



The Project in Brief 2007

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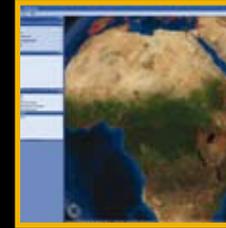
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welcome message

Welcome to the Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) Project, the largest initiative in the African-Eurasian region for the conservation of migratory waterbirds and their critical habitats. WOW is a joint effort between UNEP/GEF, Wetlands International, BirdLife International, UNEP/AEWA, the Ramsar Convention Secretariat, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and a range of donors and local partners along the African-Eurasian Flyways.

Migratory birds see no borders. Conservation efforts in one part of the flyway — no matter how effective — will fail unless complemented by concerted actions across the entire range of habitats where these species stop to feed, mate, rest and raise their offspring. Conservation of migrants must happen at a flyway scale.

A flyway-scale approach demands extensive co-operation, and this is reflected in the structure of WOW. Wetlands International and BirdLife International deliver technical expertise, while the overarching policy framework is provided by the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds Agreement (AEWA) and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the implementing agency of WOW. The UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) is developing state-of-the-art tools to improve access to information on key sites for waterbird migration. UNOPS manages contracts in 19 countries where WOW is now active on the ground through local partners. All this is made possible through generous financial support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Government of Germany, AEWA and many other donors.

WOW aims to provide improved conservation and monitoring tools, enhanced capacity and partnerships towards the conservation of critical sites for migratory waterbirds. Are we being ambitious? Perhaps! But we need to aim high, be persistent and lead by example, especially when the goal is so important for the survival of key elements of our living planet.

birds & people

Bird migration is an amazing phenomenon. The annual departure and arrival of migratory birds arouses emotions in many people and has symbolic meaning in cultures around the world. Many of these birds travel vast distances, their movements connecting disparate countries and continents. The routes they travel, their flyways, are dotted with stopping-places where they break their journeys to feed, rest and moult.

Wetlands are vital habitats for many migratory birds. They also provide tremendous economic benefits to people, through, for example, water supply, fisheries, agriculture, timber production, biomass, wildlife resources, transport, recreation and tourism opportunities. Wetlands have special attributes too, as part of the cultural heritage of humanity.

Despite these numerous values and functions, wetlands continue to be among the world's most threatened ecosystems. Many are damaged or destroyed by ongoing drainage, conversion, pollution, and over-exploitation of resources (Ramsar Information Paper no. 1).

The overall mission of WOW is clear: to promote the 'flyway-scale' approach to conserving migratory waterbirds and their critical wetland habitats at all levels.



