



Dear WLI Colleague,

Recently the WLI network has made some great steps forward, with offers of support in the Neotropics and Asia regions, and continued work with the Migratory Birds for People team (Europe) and WLI Russia. The Ramsar Regional Centre East Asia is willing to take

the WLI Asia network forward, particularly with plans for our next WLI Asia meeting in China, in early 2015. Our Chilean colleagues at the Centro de Estudios de Humedales (CEH) are working hard to hold our first Neotropics meeting for Central and South America. It has taken many discussions with our colleagues to get to this point, and we are very grateful to our local partners who are keen to take on the challenge of developing more support in the regions.

The Ramsar conventions is gearing up for the next Conference of the Parties, and has announced its theme for 2015 as 'Wetlands for the Future' – a positive approach to planning for work in promoting and protecting our wetland resource. Regional preparatory meetings are happening right now, and WLI representatives will attend several of them. Ramsar is also keen to take a more active role in supporting WLI as one of the key deliverers of their CEPA programme. You can also see their new website at www.ramsar.org.

We also have new members joining, and you can read about some of them in this issue. If you know of centres that you think could benefit from joining the network, we would love to hear from them. Please pass on the WLI contact details – we would like to go beyond the 300 member mark, and just need a few more to do this.

Best regards,

Chris Rostron
Head of WLI

In this issue...

- CEH and WLI Neotropics
- Terschelling great outdoors
- Pantanos de Villa, Peru
- Peer to Peer, US and Russia
- Urdaibai, Spain
- Future plans for WLI
- WLI future plans

CEH and Neotropics Conference

After much work with partners at CEH (Centro de Estudios de Humedales) and the Fundacion Kennedy, we are pleased to announce the the first WLI Neotropics meeting will be taking place in Pica, Chile, from the 17th to the 20th of November this year. The event will create the platform to launch a more structured WLI Neotropics network, with CEH taking a lead on the regional programme. We have speakers from the Ramsar convention, IUCN, and the Western Hemispheric Shorebird Network amongst others. The conference will be a great opportunity to discuss what types of wetland engagement and awareness

raising activities are already taking place, what the concept of 'wetland centres' means in the region, establish how the network will function. If you would like to attend, please see our [webpages](#) or contact the Head of WLI or Carolina Vera Burgos, at CEH, on cvburgos@ceh.org.cl.



Terschelling engagement project, the Netherlands

In the first weeks of

september, Staatsbosbeheer on Terschelling island invited all pupils of the primary schools on the island for a stay on the Boschplaat. It wasn't a 'normal' visit; the children also stayed there for one night at a campsite that we created especially for this activity. This campside was situated right in the middle of nowhere in the 4,400ha large reserve, 10km away from the nearest houses. Over six nights we've welcomed about 200 children. During their stay, they followed an educational program about the cultural and ecological importance of the Boschplaat for the island and for birds.

In the breeding season, from March till August, the Boschplaat is of a huge importance for breeding birds such as Spoonbill, Common eider, Marsh harrier

and several species of gulls. At the time that this expedition took place, the Boschplaat and the surrounding mudflats were visited by thousands of migratory birds that are using the Boschplaat to rest at high tide. Of course we made sure that we didn't disturb them.

This expedition came about in collaboration with the schools on the island and with donations of local companies. Staatsbosbeheer wants to organise this expedition every 4 years so that all the children on the island can experience a stay on the Boschplaat. This was the second time, the first wilderness experience was in 2010 during the



100 year anniversary of our organisation on Terschelling. Overall, it was a great experience for the children, and also got their parents and friends interested and involved, raising awareness of the



The wildlife sanctuary Pantanos de Villa is internationally recognised as a refuge for both resident and migratory birds from across the Americas, and received its designation from the Peruvian government in 2005. The objective was to combine the efforts of different authorities to protect wildlife, the environment and promote sustainable use of the wetlands of Pantanos de Villa.

Today the results of this conservation are becoming visible; tourism has increased by 20% over the last



importance of the area amongst local people. For more information contact [Joeri Lamers](#), at Staatsbosbeheer, Netherlands.

