundraising needs which helped us identify areas of strength, weakness and opportunities for growth which will guide our priorities in the coming period. As one of the main conclusions, we decided to improve our coordination as a network to engage effectively with the private sector. We developed a corporate engagement strategy to align with our future ambitions and market readiness.

Governance

Wetlands International is a non-profit organisation with charitable status in the Netherlands and in countries where it operates. The organisation has two complementary forms of international governance: an Association of Members (governments and NGOs), and a foundation overseen by a Supervisory Council (SC) whose members also constitute the Board of the Association (BoA). The SC and BoA met three times in 2022 and made a field visit to learn about peatland restoration in Scotland. A report of governance activities is presented in the Supervisory Council chapter. In cases where Wetlands International offices have an independent legal status, they are governed by their own boards and the organisation's CEO is an ex-officio member.

Network management

The Global Board, consisting of the Wetlands International CEO and Heads of each office, is responsible for strategic decisions on positioning, priorities and institutional issues. The Global Board delegates operational decision-making to the Network Management Team which has members drawn from among Heads of office and global functions. In 2022, the Network Management Team met every two months and was key in decision-making in network-wide policy and communications issues (such as positioning on Voluntary Carbon Markets, engagement strategies for Ramsar, UNFCCC and CBD), and supervised investments made in organisational development, such as capacity building in Project Cycle Management and the Corporate Engagement Strategy. The Global Board met in November in the Camargue, France as part of the organisation's Annual Meeting, where everyone there signed the Heads of Office Charter.

Accountability

Transparency and accountability towards our stakeholders are part of our core values, including actively seeking feedback

Wetlands International Office in Fatick, Senegal

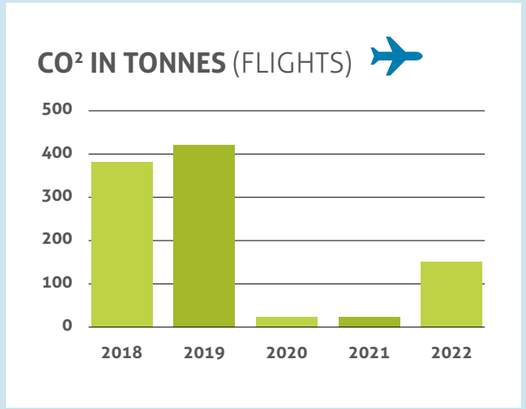
on our performance. A dedicated webpage provides our annual reports and accounts, and information about key global policies including the Conservation and Human Rights Framework, INGO Accountability Framework, Code of Conduct, Corporate Engagement, Anti-corruption, Ethical, Gender, and Partnership policies. In 2022 Wetlands International made no changes to these policies.