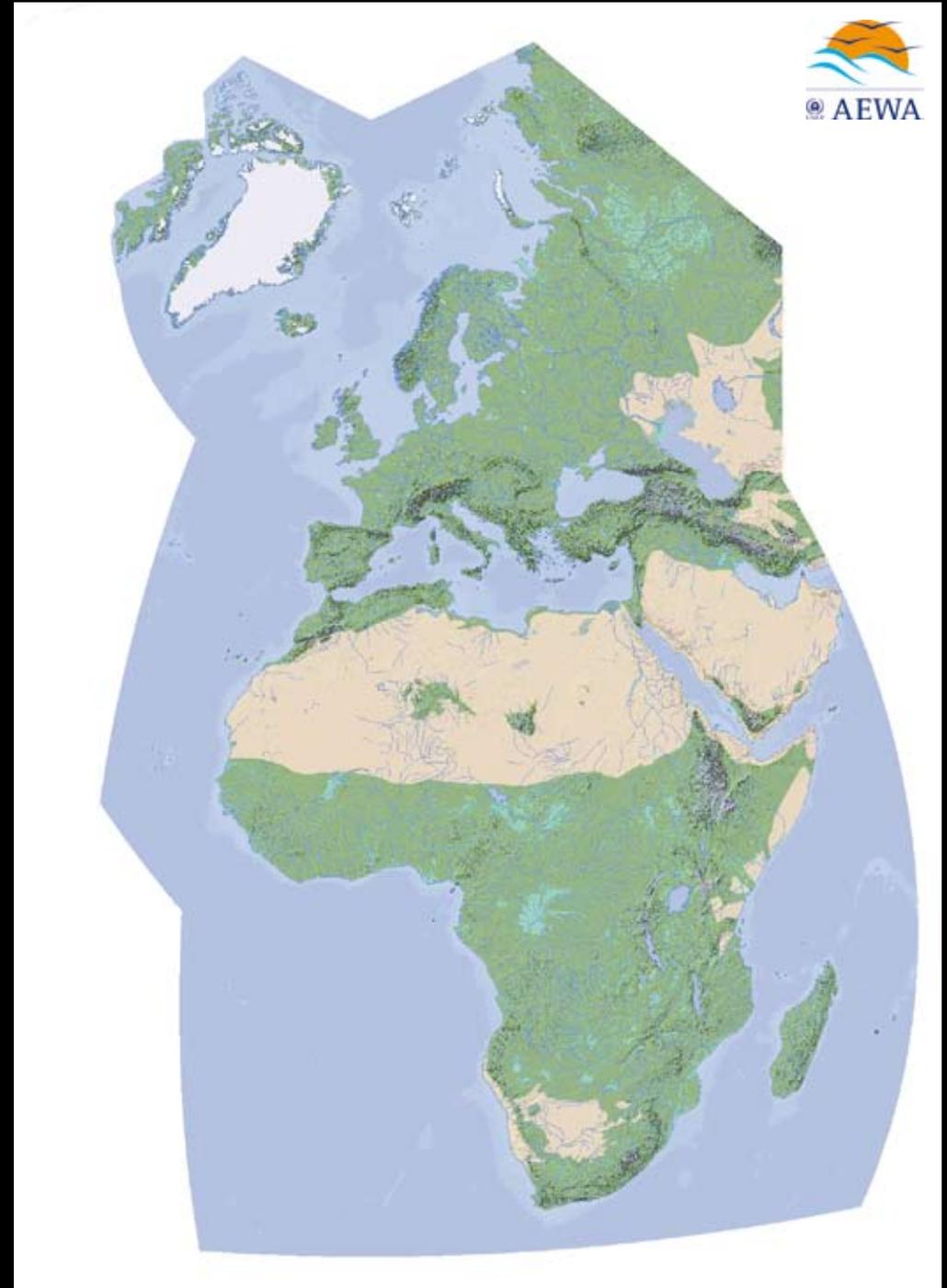
Photo © Jonathan Barnard

flyway conservation

"A flyway is the entire range of a migratory bird species (or groups of related species or distinct populations of a single species) through which it moves on an annual basis from the breeding grounds to non-breeding areas, including intermediate resting and feeding places as well as the area within which the birds migrate." (Gerard C. Boere & David A. Stroud, 2006)

Worldwide, waterbird migration routes can be grouped along four major flyways: the American Flyway, the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, the Central Asian Flyway and the African-Eurasian flyway. The WOW Project focuses on this last flyway, the area covered by the UNEP-administered African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement. AEWA includes all of Africa, Europe, south-west Asia (including the Middle East and Central Asian States), Greenland and the Canadian Archipelago, 119 range states in all (see adjacent map).

To be effective, conservation efforts must consider and address the ecological needs of a species holistically and throughout its life cycle. This means ensuring that all critical links in the flyway chain are intact. Such an approach ensures that investments in one location are not undermined by inaction or detrimental activities somewhere else. It recognises biological, not political boundaries, requiring harmonised international cooperation. Only this can ensure that migratory birds find the necessary resources and critical sites they need along their entire flyway, to complete their annual journeys.



Blacktailed Godwit
Limosa limosa

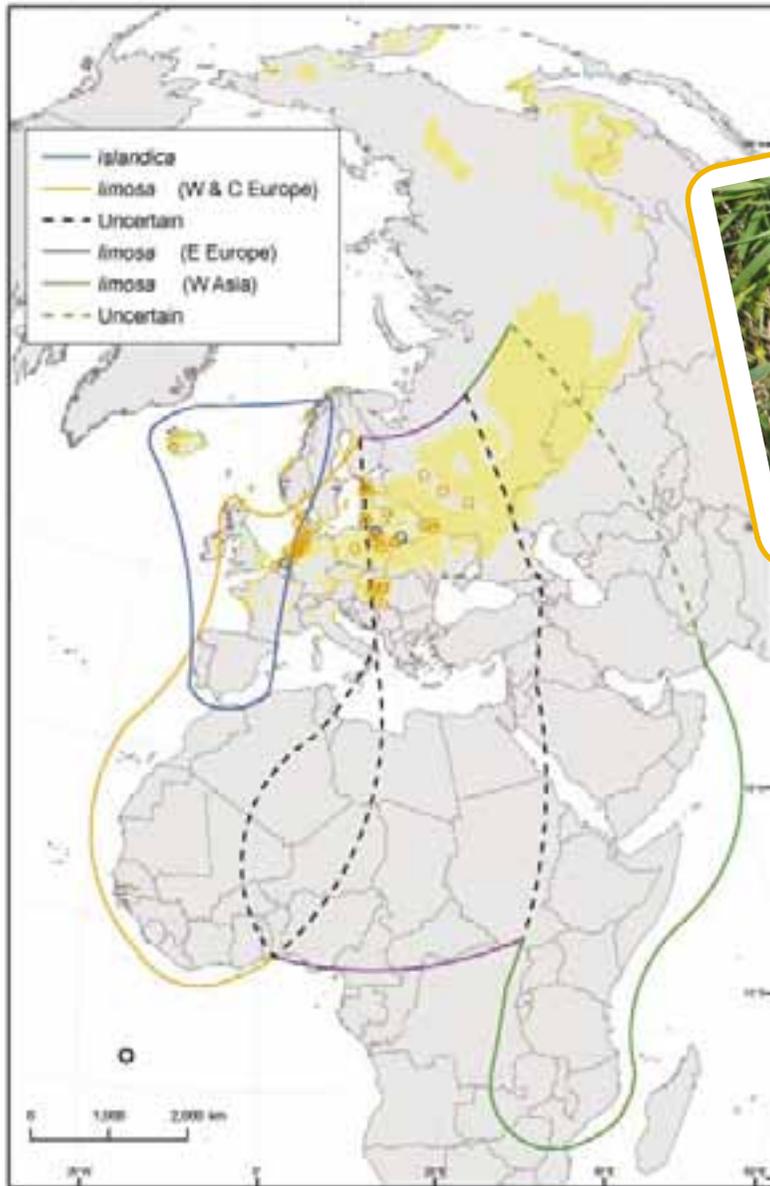


Photo © Daniel Bergmann



Photo © Stephen Duffield

Changes at one site can have a detrimental effect on the success of the completion of their migration cycle and on their survival. Conservation of migratory bird species must therefore aim at conserving all important sites found on the flyways. In addition, conservation efforts made by states and other actors are more effective if they are coordinated at the flyway scale. The need to conserve and manage all critical sites on a given migratory pathway across borders is now recognized and is an important component of a flyway approach to conservation.

how to contribute



Photo © Tim Faasen

Flyway-scale conservation of migratory waterbirds requires international cooperation on priority actions: a concerted effort among all parties along a flyway to address immediate concerns. The following themes are highlighted in AEWA's Implementation Priorities for 2006-2008, for Contracting Parties, donors and other stakeholders: (a) exchange/transfer of information, (b) research, surveys and monitoring, (c) exchange/transfer of expertise, (d) financial assistance, and (e) transboundary drafting and implementation of action plans. These themes mirror the priorities and interventions of the Wings Over Wetlands Project. Through the development of the Critical Sites Network Tool, WOW is meeting the need for improved access to information on migratory waterbirds and their critical sites, as a basis for guiding effective wetland management. Gap filling is undertaken to improve the coverage of the databases. The project's Training and Awareness component will be a platform for the transfer of expertise and professional capacity for implementing flyway conservation, while efforts will be made to enhance communication mechanisms within the region.

