



AEWA Regional Training of Trainers (ToT) Workshop on flyway conservation for Francophone Countries of Western and Central Africa

Premises of the Directorate General of Water, Forests and Hunting

Cotonou, Benin, 6-10 May 2019

Workshop Report



**Tim Dodman
15th June 2019**

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Getting a good vantage point for bird watching in the floodplain!

1. Background

This Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop aimed to deliver training at the regional level to establish / strengthen a network of experienced trainers in the francophone Western and Central African countries to enable them to conduct future local, national or regional trainings in the '*Flyway Approach to the Conservation and Wise Use of Waterbirds and Wetlands*'. The ToT made full use of the Flyway Training Kit (FTK) developed under the UNEP/GEF African-Eurasian Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) Flyway Project among other resources, including the Toolkit for Trainers on identifying and counting waterbirds in Africa developed by the French National Agency for Hunting and Wildlife (ONCFS).

The workshop addresses capacity-building goals of the recently adopted AEWA Plan of Action for Africa 2019-2027, which includes promotion of regional training in Africa under AEWA, as well as promoting national follow-up training and the use of the FTK within wildlife training institutes. The primary stakeholders for this workshop were technical staff or affiliates of conservation, education or environmental, Governmental or non-Governmental organizations already engaged in the design or delivery of training at some level. The ToT aimed to build on their experiences in providing skills relevant to the implementation of AEWA.

The 44 trainees from 18 Francophone countries of Western and Central Africa as well as from some regional wildlife training institutes were selected through a nomination process supported by AEWA National Focal Points and conducted by a multi-partner selection panel. Selected participants were expected to have the necessary educational background, professional experience and skills to effectively benefit from and contribute to the workshop as well as have the capacity and institutional backing to be able to deliver future flyway conservation as well as design and organize subsequent trainings at the local/national level. A list of participants is given in Annex 1.

2. Overview

The workshop was jointly organized by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat and the Directorate General of Water, Forests and Hunting (DGEFC) of Benin, in cooperation with the Ramsar Secretariat and the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative (WSFI). It was made possible thanks to generous financial and in-kind support from the Government of Benin, the WSFI and the European Commission's Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC) Programme Cooperation Agreement with UN Environment. The lead trainer was Tim Dodman, who developed the programme and jointly delivered the ToT with co-trainer Abdoulaye Ndiaye. They were supported by Aliou Daouda, Rémi Hefoume and Nassirou Brisso, with strong strategic input from Evelyn Moloko and Paul Ouedraogo.

The trainees participated very actively and with great enthusiasm in the workshop, which focused on enhancing their capacity and knowledge, equipping them with the necessary knowhow to design and deliver future national training courses on the flyway approach to the conservation and wise use of waterbirds and wetlands. The rich programme consisted of lectures, practical exercises and games, group sessions, case studies, role-play exercises and field excursions. The different components of the FTK, which was used as the main training tool, were explored in depth, including an overview of the flyway concept, reasons for and types of bird migration, monitoring of birds and their sites, conservation and

management of birds and sites using the flyway approach, species action planning, capacity-building, awareness-raising and communication. Methods for bird identification and counting were also covered using the dedicated ONCFS toolkit. Participants benefitted from two full days of field activities, which were used for practical observations and exercises on the different thematic aspects addressed in the tool kit.

3. Approach and Content of the Training

The key training tool (the WOW FTK) is a unique resource that provides a comprehensive introduction to the main issues of relevance for the conservation, management and awareness-raising for migratory waterbirds and wetlands. It also provides a practical framework for trainers on how to hold workshops and deliver trainings at the national and regional level for different target audiences.

The five-day ToT workshop took place at the DGEFC meeting room in Cotonou, whilst two of the five days consisted of field activities at different locations. The training was delivered in French and the workshop made full use of local case studies from Benin and included a celebration of World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) within the course. The links between countries in the context of waterbird migration and conservation were strongly demonstrated. Significant attention was paid to the Training of Trainers aspect, especially through carrying out and discussing novel exercises and by assigning participants with topics from the FTK to deliver themselves during the workshop. A friendly and enjoyable ambience was set through early personal introductions, participative exercises, field visits and social events.



