

WLI Annual Report 2010





1. Introduction

2010 was a busy year for WLI, with development taking place to improve the WLI website, creation of new communications tools as well as moving forward projects on the ground such as the Migratory Birds for People project and the WLI Russia network. Despite global recession and lack of funding, the network has remained active, finding ways to deliver work through inventive and alternative means, such as the hosting of the WLI Asia conference, and the creation of a leaflet for WLI North America. The network has grown by over 40 members this year, reaching a total of around 280 wetland centre members. All in all, a strengthening of the network with more resources and activity.

2. Resources

2.1 Distance learning course.

Working with London South Bank University, Kew Botanic Gardens and three other UK conservation organisations, we have put together the format for a distance learning course for those working on environmental issues on site. Topics include principles of education and conservation, identifying and engaging stakeholders and meeting sustainability challenges. The course will be available on line, and we hope will create an accessible way of improving the skills of those working at wetland centres in the UK and beyond. The pilot scheme will be run in 2011.

2.2 WLI virtual visits

With funding from the UK ministry of the environment, and the Norwegian government, we were able to create a site that gives you the chance to become a 'virtual visitor'. Conscious of the impacts of flying on the environment, the time it takes, and the prohibitive financial cost, the site aims to allow WLI members and others to get a better idea of what is going on at other wetland centres without having to leave their office.

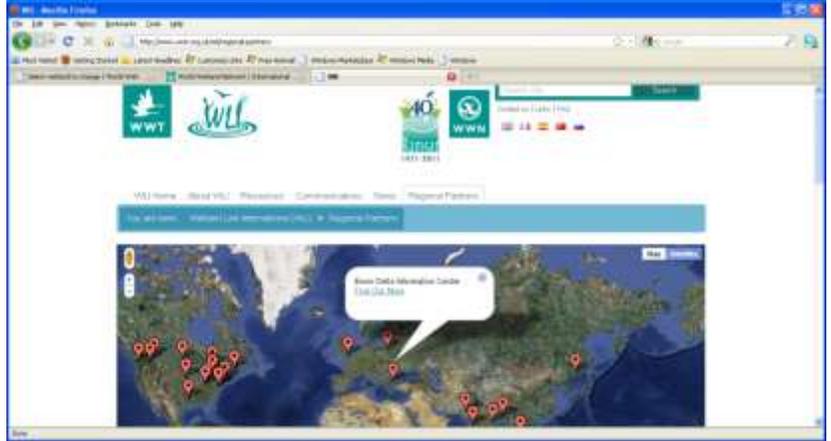


The site includes an accurate Google earth location map, videos of the wetlands and their activities, 360 degree views from key parts of the wetland, downloadable resources, and site maps. It forms a micro-site within the WLI website overall. We hope that more wetland centres will upload materials, to give a fuller range of centres and their activities.



2.3 WLI website

The website is the main forum for providing access to members to resources such as pictures, files <> and information, and for hosting detailed information on members that can be accessible to others. We have worked to change the member profiles so that they can be accessed via Google Maps, showing the spread of centres globally and allowing visitors to easily click on sites to show details. The facility allows visitors to zoom in to see the geographical features of the site. We have also re-arranged the web site to give each geographical region a specific page, allowing us to update them with relevant resources and post news items where they are most likely to get read.



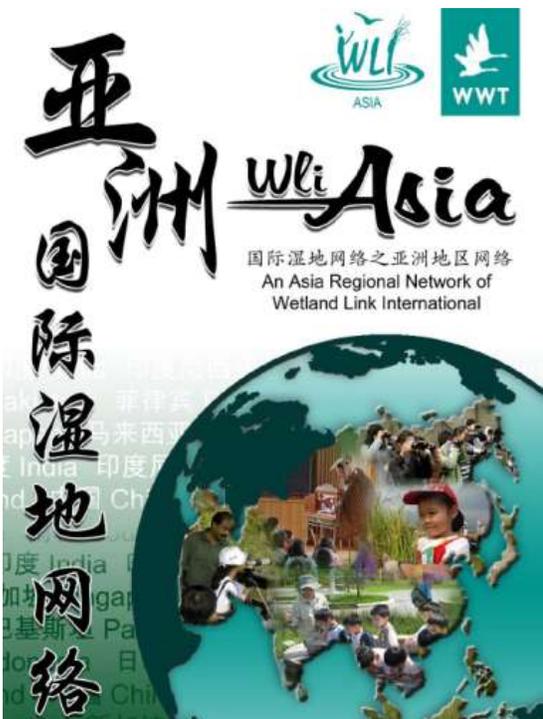
In addition, we worked with colleagues to develop Chinese and Russian language facilities, offering key pages in both languages. There is now the ability to show what WLI can offer, although we still need to develop resources that can be downloaded in Chinese and Russia. Our WLI Russia members are developing these, and WLI Asia links to its own website, with resources in Mandarin.

2.4 Materials

Continued development of downloadable resources has been ongoing. We not only source materials from existing partners and projects, but also develop our own. For instance, a tailor-made WLI Asia leaflet is now available in Chinese, and we have worked with WLI North America colleagues to produce a 'Discover North America Wetlands' leaflet for the region.