WOW provides a much-needed financial boost to the implementation of the flyway concept in the African-Eurasian region, and encouragement to all stakeholders to “think globally and act locally” for the protection of migratory waterbirds. The WOW Project is a unique partnership of like-minded institutions in flyway-scale conservation. Key partners such as AEWA, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, Wetlands International and BirdLife International already engage in flyway work and promote wise-use principles at wetlands. The project reaffirms a solidarity and commitment towards mainstreaming flyway conservation of migratory waterbirds, harmonising efforts among institutions and protecting key sites along the African-Eurasian Flyways. Here is how you can help:

Help your country become an active Party to AEWA and Ramsar to strengthen their mandate: AEWA is the Multilateral Environmental Agreement for the conservation of migratory waterbirds in Africa and Eurasia. It covers 119 Range States and 236 species of birds dependent on wetlands. Countries join the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands to ensure that the vital services, functions and benefits provided by their wetlands are maintained. For more information on how to become a Party go to http://www.unep-aewa.org/about/party_to_aewa.htm or <http://www.ramsar.org/about/info2007-13-e.pdf>.



Implement existing international single species action plans and foster the development of new ones: Specific actions are needed to stabilise or improve the status of particular migratory waterbirds. You can help develop policy at the national level to protect key species and support activities outlined within a species action plan. At the local level site managers can contribute to this effort by implementing activities outlined in an action plan. Contact AEWA for details.



Photo © Sergey Dereliev

Join the network of field observers and contribute to key databases: There are many gaps in our knowledge of waterbird movements and populations, and how and when birds use particular wetlands. You can help fill these gaps by taking part in the International Waterbird Census and the Important Bird Area Programme. Contact the International Waterbird Census national coordinator or the BirdLife International Partner in your country.



Photo © BSPB

Use the Critical Sites Network Tool to ensure that the needs of migratory waterbirds are met: Understanding the network of key sites that migratory waterbirds depend on is vital for their conservation. The CSN Tool provides a web-based portal integrating data from multiple sources, and will help improve site management along the entire African-Eurasian Flyways. Visit the project website to see how the CSN Tool can help you.



Support activities critical to flyway conservation: The WOW project is only a start. Many activities, including capacity-development and gap-filling surveys, require additional or longer-term financial resources. Join the many partners and donors already supporting this exciting initiative and make a commitment to flyway-scale conservation efforts. Contact the WOW Project Coordination Unit to find out how you can contribute.



Photo © Nicky Petkov / BSPB



critical sites network tool

Most migratory waterbird species in the African-Eurasian region are ecologically restricted to specific, suitable sites in their breeding, wintering and/or stopover areas. For each species, the key sites form a complex chain, in which each link is essential for maintaining a healthy population overall. Protecting this network of critical sites requires concerted national and transboundary conservation actions. Identifying key sites and maintaining their ecological functions and services along the entire migration route is paramount for successful flyway-scale conservation.

WOW is supporting development of an electronic portal called the Critical Sites Network (CSN) Tool. This will integrate information from three major databases for waterbirds: the Ramsar Sites Information Service and database, The International Waterbird Census Database and the World Bird Database. This will improve knowledge of the critical sites required by migratory waterbirds throughout Africa and Eurasia. The CSN Tool will help decision-makers and planners at the local, national and international level identify which sites are part of the critical network for specific waterbirds, and help stakeholders to manage these sites better. This tool will provide comprehensive data for over 400 migratory waterbird species, including all 236 species covered by the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement. This endeavour is being spearheaded by Wetlands International, in close coordination with BirdLife International, UNEP-WCMC and relevant parallel initiatives. Highlights to date include:

- Essential parameters have been established for achieving interoperability between the Important Bird Area database, International Waterbird Census database, Ramsar Sites Information Service and database and the World Database on Protected Areas,
- Digitization of range maps and flyway boundaries is completed,
- UNEP-WCMC has developed the first conceptual structure for the tool,
- Important partnerships are being forged with parallel initiatives and in other regions around the globe where similar initiatives are at a conceptual phase.



capacity building

A truly international effort to conserve migratory waterbirds depends on exchange of relevant information, experiences and resources among a wide range of stakeholders. Yet information access and professional capacity remain patchy across many parts of the AEWA region.

The WOW Project contributes to overcoming these barriers by:

- Developing training & awareness raising programmes, and tailor-made training materials, for different stakeholders across the African-Eurasian region,
- Establishing exchange programmes and opportunities for job shadowing, thus enabling site practitioners to acquire hands-on experience in wetland management and waterbird conservation,
- Implementing and creating capacity for flyway monitoring and data collection schemes, to address current gaps in geographical coverage and knowledge.

The following milestones have been reached to date:

- Regional Centres have been set up in Dakar (Senegal), Nairobi (Kenya), Amman (Jordan), Almaty (Kazakhstan) and Moscow (Russia) to facilitate capacity development efforts within the sub-regions, and to reflect the strong need for capacity development across the African-Eurasian region, and especially in Central Asia,
- A draft Training and Awareness framework has been developed and is being transformed into a series of modules that each WOW Regional Centre can adapt to its needs.



enhancing communication

Effective information exchange is a daunting task given the huge geographical area covered by WOW, which includes all 119 Range States of the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement. To communicate the benefits of adopting a flyway approach, to keep practitioners informed of new techniques and opportunities, and to allow experience to be shared, WOW must develop improved and innovative communication mediums.