Anti-corruption and whistle blowing

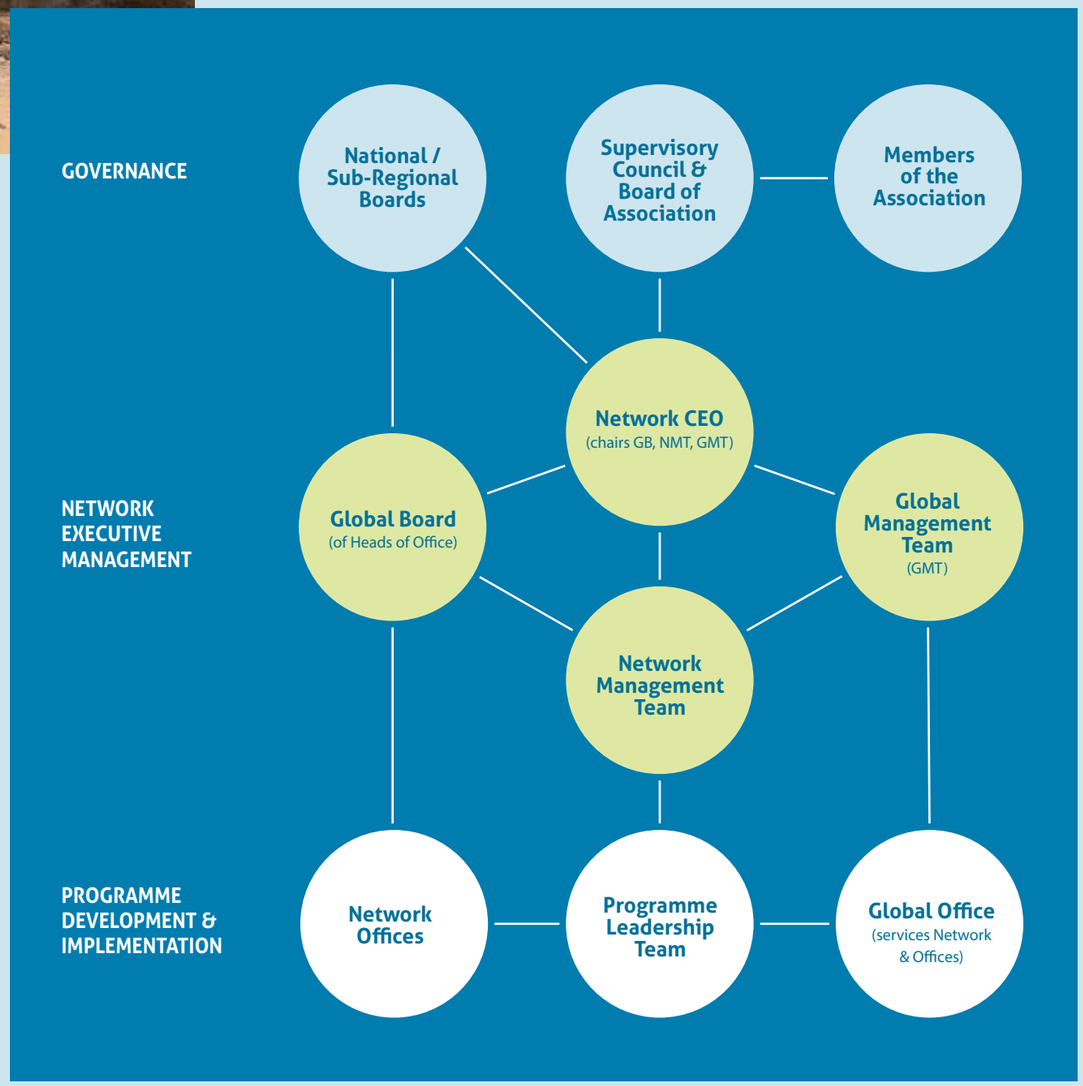
All staff are introduced to the anti-corruption policy in their induction and are encouraged to be vigilant and discuss any suspicious activities with their line manager or Head of office. External stakeholders can also approach Wetlands International with any grievances or complaints related to possible cases of fraud, discrimination or mismanagement. The complaints procedure is available for use of anyone on the Wetlands International website. In 2022 we received a complaint from a staff member in the Eastern Africa region which was dealt with by the responsible Director supported by the Director of Resources from the Global Office. The lessons from this case are being used to improve our practices.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Wetlands International strives in its daily operations to reduce negative impact on the environment and act in a sustainable and socially responsible way. Since travel is the most important part of our footprint, we encourage Global Office staff to use public transport and work part-time from home. Also, all company flights are compensated fully for their CO_2 emissions. In 2022 we calculated our CO_2 footprint from flights as 153 Tonnes which corresponds to about 4 T CO_2 per FTE staff. The graph below illustrates that, although our impact from flying increased in 2022, it is still about 40% of our previous average in the pre-COVID period. Similarly, commuting to work and domestic travel have increased compared with the past two years, but are still below our pre-COVID averages.



Network Organisation Chart



Risk Management

Associated experts, members and volunteers

Risk Management

A risk register for the network, overseen by the Network Management Team, is updated regularly and discussed at least once a year with the Wetlands International Supervisory Council. Overall, we see that risks have edged-up in the past year, despite that fact that Covid risks (and related disruptions) have dropped to low levels. We see increases in risk due to challenges in obtaining sufficient quality and timeliness in project audits and due to the tight labour market that has made it challenging to fill vacancies in the past 12 months. Despite this we consider the organisation to be in a good position to deal with these risks, due to its stronger financial position, which means that we can take mitigation measures more quickly when required.