Participants at the Door of No Return, Ouidah

4. Workshop Programme

A one-page workshop programme was devised, which clearly outlined the main topics of the training (Annex 2). This was supported by more detailed session plans, which aimed to guide the trainers and help them plan each day and session effectively. Each country was assigned a task (e.g. presentation, exercise or report-back) to deliver during the week. The programme covered key aspects of Modules 1 and 2 of the FTK and included field visits designed to deliver shared experiences and stimulate discussion. A final session focused on the design / development of future in-country training plans.

5. The Workshop as it happened

Sunday 5th May 2019

Workshop organisers and trainers met in Cotonou at the training venue, the DGEFC meeting room, where they discussed logistical and organisational issues. The trainers then visited the planned field sites to meet local hosts and plan the order of activities and logistical issues for the two field days. Most participants arrived during the afternoon.

Monday 6th May 2019

After transport from the hotel to the training venue and settling in, the training workshop opening session got underway, with brief presentations from Colonel Rémi Hefoume (DGEFC), Evelyn Moloko (UNEP/AEWA Secretariat) and Dr Paul Ouedraogo (Ramsar Secretariat). Jeanne Josette Acha Akoha, Cabinet Director for the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, then officially opened the workshop. She welcomed all participants and emphasized the importance of putting measures into practice for promoting waterbird and wetlands conservation.



The opening session also comprised participant introductions, followed by a group photo. Tim Dodman and Abdoulaye Ndiaye then introduced the workshop before presentations on AEWA by Evelyn Moloko and on Ramsar by Paul Ouedraogo. The first technical session then began, with an introduction to migratory birds and the flyway approach to conservation by Tim Dodman, followed by group work to 'draw a flyway'. For this, participants were divided into five groups, and each focused on a separate bird species to map and discuss its migratory route and life cycle and the

implications for its conservation. Plenary discussions were held after each group's presentation with any errors pointed out, though the main lesson was to get a better understanding of what a flyway is, i.e. the entire range of a migratory bird, within which breeding, non-breeding and passage areas / routes may be identified.

Abdoulaye Ndiaye gave a presentation on the function and concept of sites and flyway threats, highlighting the need for a secure network of sites along a bird's flyway. The afternoon included a briefing presentation from the United Nations Department of Safety and Security-Benin on security and safety advice for the country. There was also an introduction to application forms and the procedure for preparing project concept notes to apply for support for national trainings. An informative session provided details and instructions relating to the field trip of the following day.

Tuesday 7th May 2019

The DGEFC and the trainers organised a field trip to Ouidah and the Bouche du Roy in southwest Benin. The day began with a brief stop in the Chacha (auction) Square of Ouidah with its symbolic 'Tree of Forgetting' and statue, before embarking on the Slave Route. This was followed by a visit to Djégbadji, where participants split into groups, each tasked to record birds and habitats on either side of the road through the wetland, which was mainly a degraded mangrove area.



The next stop was at Djégbadji village where participants met the local women who depend on the mangrove wood for salt production. Participants assessed pressures exerted by use of the mangrove resources, as well as alternative livelihood options promoted by local NGOs to alleviate and minimize these pressures. The traditional salt production presented a tricky dilemma: the local women employ traditional methods to produce salt from the brackish lagoon water, which involves the evaporation of saline water by burning mangrove wood in ovens, thus impacting the mangrove habitat. Ideally, local solutions need to be found to maintain this skilful local tradition but in a sustainable manner that does not deplete the mangrove resource. In this context, the NGO Active Plus supports the salt producers who are organized in groups, to improve salt production techniques (e.g.

through solar drying) and to diversify their activities and sources of income (e.g. through micro-finance, fish farming and livestock farming).