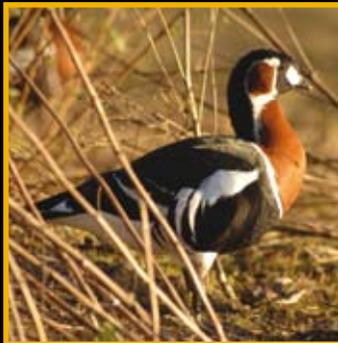
There is enormous potential to tap into and expand the network of organisations working on migratory waterbird conservation, to build networks of conservation practitioners, and to engage local communities in flyway work. Such an endeavour can help build the capacity for undertaking conservation work holistically and link site-based activities to the broader picture. This can improve coordination of activities being undertaken along the critical sites used by different migratory waterbird species in the African-Eurasian region.

Efforts being made on this front include:

- Creation of a project website and intranet facility to improve communication among the WOW team in different parts of Africa and Eurasia,
- Establishment of a database of flyway practitioners in the African-Eurasian region to strengthen communication,
- Periodic dissemination of project information to keep team members abreast of progress, events and activities,
- Creation of an exchange programme targeting different flyways and strategic priority areas within the WOW Project.



Photo © Tim Faasen



regional centres

Implementation of the Wings Over Wetlands Project will be facilitated and coordinated through four Regional Centres across the AEWA region, respectively covering Western and Central Africa, Eastern and Southern Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia and the Caucasus States. These centres will forge regional ties and enhance contact with other conservation institutions. They will act as hubs for training, professional capacity building and exchange of information within each region.

The WOW Regional Centres form an important pillar for the project, strengthening the capacity of local partners and fostering the long-term sustainability of flyway-level conservation across the entire African-Eurasian region. The Regional Centres will therefore ensure that key stakeholder agencies are integrally involved in the development of training and awareness programmes.

The roles of each centre include:

- Providing technical and administrative support for demonstration projects in the region,
- Disseminating 'lessons learned' from demonstration projects to key stakeholders in the region,
- Establishing a regional training board to oversee the development of a flyway-scale Training Programme,
- Identifying priorities for gap-filling in spatial coverage of Important Bird Area and International Waterbird Census sites.

Regional Teams



Photo © Wetlands International

The WOW Regional Centre for the Middle East is hosted by BirdLife International's Middle East Division based in Amman, Jordan. This will ensure full synergy with parallel flyway-level conservation initiatives such as the upcoming GEF 'Soaring Birds Project'. The centre serves the following countries within the region: Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, The Palestinian Territories, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arabic Republic, UAE and Yemen. It also oversees and provides administrative support for the demonstration project in Yemen.

The WOW Regional Centre for Eastern and Southern Africa is hosted by the BirdLife Africa Partnership Secretariat in Nairobi, Kenya. The countries served by the centre include Angola, Ascension Island, Botswana, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mayotte, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, St Helena, Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Reunion, Zambia and Zimbabwe. It also oversees the demonstration projects in Tanzania, South Africa and Nigeria.

The Regional Centre for Western and Central Africa is hosted by the Wetlands International Africa Programme in Dakar, Senegal. The countries being served by the centre include Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Gabon, Guinea Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. It also oversees the demonstration projects in Niger, Mauritania, and Senegal & The Gambia.

The WOW Regional Centre for Central Asia and the Caucasus will be jointly hosted by two NGOs, namely the Wetlands International Russia Programme (in Moscow, Russia), and the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity (Almaty, Kazakhstan). Technical oversight will be coordinated from Wetlands International in the Netherlands. This hybrid set-up reflects the need to enhance capacity development and gap-filling in the Central Asian region. The countries served by the centre include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.



demonstration projects

To succeed, flyway-scale conservation must be mainstreamed within the broader agenda of sustainable development. Addressing the needs of people can pay environmental dividends in the conservation of migratory birds, as highlighted in the recent 'Waterbirds around the world' forum.

To engage local communities and involve local institutions in conservation, WOW supports 11 demonstration projects in 12 countries. These focus on a range of critical issues including community mobilization, management planning, ecotourism, field research, wetland restoration, control of invasive species, transboundary management, education and awareness-raising, and alternative livelihoods. Lessons learned and elements of best practice from the demonstration projects will be disseminated throughout the project area.

Highlights over the past year include:

- Local entities overseeing the 11 demonstration projects have entered into contractual arrangements with UNOPS (facilitated by the Project Coordination Unit based in Wageningen, The Netherlands and technically administered by both Wetlands International and BirdLife International),
- Approximately US\$3,000,000 in project funding is now contracted to local institutions and communities to jump start activities on the ground,
- Project personnel have visited all demonstration projects and regional centres to establish local teams, facilitate the start-up of operations and mobilize financing pledged during project design.

Estonia

Haapsalu-Noarootsi Bays



Photos © State Nature Conservation Centre, Estonia

The Haapsalu-Noarootsi Bays is a complex wetland system made up of different Nature Reserves on the Northwestern coast of Estonia. The open water, meadows, reed-beds and woodlands of the Haapsalu-Noarootsi Bays provide breeding sites and safe havens for many migratory bird species. However, a range of threats are affecting the site, diminishing its intrinsic value as an internationally important wetland and stop-over / breeding site for migratory waterbirds.

Here we aim to develop a management plan for the Haapsalu-Noarootsi Bays and develop capacity for its implementation. Contact the State Nature Conservation Centre at www.envir.ee/lk/aewa for more information.





Hungary

Biharugra Fishponds



Photos © MME / BirdLife Hungary, Nicky Petkov / BSPB, Camillo Ponziani

The Biharugra Fishponds are regarded as one of the most important wetland habitats in Hungary. They support a significant proportion of the country's threatened breeding waterbirds and large concentrations of migratory waterfowl. The area comprises of a low-lying flood-plain situated between Körösnagyharsány and Mezögyán rivers in the eastern part of the country. This large system of fishponds is managed for conservation, and is surrounded by extensive saline grasslands and arable fields.

WOW will support the introduction of nature-friendly fish farming methods within the management of the Biharugra Fishponds and ensure the sharing of economic benefits with the local community. Contact MME at www.mme.hu for more information.