The top 5 risks in December 2022 are listed in the table below:

	RISK	AREA OF RISK	POTENTIAL IMPACT ON ORGANISATION	MITIGATION MEASURES
1	Political instability and conflict affects operations (Ukraine/Russia, Sahel region)	Governance	Programme operations and funding is greatly reduced	Strengthen cooperation with local communities. Incorporate flexibility in project design
2	Economic recession due to cost of living crisis in multiple regions leads to less funds available and more competition	Financial	Fewer opportunites to develop and implement programesm with effects on staffing and offices	Regular monitoring by Network MT, sharpen propositions, and more attention to relationship management
3	Insufficient quallity and late submission of audits from offices (local partners finance reports are insufficient)	Financial	Delays in reports, cashflow and ultimately an impact on reputation	Pre-Investing in network support functions (senior finance staff), amd training in project finance management
4	Political instability Change in policies or priorities of major donors (closure of MAVA)	Financial	Key funding sources are no longer available E.g. Mediterranean, West Africa	Develop and maintain open relationships with other donors
5	Tight labour market slows recruitment and leads to gaps in staffing and stress for current staff	Operational	Inability to implement current programmes correctly or to start new ones and over-work symptoms among staff	Extra suport to recruitments processes, including interim staff and recruitment agencies

From the perspective of

The COmON Foundation has awarded Wetlands International the status of key grantee and provides structural and project-related support to the organisation. At present the Foundation supports our action to safeguard and restore mangroves in Africa and Asia, and to further develop the 4 Returns methodology for landscape restoration in partnership with Commonland, and supports a step change in the organisation's effectiveness, capacity and systems.

"If ever a breakthrough was a real breakthrough, it is the Mangrove Breakthrough! Thanks to the tireless work of Wetlands International in the past 25 years, finally the world has seen the importance of mangroves. They protect coastal areas with its inhabitants from the sea, they absorb massive Carbon, they provide income to local communities, they provide shelter and breeding space for fish and mammals. In other words, they play a crucial role in the Circle of Life.

There is no other organisation to be found in the whole world with so much global knowledge about mangroves than Wetlands International. At COmON Foundation we are extremely proud to be associated with Wetlands International.

We provide core-funding to the organisation annually and we finance several global mangrove projects, one of them being the To Plant Or not To Plant initiative in Guinee Bissau, Tanzania, Indonesia and Malaysia. I would urge other donors, big or small, to jump on the riding train and join us in supporting this spectacular organisation filled with motivated, skilled people who all have their hearts in the right place!"

Associated experts, members and volunteers

The strength of Wetlands International is much more than its staff and offices. Through working with influential partners, specialist groups, experts and members, we accelerate our momentum and strategic results.
Members and the Supervisory Council provide active governance and, together with Counsellors of Honour, bring high-level expertise, guidance and connections. Specialist groups, associate experts and partners provide expertise, evidence and advice that underpins our approach on science, policy and practice.
Partner organisations with whom we work regularly to implement programmes and projects are listed in Annex 3.7.
We are especially proud of our long-standing engagement with volunteer and citizen science groups, such as those who participate in the International Waterbird Census each year.

Members of the Association

Government and NGO members of the global association provide long-term support and strategic guidance to the organisation. In November 2022, we held a well-attended event for members on the margins of the Ramsar Convention COP14 meeting which highlighted the urgency and opportunity to collaborate over scaling up action for biodiverse, healthy wetlands and the involvement of members in Wetlands International and their willingness to further collaborate.