Salt producers at Djégbadji village, Ouidah commune, Benin

We then had an opportunity to visit the memorial square with the famous Door of No Return, as well as the museum at Ouidah, where we also had lunch. We next took motorized boats on Lake Ahémé in the Grand Popo commune, travelling to Avloh village, where participants observed a small uninhabited sacred forested island (“Île des oiseaux”) that is protected by traditional rites which also benefit an important mixed breeding waterbird colony. This island is close to the “Bouche du Roy”, where the Mono River meets the Atlantic Ocean. The whole area falls within the Mono transboundary biosphere reserve on the southern border between Benin and Togo. Reserve staff and members of the NGO Eco-Benin hosted the group and outlined some of the threats and uses of the site, which included sand mining. Seasonally, the sand bars of the river mouth support large numbers of migratory terns.



Transporting a heavy load of sand, Lac Ahémé

Wednesday 8th May 2019

This day comprised lectures mostly from Module 2 of the FTK, each of them delivered by participants from different countries. The main topics covered were population dynamics and wise use, waterbird monitoring and species action plans, site conservation and site management planning, and integrating flyway and community needs. The trainees skilfully and successfully adapted the PowerPoint presentations in the FTK for each issue, providing local case studies and up-to-date information. The waterbird identification and monitoring session was based on the ONCFS toolkit.

There was an interactive exercise in the morning on population dynamics and wise use led by Tim Dodman, in which participants enacted the migration of Black Storks from north Benin to a breeding site in Europe, experiencing the need to feed well en route and avoid threats from wind turbines and hunters. This brought home the real challenges faced by migratory birds at different stages of their migratory cycle. The day ended with an excellent role-play titled 'Convincing the Chief', whereby the team from Benin enacted a situation in which an entrepreneur was trying to convince the local chief to develop an important wetland, against the wishes of other members of the community.



Interactive exercises during the training

Thursday 9th May 2019

The second excursion day took participants to the Sô-Ava commune, at Ganvié, one of the largest lake villages in Africa, which lies on the Lake Nokoué Ramsar Site. We travelled to Ganvié from Abomey-Calavi in motorized canoes, passing through the extensive 'acadja' - fishing installations consisting mainly of branches stuck into the muddy lagoon bottom. Ganvié itself is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and everyone appreciated the slow journey through the lake village, in which most houses are built on stilts and much trading is done from local canoes. Staff of the Benin Environment and Education Society (BEES) NGO informed the group about the site at the departure jetty and during the boat rides.



On arrival at Site "B" of the Ganvié General Education secondary school, participants joined the school children to celebrate World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) 2019 through an interactive session on bird migration and in relation to the WMBD global theme "**Protect birds – be the solution to plastic pollution**". A lively session was held in a large school classroom, facilitated by Abdoulaye Ndiaye, with an entertaining yet powerful and engaging message delivered by Paul Ouedraogo, and with a range of introductions from trainees, teachers and Evelyn Moloko.

Workshop participants then conducted the outdoor 'migration challenge' game with the school children to demonstrate challenges to bird migration. In this exercise, children acted as Purple Herons (commonly found at Ganvié – herons are known locally as 'adowey'). The 'herons' had to pass through various migration stop-overs which represented passage, non-breeding





World Migratory Bird Day activity during the ToT, Ganvié, Benin

and breeding grounds. A trainee at each stop offered cards with choices that impacted their onward migration. Some herons unfortunately met their end to predators, infrastructure or other anthropogenic activities, whilst others became disoriented on their migration. However, a few made it to the breeding grounds and won prizes. A pair of binoculars from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and the WSFI African East Atlantic Flyway guide were presented to the school to encourage interest and

future training in bird identification and monitoring. The trainees also delivered practical lessons to the school children on the use of binoculars to identify birds.

After the exercises, there was a timely downpour, and the group shared lunch together, before departing back to Cotonou, after a rewarding and fascinating day. The evening was marked by a welcome cocktail offered by our hosts.