Lithuania

Nemunas River Delta



Photos © Institute of Ecology of Vilnius University

The Nemunas River Delta is the most important wetland complex and one of the most diverse biodiversity habitats in Lithuania. It is one of the key stop-over sites for migratory waterbirds in Europe, regularly supporting internationally important concentrations of more than 20 waterbird species.

Activities will improve the conservation status and management of waterbirds and their habitats and promote the demonstration site as an important location for migratory waterbird research. Contact IEVU at www.ekoi.lt/en for more information.



Mauritania

Banc D'Arguin



Photos © Hellio & van Ingen, Camillo Ponziani

Parc National du Banc d'Arguin (PNBA) is a large and internationally renowned protected area comprising shallow coastal waters, mudflats, islands and a shifting coastline. The shallow coastal waters are internationally important fish breeding nurseries and the mudflats are highly productive, supporting many benthic invertebrates, which in turn attract large numbers of fish and wading birds.

WOW will support the implementation of the PNBA's ecotourism strategy by training nature guides and park staff from the Imraguen community. Contact the PNBA at www.mauritania.mr/pnba/ for more information.





Nigeria

Hadejia-Nguru Wetlands



Photos © Mieke van den Abeele, Camillo Ponziani, Jonathan Barnard

The Hadejia-Nguru Wetlands are located in the Sahel zone of north-eastern Nigeria. The area is a floodplain wetland comprising permanent water bodies and seasonally flooded areas. The wetlands are important feeding grounds for different migratory bird species. The area supports about 1.5 million farmers, herders and fishermen, who depend on the wetlands for their livelihoods.

Here, the demonstration project will promote greater community participation in wetland resource management, in an effort to reduce the degradation of these critical wetland areas. WOW will add to the good work being done by local organisations in restoring the water regime and in clearing invasive Typha grass. Contact the Nigerian Conservation Foundation at www.ncfnigeria.org for more information.



Niger

Namga-Kokorou Complex

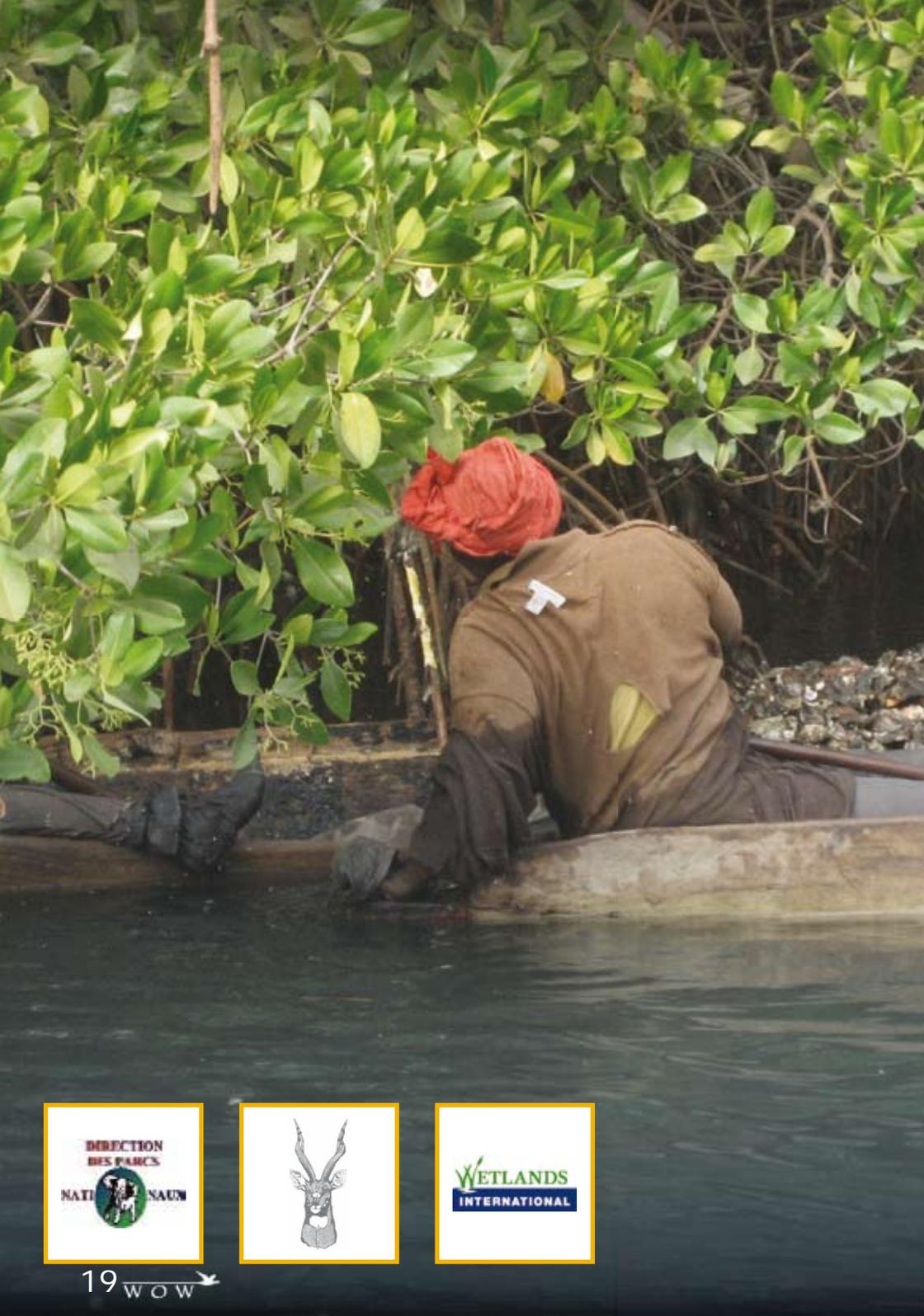


Photos © Camillo Ponziani, Mieke van den Abeele

Namga-Kokorou is a complex of wetlands, located in an ancient valley of a former tributary of the Niger River. The wetlands comprise pools, marshes and floodplains and are separated by sand dunes. The high diversity of flora and the variation in vegetation structure result in a mosaic of natural habitats suitable for many Afrotropical and migratory water-birds. It is also a very productive system, especially in the context of the surrounding semi-arid and arid areas of the Sahel.