Strategic partnerships

Wetlands International works in partnerships in nearly all the activities we undertake. Our partnership policy outlines principles that guide why and how long-term strategic relationships are developed and managed. In 2022 we made important steps forward in strategic partnerships across our programme, including in:

- Coasts and Deltas: Global Mangrove Alliance, The Nature Conservancy, WWF, Permian Global and Boskalis
- Peatlands: Global Peatlands Initiative, Greifswald Mire Centre, Rewilding Europe and Greenchoice
- Rivers and Lakes: CARE, International Alert, IWMI and GIZ
- Conventions and Waterbird Agreements: Ramsar Convention, IUCN, AEWA, EAAFP and CMS

SPOTLIGHT:
GLOBAL OFFICE SOCIAL REPORT 2022

This section provides insight into our global office staffing and human resource (HR) practices in 2022.

Updated HR Plan

In 2022 we conducted an independent assessment leading to reflection, learning and understanding on motivations for retention. As a follow-up we prepared an updated HR plan for the Global Office to stimulate support for personal development and training, foster teamwork and ensure a pleasant working environment for all staff. As part of this, we set up an Employee Participation Group to facilitate two-way communications, enable ideas and innovations to be picked up and to act as an additional mechanism to ensure that staff views are taken on board by the Management Team in key decision making.

Diversity

In December 2022, we had a total Global Office staff of 41 people. Our staff has a diverse cultural and professional background which matches our role as an international NGO. During the year key staff ratios remained generally stable with 13 different nationalities, an average age of 47 years, and a balanced male/female ratio of 56/44. In 2022, most of our staff were educated to university level and included 8 members with highest education being PhD.

Employment contracts

The average number of contracted working was 34,3 hours during the year (fulltime is 36 hours). During 2022 we employed 10 new staff members while 5 staff members left. We are in full transition to meet the needs of the Strategy and the emerging project portfolio. Of the five who left: 1 resigned for personal reasons, 3 were not a good match and 1 left on a sabbatical.

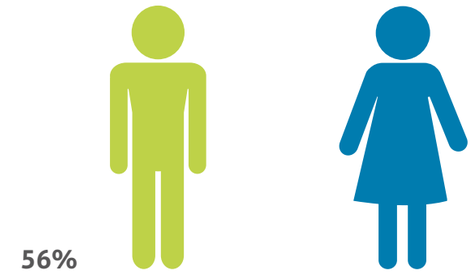
Health

Our total percentage of sick leave went up to 2.7%, in most cases still related to Covid.

Integrity

Personal safety and integrity are a priority for Wetlands International. We have policies and practices about the behaviour staff can expect from each other and we endeavour to create a safe space to share concerns or complaints as they occur. For the Global Office no official complaints were received in 2022 from staff. We continue to give attention to awareness and training on behaviour, transparency and integrity.

Global Office Staff



13 NATIONALITIES

AVERAGE AGE: 47

STAFF NUMBERS
total: 41
fte: 34,8
part-time: 9
full-time: 32

CONTRACT TYPE
permanent: 31
fixed time: 10
project: 0

HIGHEST LEVEL EDUCATION
PhD: 8
master: 21
bachelor: 7
other: 2

HEALTH
short-term
sick leave 2.7%

INTEGRITY PROCEDURES
internal: 0
external: 0

PAUL MBATIA

PARTNERSHIP MANAGER

I am Paul Mbatia, and I bring extensive expertise as a business developer, facilitator, strategist, and program designer to my role at Wetlands International. Within the organisation, my primary focus is providing guidance to our network and spearheading efforts to build long term sustainable partnerships and funding. Growing up in Kenya, I witnessed firsthand the destruction of forests and wetlands, which resulted in severe consequences for our climate, biodiversity, and people's livelihoods. This experience ignited my passion for addressing climate change and protecting our environment. To me, human-induced climate change is a violation of fundamental human rights, including the right to life, water and sanitation, food, health, housing, self-determination, culture, and development. It is our collective responsibility to take action, implement remedies, and support communities to adapt to ensure a dignified life. This is why working for Wetlands International is so fulfilling for me.

I have a background in teaching economics and geography, and a master's degree in international development studies, and a deep knowledge of international development policies and engagement with philanthropic organisations. My expertise lies in planning, reporting, and resource mobilisation, with a deep understanding of donor engagement.