Friday 10th May 2019

On the last day of the course, there were three more lectures by participants based on FTK PowerPoint presentations, which again were of good quality, showing the effort put into them. These were on policies and initiatives for flyway conservation, building capacity and networking, and an introduction to communication. There was also a communication role-play, in which three presidents faced a set of questions from the press at an international climate-related meeting. One of the presidents was very rude and self-centred, which showed an entertaining lesson in how it can be difficult to get a good communication message across, especially when the skin is very thick!

The last technical session was an interactive quiz conducted in groups, which offered a great opportunity for a recap and refreshing key messages, along with lively debates, especially when points were at stake!

Representatives of each participating country were requested to jointly develop micro-project concept notes during the week, aimed at supporting future fundraising efforts for national courses on flyway conservation. At least one of these projects would be taken forward for funding by the WSFI. Given the limited time available to evaluate proposals, only the eight concept notes submitted by the suggested deadline were evaluated on site, meanwhile detailed comments will be provided for all proposals after the workshop, to

enhance fundraising efficiency. However, Evelyn Moloko and Paul Ouedraogo gave an overview of the proposals and fundraising advice, also in relation to AEWA and Ramsar.

During the closing session, binoculars, bird identification guides and other resources were distributed to all countries represented, to support future waterbird identification and monitoring efforts on the ground. Evelyn Moloko and Paul Ouedraogo gave words of thanks to the trainers, trainees and hosts. As the training workshop came to an end after five highly interactive and instructive days, Colonel Rémi Hefoume expressed great appreciation in his closing remarks for having had the opportunity to host this talented group of trainees. He thanked all the trainees and trainers for their very active and enthusiastic participation. The participants, in turn, made provisions for keeping their important new network of experts active and sustainable.

Saturday 11th May 2019

Only a few trainees left on the evening of Friday 10th May. While participants gathered in the hotel lobby on Saturday morning for farewells, the Director General of Water, Forests and Hunting of Benin also called in to greet the organisers, trainers and remaining trainees.



5. Workshop Evaluation

The workshop received many positive comments from trainees, both during and after the ToT, and an informal mood meter evaluation demonstrated that most trainees were very happy with the whole event. The mix of lectures, exercises and field trips was well appreciated, as well as the support of the local hosts.

6. End notes

The ToT was a full but inspiring event, with a dynamic group of participants who seemed genuinely committed and keen to learn and take things forward. Going through a formal competitive selection process helped to ensure this commitment. There certainly appear to be excellent prospects for flyway training to continue, led by this network of trainees when back home in their respective countries, and hopefully there will be means to monitor this through AEWA. It is particularly encouraging to note the set-up and active operation of an "AEWA Cotonou 2019" WhatsApp group by the trainees themselves, indicating that this really is a new network.