WOW will contribute to the sustainable use of Namga-Kokorou through the development of a participatory community-based management plan. Contact Wetlands International Africa Programme at www.wetlands.org/africa/fr/index.aspx for more information.





Senegal & The Gambia

Saloum-Niumi Complex

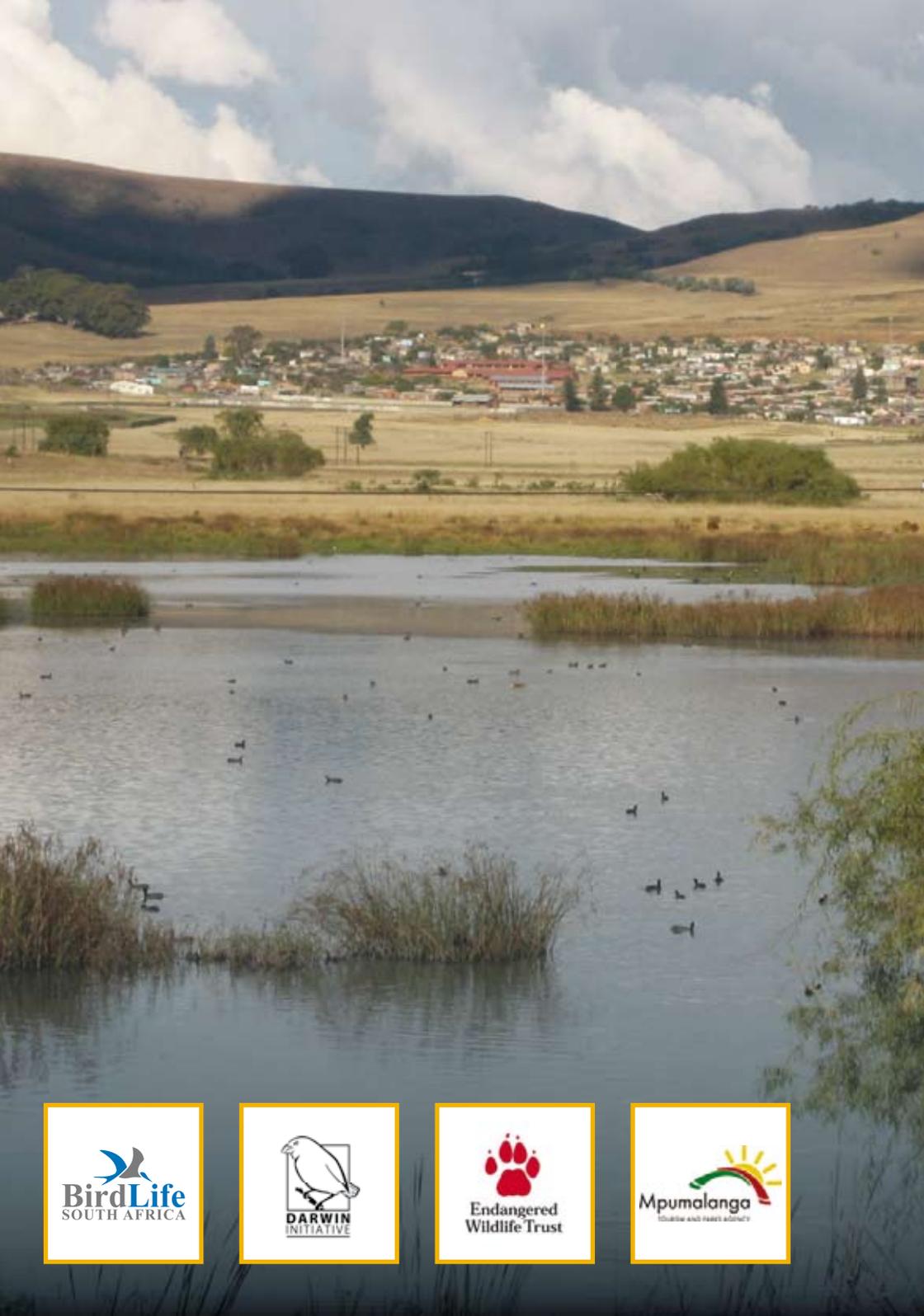


Photos © Wetlands International Africa Programme, Camillo Ponziani, Emma Greatrix

The Saloum-Niumi complex consists of coastal wetlands and savannah forests, and includes one of the largest tracts of mangrove forest in West Africa. Niumi National Park is located on the north-western part of The Gambia adjacent to the Senegalese Saloum Delta National Park. The Saloum-Niumi complex forms one ecological system divided by a national border. However, different languages and management regimes have led to the two protected areas being treated as separate entities.

WOW will work to establish a framework of trans-boundary cooperation and enhance community participation in resource management in the project area. Contact Wetlands International Africa Programme at www.wetlands.org/africa/fr/index.aspx for more information.





South Africa

Wakkerstroom Wetlands



Photos © BirdLife South Africa, Camillo Ponziani, Jonathan Barnard, Warwick Tarboton

Wakkerstroom Wetland is predominantly a mosaic of different marshes. Although it contains very little open water, the centre of the wetland is permanently wet. The site is well endowed with rare species, such as the globally threatened Blue Crane. The hydrological functioning of the wetland is currently disrupted, largely by invasive alien vegetation in the surrounding catchment. The wetland is also threatened by annual fires stemming from the burning of adjacent grasslands to improve grazing areas for cattle.