In my role, I support the Wetlands International network by leading and developing resource mobilisation strategies and their implementation. This includes the timely preparation and completion of donor reports, proposals, presentations, and briefing papers. My role expands to supporting the network team's development skills by enhancing our result-based report in analytical writing, and donor relationship development to ensure high-quality proposals and donor reports critical for our network's partnership management
To safeguard wetlands for the benefit of both people and nature, I believe we require strong political commitment from nations to improve the condition of wetlands and enhance community resilience in the face of climate change. This commitment must be accompanied by policy development at local basin and national levels through relevant platforms and I ensure that local wetland communities have access to knowledge, financing, tools, and early-warning systems enabling them to make optimal choices for sustainable livelihoods in harmony with wetland conservation.

Sunset at Danube Delta

SUMMARY OF FINANCE AND RESOURCING

This section provides a summary of Wetlands International's finance and resourcing in 2022. A detailed version can be found in sections 1 and 2 (annual accounts) and section 3 of the Annex.

Wetlands International focuses its work where wetlands matter most to people and nature. Our programmes and initiatives are developed to meet our goals set out in our Strategic Intent 2020-2030 and organised into three streams: Coasts and Deltas, Rivers and Lakes, and Peatlands (see section 3.1 of the Annex for a complete list of our projects).

Our programmes are increasingly large-scale and long-term, involving transboundary and international work that involves several offices. The network's offices (global and sub-regional, national) work together on resource development and an increasing amount of funding is raised by offices other than the global office.

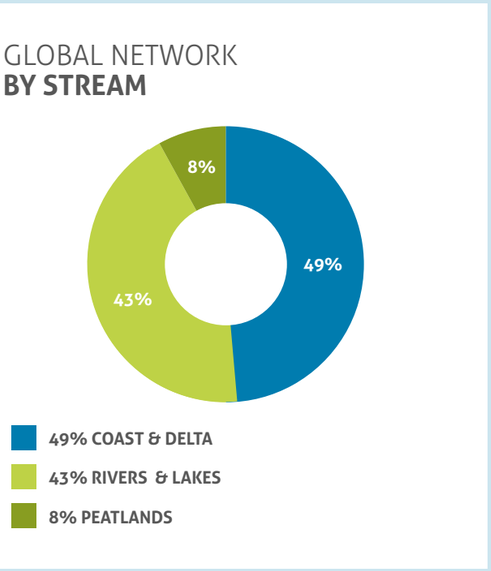
Resourcing the global organisation

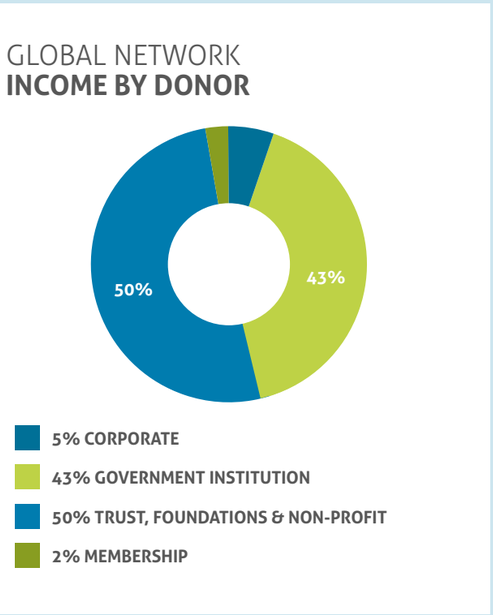
The main sources of income of Wetlands International for 2022 came from projects as well as important annual contributions from our members. The total network project income is based on data obtained from all offices according to their national finance practices. The total network project income of 2022 amounted to €18 million (see Annex section 3.1).