7. Annexes

Annex 1. List of participants

Country	Title	First name	Last name	Organisation
PARTICIPANTS				
Benin	Mr	ADIKPETO	Arnaud Wilfrid	Benin Environment and Education Society (BEES) ONG
Benin	Mr	AMADOU BAHLEMAN	Farid	Actions for sustainable development and Biodiversity (ADDDBIO)
Benin	Mr	CHAFFRA	Sylvestre Abiola	Abomey-Calavi University
Benin	Mr	DEGLA	Marius Hugues	Benin Environment Agency (ABE)
Benin	Mr	GANGNIBO	Nounagnon Charles	Department of Programming and Planning / Unit for Studies and Planning
Benin	Ms	HOUINDOTE	Élodie	Laboratory for Applied Ecology
Benin	Mr	MADOGOTCHA	Josias Tchoum	NGO "Nature Tropicale"
Benin	Mr	TCHANKPAN	Camille Bruno Mahuna	Regional Center for Research and Education for Integrated Development (CRÉDI-ONG)
Burkina Faso	Dr	DABONE	Clément	Ouaga II University / Polytechnic University Centre of Tenkodogo
Burkina Faso	Dr (Mr)	HEMA	Midibahaye Emmanuel	Dédougou University, Water, Forestry and Environment & Training and Research Unit / Applied Sciences and Technology (UFR-SAT)
Burkina Faso	Ms	Ouedraogo Bouda	Germaine	Directorate for Wildlife and Hunting
Burundi	Mr	Ahishakiye	Jérôme	Office for the Protection the Environment of Burundi (OBPE)
Burundi	Mr	Niyongabo	Éric	Association for the Protection of Nature of Burundi (ABN)
Cameroon	Mr	MBONGKO	Roland Ndi	Agricultural Research Institute for Development (IRAD)
Cameroon	Ms	Nengoue Tchinda	Fidèle Laurentine	Cameroon Wildlife Conservation Society
Cameroon	Mr	Ngumkeng Djakwouryh	Louis	Garoua Wildlife College
Congo (Republic)	Mr	DEMASSALA	Elimane Dubrel	General Directorate of Aquatic Ecosystems
Congo (Republic)	Mr	MISSAMBA-LOLA	Aimé Patrick	Multi-stakeholder Platform for Integrated Mangroves Management
Côte d'Ivoire	Mr	KOUAME	Kouassi Firmin	Directorate for Wildlife and Hunting
Côte d'Ivoire	Prof	YAOKOKORE	Bébro Kouassi Hilaire	Félix Houphouët-Boigny University
Gabon	Ms	AZIZET	Dallia Arielle	Department for Aquatic Ecosystems
Gabon	Mr	NZAMBA OUMAR	Gabin	National School of Water and Forestry
Guinea	Ms	SOUMAH	Kadiatou	Department of Water and Forestry
Guinea	Mr	DORÉ	Roger	Guinée Écologie
Equatorial Guinea	Ms	KING EJOME	Ivon	Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry and Environment (INCOMA)
Equatorial Guinea	Ms	NKOGO ABESO	Anastasia Amor Nengono	National Institute of Forest Development and Management the Network of Protected Areas – (INDEFOR-AP)
Mali	Dr (Mr)	KONARE	Seriba	Wetlands International, Bamako Office
Mali	M.	MAIGA	Almoustapha Moussa	Chemonics International
Mauritania	Dr (Mr)	AHMED MAHMOUD	Lemhaba	Banc d'Arguin National Park
Mauritania	Dr (Mr)	CHEIKH EL MOUSTAPH	Zeine El Abidine	Diawling National Park
Niger	Dr (Mr)	SEYNI SEYBOU	Abdoul Aziz	Department of Wildlife, Hunting and Parks and Reserves
Niger	Ms	GUERO MAGALE	Ousseina	Directorate of Wildlife, Hunting and Parks and Reserves
Central African Republic	Mr	OMON SOUANGBI	Yves Davy	Research and Development Support Center (CRAD)
Central African Republic	Mr	YAMALE	Salomon	Directorate General of Waters, Forests, Hunting and Fishing

