



Dear WLI Colleague,

It's good to be in contact again after a busy time with lots happening since the last bulletin. A big development for WLI was that WWT (our host organisation) became an International Organisation Partner (IOP) of Ramsar! After much work preparing a lot of material to show why WWT should join the existing IOPs (WWF, BirdLife, IUCN, Wetlands International and IWMI) WWT was confirmed as the sixth IOP during the recent Ramsar COP (conference of the parties) in Uruguay. This further strengthens the link between WLI and the Ramsar Convention.

We also held the 5th WLI Asia Conference, with partners at the Ramsar Regional Centre East Asia and East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership in Bangkok, hosted by the Thai Government. This was followed closely by the European / West Africa network, Migratory Birds for People, and many similar issues came up. For example, members want a more formal membership process, more regular updating of details of partners (as these change regularly), and development of common projects, particularly around migratory bird species. It was also suggested that the different regional networks should work more together to share best practice and resources.

We will work harder to deliver these outcomes, through our regional steering group teams. If you have other requests, then please do send them along to me.

Another exciting development is the Peer to Peer project, supporting exchange visits between wetland centres in Russia and the US. Visits have already taken place from US partners to Russian partners, and the return visits will happen in October – we will report back in our next newsletter with results from the final conference.

Finally, Ramsar has announced the World Wetlands Day will keep the same overall theme for the next few years, 'Wetlands are our Future', and each year will add a new focus. For 2016 it will be 'Sustainable Livelihoods', so please let us know if you are planning to celebrate it – it would be excellent to have stories about your activities.

Best regards,

Chris Rostron
Head of WLI

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5th WLI Asia Conference, Bangkok, Thailand

As one of our most active regions, it is always an excellent opportunity to meet with colleagues from across Asia, hearing their reports of activities and developments. It was also a great opportunity to work more closely with the Ramsar Regional Centre East Asia (RRC-EA) and East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP), plus around 50 colleagues from wetland centres and other initiatives.

One key point of discussion was how the WLI Asia network could develop, and with RRC-EA keen to play a leading role, we talked a lot about the pros and cons of this arrangement. All agreed that it could work well, but that we need to have



a clear agreement with the RRC-EA and core partners to ensure that WLI Asia continues to deliver what its members need, maintaining the steering group

structure that exists.

In Addition, the conference proposed that:

- A survey of all members should be undertaken to update details, find out what members need and

identify what skills and resources members can share, as well as identifying national



representatives.

- Develop some more resources on long-term financial planning for wetland centres, and some evaluation guidelines for CEPA work that can be used at any centre (thanks to Mai Po for providing a great 'virtual' lecture despite not being able to attend).
- Create more formal agreements between WLI and its members, to be used to seek support from local and national governments.

Thanks to Eugene Cheah for the pictures! If you would like more information, contact Chris Rostron, head of WLI at wli@wwt.org.uk, or Mr Suh, Seung-oh, RRC-EA, at suhseungoh@gmail.com

Migratory Birds for People update



Just back from the annual MBP meeting, which this year was held at the Urdaibai Bird Centre, Basque Country, Spain. An excellent opportunity to see a state of the art wetland centre, with their enthusiastic team keen to show us what they've been doing. This year, MBP has worked with the Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process, to highlight

the importance of international cooperation amongst protected areas across Europe and beyond.

Whilst at Urdaibai we found out how to make a 'do it yourself' digiscope. Using a screen, telescope, ketchup bottle, webcam and some tape to create a display allowing a group of people to watch the telescope view of the reserve all together on screen. We have a worksheet showing how to do this, please drop us a line if you'd like it, or visit the WLI website resources pages. In addition we visited a local biodiversity visitor centre, found out about the Urdaibai bay Biosphere reserve, and shared presentations on our wetland centres.

Other outcomes included:

- A potential bid for 'Migratory People for Birds', in which young professionals / students



- travel along the flyway visiting member centres.
- Production of the final version of the MBP film, shortened to three minutes, and for use at all centres (available soon).
- Urdaibai's flyway project, linking species with eco-tourism.

- Selection of three key species, based on our recent survey – curlew, black-tailed godwit and osprey.
- Ideas for a new logo, incorporating people, birds and an outline of the flyway

For more information, contact the Head of WLI, wli@wwt.org.uk.

Telling the story of Baltic Sea wildlife, Vyborg Castle, Russia

This September, the Baltic Fund for Nature (BFN), with support of UNDP GEF, opened the refurbished exhibition in the ancient Vyborg castle, in North-western Russia. The exhibition focuses on two ecosystems - wetlands and Baltic



Sea coastline. It has updated the traditional museum exhibition space with modern elements like touchscreens and interactive zones..

The exhibition features the biodiversity of waterfowl bird species that occur in the wetland environments

of the Karelian isthmus area - the land between the Northern coast of the Gulf of Finland and Ladoga lake. Visitors can listen to their calls through headphones, see dioramas for typical habitats where birds live (peat bogs, lakes and lowlands). Young visitors can compare their own height with the models of white-fronted goose, bittern, crane and mute swan. The exhibition tells the story of beavers in Northern Europe – their near extinction due to over-hunting, and slow recovery thanks to conservation work and introduction of Canada beaver.