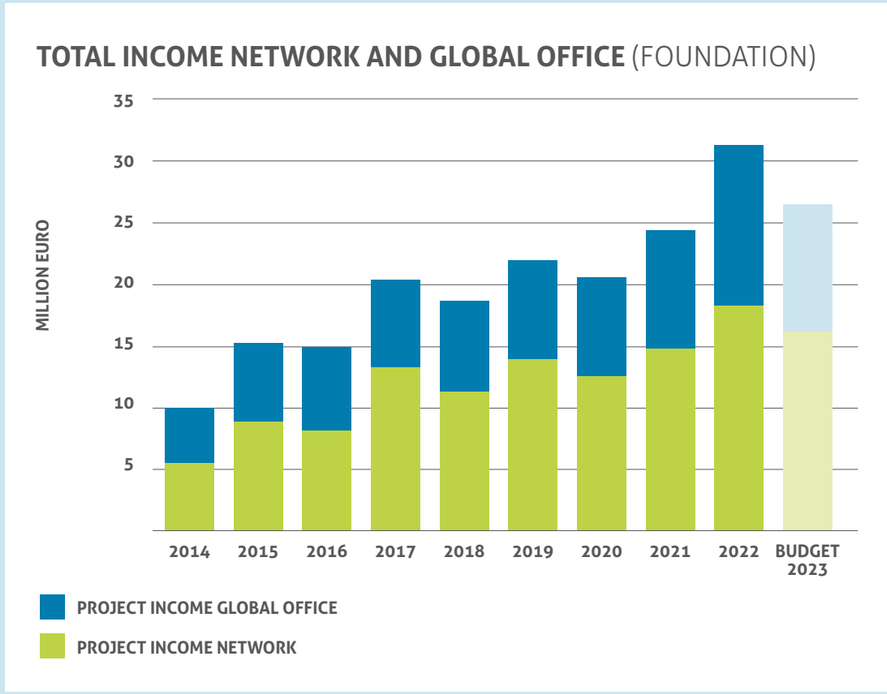
Our sources of income and expenditures across the sectors

The main source of income in 2022 was from foundations, trusts and other non-profits at 50% (last year 40%). This increase came from a shift from government grants, representing a lower part of the total income of 43% this year (last year 51%). In addition, 5% (last year 6%) came from corporate funding (through our Collaboration Agreements). Membership contributions remained at 2% of the total income but are important strategically, as they enable action on waterbird monitoring and support strategic investments.

A full list of network projects can be found in section 3.1 of the Annex. This list provides an overview of projects implemented in 2022 per office and includes the stream, the amount funded, the donor and the donor type.







Our sources of income and expenditures across the three streams

Across our three streams, Coasts and Deltas accounted for the largest portion of our income at 49% (last year 50%), Rivers and Lakes increased to 43% because of the starting of two larger programs (last year 38%) and Peatlands contributed 8% (last year 12%) of total network income; this decline is mainly due to one large programme ending.

Resource development and implementation by network offices

In 2022, network offices received and managed 28% of total income directly from our donors. This is slightly lower than in 2021 (35%), mainly due to the taking of larger programs with conditional funding through the Global office.

Projects managed through the global office are mostly implemented by our network offices or by affiliated scientific institutions, partners and experts using sub-contracts.

Considerations looking ahead

We received significant one-off grants in 2022 from individuals via philanthropic fundraising platforms. In 2023, we have planned to increase this part of our annual income by €800k in new flexible funding donations built from a mix of private sources. Our aim is that by the end of 2025, organisational development, communications and advocacy costs will be financed 100% from flexible funds. We aim for 30% flexible funding of the total annual income. This target assumes that we invest in the operational fundraising foundations required, and that partnership development capacity at Global Office level is focused primarily on new business acquisition, as well as building capacity for fundraising in our offices. It also requires we shift from a culture of fundraising to one of philanthropy.

Our strategy to achieve this target will involve establishing systems to build strong relationships and support donors' connection to our work by:

- Investing in developing a coherent organisational level case for support and underlying donor engagement assets. This would help us promote our organisation as a whole and therefore have better control on our donor engagement rather than our current practices of selling projects.
- Developing comprehensive organisational level engagement strategies for our four main fundraising markets - corporate engagement, private foundations and high net worth individuals; Government Membership and public donors. This would allow us to build our network level resource mobilisation capacity that is less about spotting an opportunity and writing proposal to that which is derived from our own strategy and that support us as an international network.
- Investing in Customer Relationship Management to improve our donor relationship management, particularly in improving the current donor lifetime value.