The WOW Project will work towards enhancing biodiversity in the catchment area and developing ecotourism that will benefit local communities. Contact BirdLife South Africa at www.birdlife.org.za for more information.





Tanzania

Dar Es Salaam Wetlands



Photos © Camillo Ponziani, Jonathan Barnard

The Dar Es Salaam Wetland system is part of the Indian Ocean coastline with lagoons, creeks, intertidal mudflats with sea grass beds, estuaries, saltpans, mangrove forests, thickets, sand beaches, and several small islands. The area supports up to 30,000 migratory waterbirds during the northern winter months, while over 100,000 waterbirds use the site as a stop over during their movement further south. The growing threat of urban encroachment, however, is undermining the wetland system's integrity.

WOW will establish a wetland information centre in Dar Es Salaam to raise awareness among local communities and decision makers on the importance of wetlands and migratory waterbirds. Contact the Wildlife Conservation Society of Tanzania at www.wcstarusha.org for more information.



Turkey

Burdur Gölü

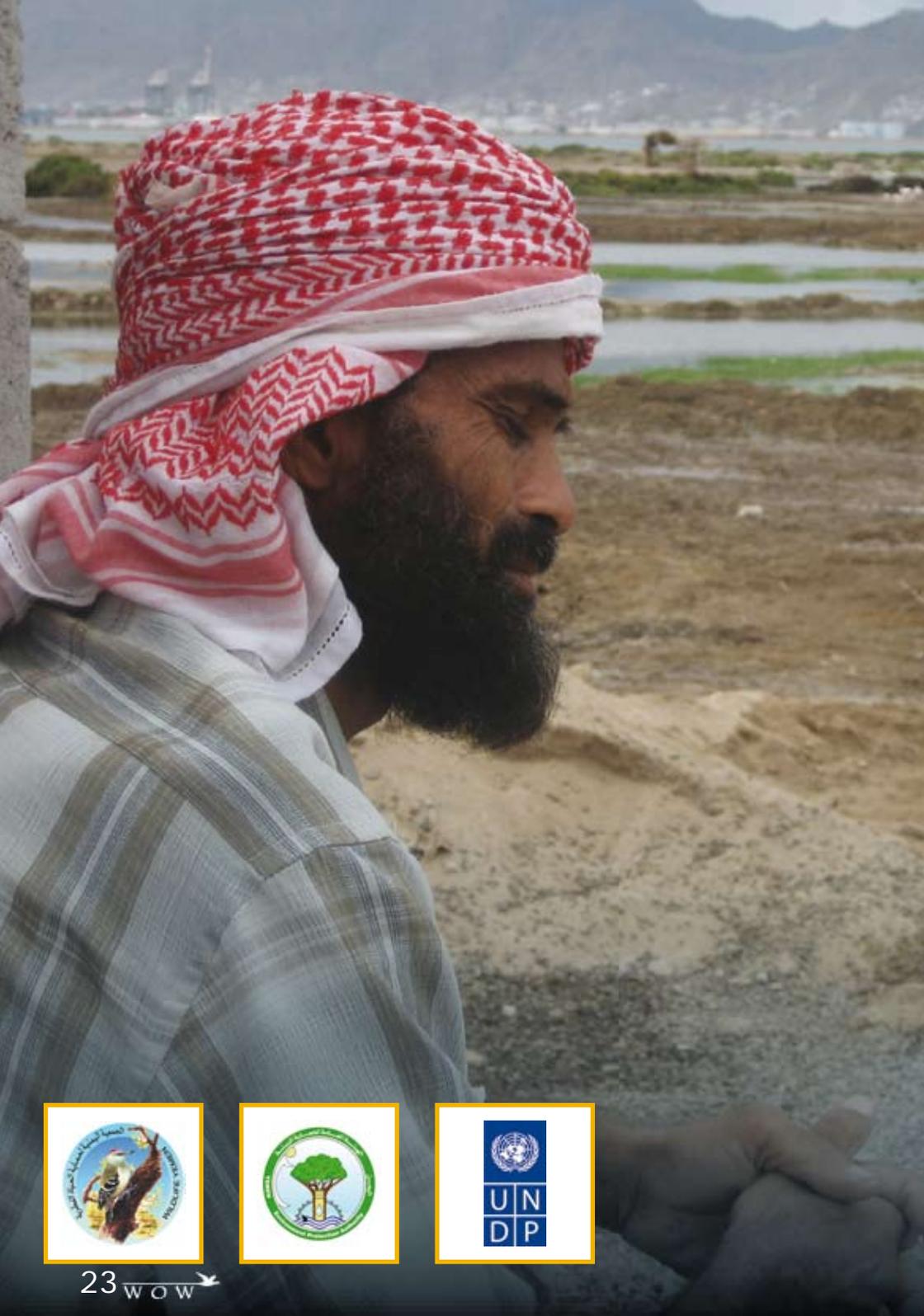


Photos © Nicky Petkov / BSPB, Camillo Ponziani

Lake Burdur is a large lake of tectonic origin situated in a closed basin and fed by several streams. To the northeast and southwest lie extensive alluvial flats and a small delta with some remnants of drained reedbeds and marshes. Lake Burdur shelters significant numbers of the globally threatened White-headed Duck. The lake's health, and its importance to migratory waterfowl, are threatened by a combination of urban and industrial expansion.

Project activities will increase the level of awareness among the local population on the ecological values of Lake Burdur. An environmental education programme will also be delivered at local elementary schools. Contact Doga Derneği at www.dogaderneği.org for more information.





Yemen

Aden Lagoons



Photos © Camillo Ponziani, Nicky Petkov / BSPB, Yemen Society for the Protection of Wildlife

The Aden wetlands are amongst the most important wetlands in Yemen and Arabia. They consist of a series of lagoons and salt pans, used by more than 100 migratory bird species for feeding and roosting. Significant social, political and economic changes are taking place around Aden and its surroundings. These have induced serious threats to the integrity of the wetlands.