Country	Title	First name	Last name	Organisation
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Mr	ARUNA SEFU	Josué	Congo Basin Conservation Society (CBCS) - Network
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Ms	MBOYANGAWO LOKANGA	Cathy	Environmental and Agro-Rural Civil Society of Congo – (SOCEARUCO)
Rwanda	Mr	SHYIRAMBERE	Dieudonné	Rwanda Polytechnic-Integrated Polytechnic Regional College Kitabi (RP-IPRC Kitabi)
Senegal	Cdr	BALDE	Pathe	Department of National Parks of Senegal, Kalissaye Kalissaye Ornithological Reserve
Senegal	Ms	DIALLO	Aissatou Yvette	Cheikh Anta Diop University, Departement of Animal Biology
Senegal	Dr (Mr)	NDIAYE	Papa Ibnou	Cheikh Anta Diop University, Département of Animal Biology
Chad	Mr	DJIMASNGAR	Mbaiti	Directorate for the Conservation of Wildlife and Protected Areas, Division for the Conservation of Biological Diversity
Chad	Dr (Ms)	NEKOULNANG	Djetounako	National Research Center for Development (CNRD)
Togo	Mr	AGBETI	Kossi Agbesime	Department of Forestry
Togo	Mr	ASSOU	Délagnon	Togolese Society for Nature Conservation (AGBO-ZEGUE)
Host Government				
Benin	Ms	ACACHA AKOHA	Jeanne Josette	Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development
Benin	Col (Mr)	HEFOUME	Rémi	Directorate General of Waters, Forestry and Hunting (DGEFC)
Benin	Cpt (Mr)	BRISSO	Nassirou	DGEFC
Benin	Cdr (Mr)	ADJINDA	Adjakou	DRAF / DGEFC
Benin	Mr	ADJIBI O.	Abdoul Razack	DGEFC
Benin	LtCol (Mr)	ADOUNVO	Ulrich	DGEFC
Benin	Mr	CHABI	Hermann	DGEFC
Benin	Cpt	DAGBETO	Mariel	DGEFC / DOFP
Benin	Ms	OKOUNDÉ DJÉGUI	Charlotte	DGEFC
Benin	Ms	GBEKAN	Angèle	DGEFC
Benin	Mr	KOUCHADE	Melkior	DGEFC
Benin	Mr	KOTY	Isidore	IGSF / DGEFC
Benin	Mr	NOUDEHOU	K. Robert	IGSF / DGEFC
Benin	Mr	SEKO N'GOYE	Enock	DGEFC
Benin	Mr	TONI	Emmanuel	DGEFC
Benin	Mr	ZINSOU	Adrique	DGEFC
Benin	Mr	HONFOGA	Félix	DGEFC
Benin	Mr	KPOGBE	Gabriel	DGEFC
Benin	Mr	MOUSTAPHA	Yéssoufou	DGEFC
Benin	Mr	YARBA	Charles	DGEFC
FACILITATORS				
Benin	Mr	ALIOU	Daouda	Directorate of Fisheries Production (DPH)
Burkina Faso	Mr	OUEDRAOGO	Paul	Ramsar Secretariat
United Kingdom	Mr	DODMAN	Timothy Hugo	Independent Consultant / Associate Expert at Wetlands International
Senegal	Mr	NDIAYE	Abdoulaye	Independent Consultant / Associate Expert at Wetlands International
UNEP/AEWA SECRETARIAT				
Germany	Ms	KAEMPER	Marie-Therese	UNEP/AEWA Secretariat
Cameroon	Ms	MOLOKO	Evelyn	UNEP/AEWA Secretariat

Annex 2. Workshop programme

Flyway Training of Trainers Programme: Workshop Guide

**Meeting room of the Directorate General of Waters, Forestry and Hunting (DGEFC), Cotonou, Benin
6-10 May 2019**

Date	Morning		Afternoon			Evening
Sunday 5 May	Arrival of participants (morning and afternoon)					
Monday 6 May	Opening Ceremony; Introduction of the workshop and of participants	Module 1: S1. The flyway approach to conservation and the hows and whys of migration	Module 1: S2. The long or short journey and how to survive	Module 1: S3. Conservation of the whole flyway	Waterbird identification and monitoring; development of proposals	
Tuesday 7 May	Module 1 & 2 Full day field visit Time allocated for appropriate exercises					
Wednesday 8 May	Module 2: S1. Species conservation & population ecology Module 2: S2. Species conservation – monitoring and species action plans		Module 2: S3. Site conservation in a flyways context Module 2: S4. Site management in a flyways context			
Thursday 9 May	Module 1 & 2 Full day field visit Time allocated for appropriate exercises; WMBD celebration					WMBD dinner cocktail
Friday 10 May	Module 2 : S5. Valuation of flyways / capacity-building / networking		Module 3: S2. Communication	The way forward; Workshop evaluation and close	Free for local visits	
Saturday 11 May	Departure of participants					

Approximate times: Morning sessions: 08:30-12:30; afternonn sessions: 14:00-17:30. Lunch: 12:30-14:00. Coffee and tea breaks provided.