We continue to improve the financial resilience of the Wetlands International network, including strengthening our financial reserves to enable us to address unforeseen external events and to invest in the organisation.

THANK YOU

The progress made towards our 2030 targets as set out in the Strategic Intent 2020-2030 and reported on in this Annual Review, is made possible thanks to the support of our donors, members and partners. A huge thanks to them all.

Wetlands International has the ambitious goal to safeguard and restore millions of hectares of wetlands over 2020-2030, achieving multiple benefits for people, climate, and nature. Our theory of change encapsulates the three main phases of our work: to inspire, mobilise, and upscale. These are the key ingredients of our organisational strategy for the period 2020-2030.

At Wetlands International, we understand that only by working with others can we safeguard and restore the world's wetlands. That is why we joined forces with a growing portfolio of partners to increase our reach, accelerate our work and scale up our impact.

In 2022, we worked intensively with existing and new partners to drive wetland solutions across regions and sectors, from knowledge institutions to the private sector.

Our members played an important part in shaping our Strategic Intent 2020-2030 and their annual membership contributions help us to drive implementation. Our members, both governments and NGOs, also provide additional financial support and collaborate in programmes and on policy advocacy. A big thank you to them for their continued support and collaboration.

The International Waterbird Census, one of the longest running and largest citizen science programme in the world, brings together counts of millions of waterbirds thanks to the many hours of fieldwork by tens of thousands of volunteers. We are grateful to them all.

We would especially like to thank our major donors in 2022:

- The COmON Foundation, for supportingWetlands International in its mission to achieve impact for wetlands and people worldwide, including safeguarding and restoring mangroves and coastal landscapes in Africa and Asia; bringing knowledge on wetlands and water issues into the 4 Returns methodology for landscape restoration in partnership with Commonland; supporting a step change in our organisation's effectiveness; and making Wetlands International a key grantee.

- The Dutch Postcode Lottery, for their three-year grant (2021-2023), enabling Wetlands International to step up our work with partners to stimulate and enable whole landscape recovery, including the regeneration of vital wetlands.

- The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), for funding "Wetlands 4 Resilience", a ten-year global wetland ambition aiming to achieve the global influence of countries, institutions and sectors, resulting in shifts in approach, policies and investments towards the regeneration of wetland landscapes. Separately, Sida also enables the restoration of high value wetlands in the Rift valley and along the East African Mangrove Coast.

- DOB Ecology, for supporting major, long-term programmes to conserve and restore mangroves in Africa, and to conserve the river and wetland system of the Paraná-Paraguay and the High Andean wetlands in South America.

Identifying different mangrove species through their propagules during CBEMR Training in Lamu, Kenya

- The International Climate Initiative (IKI) of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU), for its support to the Building with Nature Indonesia programme and the Accelerating Adaptation through Building with Nature in Asia upscaling initiative.

- The German Agency for Development & International Cooperation (GIZ), for enabling our work on deltas and coasts.

- Arcadia, for enabling our work to help conserve and restore intertidal wetlands along the Yellow Sea coast in China, a critically important part of the East Asian–Australasian Flyway for migratory waterbirds.

- The Grantham Foundation, for supporting our work with Rewilding Europe on the development of carbon landscape propositions for peatland restoration and attracting further funding for upscaling.

- Greenchoice, for supporting Wetlands International in restoring2,500 ha of mangroves in Guinea-Bissau.

- All the donors who fund the Global Mangrove Alliance, and particularly the Oak Foundation, DoBEcology, COmON Foundation and the Dutch Postcode Lottery for their support toward the Global Mangrove Watch platform and its integration into (inter)national processes to support the broader mangrove community.

- The Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and others for funding our work in the Sahel, the Horn of Africa and elsewhere on the African continent.

- Donors who fund our work through the effective giving platform Effektiv-Spenden.

- The many ministries of environment and development agencies, state and local governments, and all government and NGO members who enable our work.

- A big thank you also to all the other donors listed in Annex 3.10.

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People guide their boats through algea covered water on the Karatoya River in Bogra, Bangladesh

Colophon

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