Here, WOW will update and implement key actions of an integrated management plan with involvement of major stakeholders, to ensure the inclusion of priorities into other relevant national management planning processes. Contact the Yemen Society for the Protection of Wildlife at www.birdlife.org/worldwide/national/yemen/index.html for more information.



wow project technical information



A Project Coordination Unit (PCU) is based at the Headquarters of Wetlands International and is staffed by UNOPS. The PCU is responsible for day-to-day operations and overall technical coordination of WOW at all levels. To contact the PCU send an e-mail to: info@wingsoverwetlands.org



WOW took its first steps in August 2006 and is expected to run until 2010. The work undertaken by this project is part of the mandate of all partner organizations involved. It will therefore continue as part of their programmes in subsequent years.

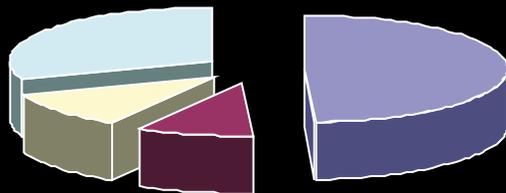


WOW has many donors at the international and local level. Funding committed to WOW stands at US\$12,195,229, including: US\$6,000,000 from the Global Environment Facility, US\$1,365,460 from AEWA, US\$1,114,405 from the German Government and US\$3,715,364 from other sources of co-financing.



WOW also acknowledges the financial support from the Office National de la Chasse et de la Faune Sauvage, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, the Danish Ministry of Environment and Energy, the Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape, and all local partners at the site level.

Overview of Project Funding



- Global Environment Facility Trust Fund
- German Government
- UNEP/AEWA Secretariat
- Other



Photo © Ivaylo Zafirov

wow partners

WOW is supported by many donors and partners at the international and local level, across the entire African-Eurasian region. The primary partners and sponsors of the project are UNEP/GEF, Wetlands International, BirdLife International, AEWA, the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN), UNOPS, Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and UNEP-WCMC.

The Partnership



As an independent international financial institution supported by member states, the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) provides grants to developing countries for projects that benefit the global environment and promote sustainable livelihoods in local communities. UNEP is responsible for the technical and administrative oversight of the WOW Project.



Wetlands International is the largest global, non-governmental organisation aiming to conserve and promote the wise use of the world's wetlands. Wetlands International is the overall technical lead contractor of the Wings Over Wetlands Project and spearheaded the design and development phase of the project.



BirdLife International is one of the world's largest international conservation organisations, specifically dedicated to preserving the world's birds, their habitats and global biodiversity. BirdLife International is also a lead organisation within the Wings Over Wetlands partnership, thus strongly involved in the implementation of all aspects of the project.



AEWA is an intergovernmental environmental treaty, developed under the auspices of the Convention on Migratory Species (UNEP/CMS), dedicated to the conservation of migratory waterbirds across Africa and Eurasia. The WOW Project supports the implementation of several key aspects of the mandate of AEWA.



The BfN is the German federal scientific authority, responsible for national and international nature conservation and landscape management, based in Bonn. The German Government is supporting the WOW Project with a generous financial contribution of 1 million Euros. The BfN is charged with overseeing funds channelled through Wetlands International.



The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) provide people, tools, and the operational know-how needed to get international projects up and running, and client goals met. UNOPS is entrusted by UNEP/GEF with the management of GEF funds and issues contracts on its behalf. It also employs the staff of the Project Coordination Unit (PCU).



Over the course of the Wings Over Wetlands project, Ramsar site data will be combined with those of the International Waterbird Census (IWC) and the Important Bird Areas (IBA) databases to create the Critical Sites Network Tool. WOW activities are also linked to the Ramsar Strategic Action Plan.



The UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) provides services to the United Nations Environmental Programme, biodiversity-related Conventions, their member states and non-governmental bodies. In the context of the Wings Over Wetlands Project, UNEP-WCMC is developing the Critical Site Network Tool.

steering committee



The first meeting of the project Steering Committee was held in Dec 2006 in Wageningen, the Netherlands. Steering Committee members include: Leon Bennun (BirdLife International), Esther Mwangi (UNEP/GEF), Julie Klassen (UNOPS), Steven de Bie (Steering Committee Chair), Nick Davidson (Ramsar Secretariat), Ward Hagemeijer (Wetlands International), Bert Lenten (AEWA). Absent: Gerard Boere (Steering Committee Vice-Chair).

Other team members participating at the first SC meeting: Jane Madgwick (CEO Wetlands International), Edoardo Zandri (WOW Chief Technical Advisor), Szabolcs Nagy (Wetlands International), Camillo Ponziani (WOW Junior Operation Manager) and Elaine King (UNEP/GEF).

The project Steering Committee includes all main project partners who are involved with the technical and administrative delivery of the Wings Over Wetlands Project. The main role of the Steering Committee is to guide and oversee the project's technical progress

and performance, as well as to enhance and optimise the contributions of partner organisations.

Steering Committee members are also acting as ambassadors of the project to a range of networks and audiences. The project Steering Committee plays two main functions:

1. Advising and guiding the WOW project based on evaluation of progress and achievements reported from project contractors and consultants via the Project Coordination Unit.
2. Ensuring synergy between project activities and partner activities to minimise overlap and maximise mutual benefits arising from project and partner activities.

The WOW Steering Committee meets annually, to discuss the project's results, agree upon the project workplan and schedule planned activities.

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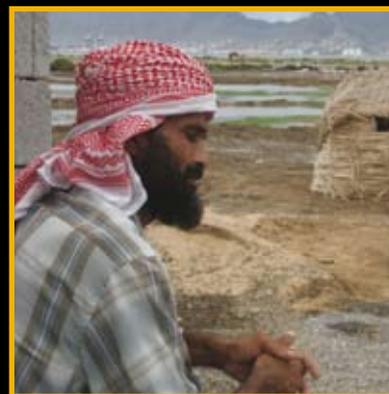
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