Pantanos de Villa, Peru

year; more than 2,568 local businesses have been audited for their impacts; and 260 young volunteers joined to contribute to the conservation of the site through awareness raising and environment education activities. This, combined with the work of neighbouring people, and that of the park rangers, has seen Pantanos de Villa become an important public open space of the city of Lima, integrating conservation and the study of nature.



In 2013 and 2014, the NGO 'Ciudadanos al Día' supported as best practice the public management system of 'Citizen Science through Public Engagement', which has been delivered through local neighbours, and could easily be replicated in other sites. Right now, we are working on a new visitor centre, which will enhance the visitor experience to our amazing wetland! See the design image to the right.

For more information, contact [Shirley Melendez](#).

Peer to Peer US and Russia exchange programme



Working with the Wetlands Institute, US and Wetlands International (Russia), we were part of a successful bid to the US Peer to Peer funding programmes, that aims to develop linkages between people in the US and Russia. Our proposal put forward a plan to run exchange visits between the WLI networks in the two countries, and we

have just started working to put the project in place.

We will shortly be selecting 3 wetland centres in each country and 2 staff from each centre, who will then carry out exchange visits during the (northern hemisphere) summer of 2015, and

resulting in a final conference at the Wetlands Institute in the fall of 2015.

Key activities will be staff

spending time with their counterparts to learn from their programmes and activities, development of resources and materials during the project, and a final conference to present and share experiences between all participants. We also hope that lasting relationships will be created between Russian and US partners, and that the WLI networks in both countries will also become more developed and active by the end of it.

For more information, please contact the [Head of WLI, Lenore Tedesco](#) in the US, or [Irina Kamennova](#) in Russia.



Urdaibai Bird Centre, Basque Country, Spain

Urdaibai Bird Center, situated in the Basque Country of northern Spain, is a great living nature museum, open for the public to enjoy the world of birds and



learn about their migratory behavior.

Created from a former fish-canning

factory, it has cleverly redesigned the space, with digital screens that can show up to the minute information on the centre, birds and other activities. Urdaibai is indeed a living center, as the course of events is set by the birds. Every day brings something new.

It is not only a great museum and scientific research center for birds; what makes the Bird Center unique, is that it is located at the heart of the Urdaibai

Biosphere Reserve, a privileged observatory from which visitors can enjoy spectacular views of the marshland. This center is administered by Aranzadi Society of Sciences and works in scientific research and dissemination of information to the public.

From the observatories the public can enjoy the birds that are visiting Urdaibai; Spoonbills from the Wadden Sea, elegant Herons, many species of ducks, waders from the far north and even birds as elusive as the Eurasian Bittern. In this center, research and dissemination teams work together so that visitors can learn about and experience the projects which are in progress.

Guides and experts are always at hand to help the visitor gain a greater insight into this



exciting world and the center is well equipped with state of the art audio visual equipment. Urdaibai Bird Center is also open to other centers interested in dissemination and research on the birds found at the wetlands of the East Atlantic Flyway.

For more information contact [Jose Mari Unamuno](mailto:Jose.Mari.Unamuno@birdcenter.org), or see www.birdcenter.org

WLI future plans



The Ramsar theme for World Wetlands Day has been announce as Wetlands for the Future, and includes a photo competition

for young people – see their new website for more details of how to get involved, and the resources that they are providing. This theme will also be used at the Ramsar COP in Uruguay next year.

By the time of the next newsletter, we hope to have the WLI Neotropics network much more active, with the lead from CEH – and will be updating you on this shortly. In addition, WLI Russia and WLI Asia should be moving forwards with regional leads, an exciting time for us.

The WLI Asia group has agreed that the Ramsar Regional Centre East Asia (RRC-EA) will take a lead on the WLI Asia network. Our initiative fits well with their programme of training and coordination in East Asia, and this will allow us more opportunities to develop and grow WLI Asia. The first task for the new structure will be to oversee the organisation of the WLI Asia Conference in China in 2015, and plans are already advancing with RRC-EA, the East Asia Australasia Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) and Wetlands International China. For more information, please contact the Head of WLI, or Mr Suh, Seung-oh, director of the RRC-EA.

Finally, as ever, if you have any stories that you think people would be interested in, please get in touch – we are happy to promote your great work!

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