3. Priority themes

We continue to encourage partners to take part in the priority themes of climate change, migratory birds, wise use of wetlands and invasive species. These link both to specific 'world' theme days (world wetland day, world migratory bird day) but also to ongoing issues that are being tackled by WLI members continuously. World Wetlands Day, under the theme of Wetlands Biodiversity and Climate Change, was celebrated by many members, recognising the link both toe wetlands being impacted



on by climate change, but also their benefits to cope with climate change through flood alleviation and water storage, and carbon sequestration e.g. via peat, and coastal protection.

World Migratory Bird Day was also covered, with opportunities to post your stories on the website around the theme of ‘Save migratory birds in crisis - every species counts!’ This always generates good publicity for local events, showing how partners can use the theme to run events from bird-watching, to family activity days, cultural events and even stage shows.

4. Regions

4.1 Europe

Migratory Birds for People. This partnership of wetland centres along the Western coast of Europe aims to use the theme of migratory birds to form links between centres and groups, to make advances in wetland conservation. Initiated by Staatsbosbeheer, the Dutch nature conservation agency, the partnership works to share best practice, develop new resources and raise awareness of the importance of wetlands as a resource for migratory birds. In 2010 the partners meet twice face-to-face and numerous times via skype, to develop ideas for fund-raising. Plans are now underway for a major bid to the EU LIFE funding stream, and we hope to have submitted the bid in July of 2011



Partners include Lake Takern (Sweden), WWT’s Welney centre (UK), Staatsbosbeheer (Netherlands), Natuurpunt (Belgium), Baie de Somme and Camargue (France), and the Parc Aiguamolls (Spain). As the core partners, they will be responsible for providing match-funding and taking an active part in development of resources, but the project will also benefit WLI partners more widely in Europe, and we hope to link this to wetland centres in West Africa too.

WLI Russia is also seeing activity, through core partners across the country. Regular skype conference calls keep partners up to date with each other, as well as having input to development of Russian pages on the WLI website, and planning a meeting of WLI partners, we hope in mid-2011.

4.2 Oceania

Since our meeting in 2009, we have focussed on talking to Ramsar and the SPREP (South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme). Plans are underway to seek support for a training and capacity building programme across the PICTs (Pacific Islands and Territories), for those working on engaging local communities in wetland conservation. A survey of core SPREP contacts was undertaken, showing a clear need to do more to provide assistance for those seeking sustainable new ways to engage and educate.





4.3 Asia

WLI Asia meeting in Malaysia. Despite not finding a corporate sponsor, we were lucky enough to find support from the Malaysian Ministry for Natural Resources and the Environment (MNRE), and the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS). Between them, they supported a meeting of 50 people at the Paya Indah wetlands near Kuala Lumpur. The event include speakers from Ramsar, Charles Sturt University (Australia) and presentations from across Asia, including Iran and Iraq, China, India, Indonesia, Hong Kong and Russia. Full results can be seen at the WLI website at

<http://wli.wwt.org.uk/regions/asia/asia/>.

4.4 North America

An active core WLI North America group meets several times a year, and we have managed to design and print a leaflet, 'Discover North American Wetlands' which can be downloaded from the website too. The leaflet aims to show the range of wetlands sites and activities, and offers links to the WLI site to show the full range of centres in Canada and the States.

4.5 South America

We have fewer partners in South America, but we are growing the network slowly, and increasing the amount of Spanish resources available on the website. In addition, the Head of WLI attended a wetland managers forum for those working in central America, in Costa Rica and presented both WLI and WWN activities to the group.

4.6 Africa

Again, Africa is not a very developed network for WLI, spanning a huge geographic area and range of issues. As part of a development of the approach, WWT hosted Leonard Nemushai, from Noumayianat, Kenya, on a 4-month placement. Leonard offered advice and help on how we can grow the network, and made introductions to useful contacts in the West Africa region. We've also been working through Wetlands International West Africa to create a project that links to the Migratory Birds for People (Europe) work. The link between the two regions makes sound sense given the species of birds that migrate annually between them.





out.

5. World Wetland Network

The WWN aims to raise the profile of civil society in delivering wetland conservation, as well as offering the opportunity to campaign for specific wetlands and integrate smaller civil society organisations into the work of the Ramsar convention. It is being developed as a separate project – you can find out more from the WWN website at www.worldwetnet.org, which shows the results of the WWN Wetland Globe awards last year, as well as ongoing work that is being carried

6. Future planning

WLI is a resource available to wetland centres wherever they are in the world, but we would like to deliver more active projects, and a wider range of wetland CEPA resources and support. In order to do this, we want to develop regional hubs to increase WLI's capacity to support our members. We are proactively working with our members to develop this regional approach and will be developing project proposals and funding bids soon, including the Migratory Birds for People project.

In addition, we hope to increase the numbers of members by at least 10% in 2012, double the number of centres with 'virtual visit' sites, and support the launch of the distance learning course for site-based educators being developed with the London South Bank University.

Finally, next year is WLI's 20th Anniversary year; the initiative was launched originally in 1991, and has been actively supporting wetlands centres ever since. We are planning a new publication for WLI members, as well as activities based around the 20 year anniversary.

Contacts

For more information on WLI, please contact the [head of WLI](#), Slimbridge Wetland Centre, Gloucestershire, GL2 7BT, UK, or see our website at www.wli.org.uk