There is also an interactive zone in the wetland part of exhibition where people can touch the pieces of wood

gnawed by beavers, browse some pages about peat bog structure, and find out about local sites and common species over the touchscreen. There is a "Migratory birds for people" poster at the entrance of wetland part of exhibition, talking about bird migration routes in Europe as well wetland visitor centres on the East Atlantic Flyway.



The second room of the exhibition focuses on the Baltic Sea coastline, gulls and terns on one of the walls as well as two large 'flocks' of fishes - herrings and sprats flying from the ceiling. One of posters shows the unique species composition of the Baltic Sea particularly fish species - in the Gulf of Finland fishermen catch riverine fishes as well as marine (e.g. Atlantic cod) and migratory (e.g. Salmon). There is also information about history of fisheries - you can feel the weight of biggest fishes that were caught in the Gulf of Finland by taking the sacks with sand inside and fish pictures on. Finally, some history aspects are present, e.g. floats and sinkers for fishing nets from 16th century that were explored during archeological surveys in the castle. For more information, contact Eugene Genelt-Yanovskiy, Baltic Fund for Nature, eyanovskiy@gmail.com

Designing a wetland centre the Filipino way!

The Society for the Conservation of Philippine Wetlands has engaged young people as champions of wetland conservation in design, engineering, and planning through Wetland Centre Design Competitions aimed at building a CEPA-anchored wetland centre in the country. Our first design competition was held in 2005 with the Architecture Students Association of the Philippines as partner. The highly successful competition was followed by two more, in 2009 and 2013 which were focused on the Candaba Wetlands and Pasig River. Soon it became known among

students and design circles as a fun and engaging way to express design creativity and learn more about wetlands.

We accumulated practical designs for implementation and made it known to



interested organisations. The competition was very successful as a CEPA strategy but building the infrastructure is a story for next time!

In 2013, we still had no wetland centre due to lack of funds,



land ownership, and land use issues. Luckily, with referral from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Office of Senator Cynthia Villar became interested in using the winning designs for a Wetland Center Complex in the Las Piñas – Paranaque Critical Habitat and Eco-tourism Area. A design team from SCPW volunteers created the plans and US\$1M was secured from the Tourism Infrastructure Enterprise Zone Authority for a Wetland Centre Complex that delivers wetland education geared towards interaction between people and nature in support of wetlands conservation. Construction will soon commence and is expected to be completed in 2016.

Amy Lecciones, amy_lecciones@yahoo.com, Society for the Protection of Philippine Wetlands

International Black-faced Spoonbill School, South Korea



The Environmental Ecosystem Research Foundation (ERF Korea), a non-profit research organization based in Seoul, is a partner organization of WLI, having worked mainly on the Handbook on Wetland Education Centers. Ganghwa People's Network, a local civic organization in Ganghwa Island, Korea and WWF Hong Kong in collaboration with UNESCAP-ENEA and NEASPEC (North-East Asian Sub-regional Programme for Environmental Cooperation) organized the **International Black-faced Spoonbill School in Ganghwa 2015** on 15th and 16th May in the Ganghwa Tidal-flat Centre, WLI member, in Ganghwa Island, Korea.

The School brought together junior-high school students living in Ganghwa and Incheon area where the main breeding ground of Black-faced Spoonbills (BFS) in Korea and educators from Korea, Japan, Taiwan and Hong Kong. This Programme was set up to raise the awareness of Black-faced Spoonbills, an endangered wetland bird in East Asia and to promote sustainable local community living with the bird among next generation.

Black-faced Spoonbills number only around 3,000 individuals in the world and the largest population of birds breed at offshore islets in the border area between North and South Korea (DMZ area) and winter in Japan (Kyushu and Okinawa), Hong Kong (Mai Po and Inner Deep Bay area), Taiwan (Tainan), Vietnam etc.

This is the first Joint education programme among countries in the flyway and the organizers would like to extend it to more regular-based international education programme with related wetland education centres. The School consisted of indoor and outdoor sessions on the life-cycle of Black-faced Spoonbills; the main habitat type of the bird; BFS and my town; BFS friends in East Asia and; field visits. Contact: Sunyoung BAK (Ms.), ERF Korea, E-mail: sunyoungbak99@gmail.com



WLI future plans



Ramsar's World Wetlands Day theme for 2016 is around **Wetlands for our Future: Sustainable Livelihoods**, which focuses on how people and wetlands can co-exist in a positive way. As usual, the Ramsar secretariat will

produce resources, information and a campaign around the theme, so keep an eye on their [website](#), and we will alert you when materials are ready.

After the updating of the CEPA resolution at COP12, WLI has been tasked to undertake a piece of work to identify more potential wetland centres. We will be in touch with your government and NGO CEPA focal points to ask for information – but if you know of any wetland centres not currently part of WLI, please send us their contacts, or encourage them to join.

Finally, we will be forming a working group on evaluation techniques for CEPA activities, and would welcome your input. If you are interested in this area, please drop me a line at wli@wwt.org.uk. The group will meet by skype, and we need your help!

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