



WLI world



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WLI news from across the globe



Dear WLI Colleague,

This edition sees articles on exciting new projects at both centre and flyway level. At time of writing we have just returned from the 10th INTECOL wetland conference held in Changshu, China, close to Shanghai. The conference gave us the chance to promote WLI and WLI Asia, meet other wetland practitioners, and talk with the Chinese government representatives that are in charge of wetland park development across the country.

In the Americas we have worked with our partners to combine the North America and Latina America / Caribbean networks, to reflect the flyway. We hope

that this will encourage more effective communication between partners, and give them opportunities to cooperate based on links made between them by migratory birds.

The Migratory Birds for People network has also just had its annual meeting, hosted by the Amager centre in Copenhagen, Denmark, and we also plan to take part in the Pan African Ornithological Congress to strengthen links with wetland centres and outreach initiatives, particularly in West Africa.

As part of this approach we've taken on an intern from Algeria, Abdallah Khazene, and you can read his article later in the newsletter – he has just started and we are excited to have him on the team! We also have a new WLI volunteer at Slimbridge, Colleen Spruce, who many of you will have heard from already, as she updates our database.

As always, we rely on you, our WLI members, to provide stories and information to keep the network alive – please keep on sending us news and stories from your centres.

Best regards,

Chris Rostron
Head of WLI

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Škocjanski Zatok Nature Reserve New Visitor Centre

Škocjanski zatok Nature Reserve is a coastal wetland located in the outskirts of the city of Koper on Slovenian coast in North-East

Adriatic. After extensive habitat restoration in 2007, the reserve hosts a huge variety of birds and other fauna and flora. In early March 2016, the reserve was reopened after the construction of visitor facilities, with a primary goal to improve the quality of the visitor experience. Besides the visitor center, the majority of the buildings were built for the observation of wildlife. Among them, the round central observatory is definitely the most exciting one, showing the views all around the reserve as well as the underwater view of the freshwater marsh. The construction of the facilities followed the sustainable construction principles and was co-financed by European Regional Development Fund.

The visit to Škocjanski zatok is an excellent choice for all who wish to experience the rich biodiversity of a Mediterranean wetland. Besides visitor centre, several observation hides and a theme trail illustrate the area's

diverse range of plant and animal life, including many rare and endangered species. Camargue horses and Podolian cattle, which help to maintain the vegetation balance of the freshwater marsh, add to the diversity of the Reserve. The story of Škocjanski zatok is a story of protection and restoration of the area, inspired by remarkable commitment and love for nature.



For more information, please contact Nataša Šalaja at natasa.salaja@dopps.si

Flight of the Swans



This daring project puts one of our adventurous colleagues, Sacha Dench, in the position of Bewick's swans, flying by paramotor along their

flyway. Since the 1990's, there has been a 40% reduction in the population that migrates from arctic western Russia, through northern Europe down to western Europe. This project aims to bring attention to this situation, with Sacha stopping at many sites (and WLI members) along the route.

At the time of writing, she has flown from Nary'an Mar, north-west Russia, through tundra, and is approaching St Petersburg, where she will meet our WLI colleagues from the

Baltic Fund for Nature. As she journeys along the route with her ground support crew, she will meet conservationists and wetland centre staff, as well as using this high profile event to contact local farmers, hunters and other local people.

We have also produced a community toolkit, which provides useful resources for people to use during their local events. It includes games and activities for children, resources to engage local groups and practical tools such as maps, posters and fact sheets that can be used wherever they are needed. We even sent t-shirts, pencils and stickers to help promote the events.

This project has had great reactions from local partners so far, who have welcomed its ability to engage and involve people that would not normally take part. For more information, see the website or contact the [head of WLI](#), or visit the website at www.flightoftheswans.org



Welcome to the first WLI intern, Abdallah Khazene

Hi! I am Abdallah, I work for a small NGO in south west Algeria, on environmental issues, cultural heritage and active citizenship. We have two RAMSAR sites in our region and they are one of the priorities of the NGO's

work. We mainly do educational activities, raising awareness about environmental issues and we conduct some projects with local authorities as well as some joint venture projects with embassies or international organisations such as IUCN or UNDP.

In one of the regional wetland activities in Morocco, I met a friend from Senegal and he has talked to me about WLI and the amazing work they are doing promoting educational centres. Two months later, there has been a call for an internship at Slimbridge to work with WLI team. I applied, was shortlisted, then accepted and just started on the 14th of September.

During my time at WWT I will work mainly on CEPA and strengthening the WLI Africa and Middle East Network, also hopefully to design some educational activities, resources and games. I hope that I will learn lot of things here, and it is already starting by virtue of my wonderful colleagues working here. I am keen about bird watching techniques, finding out about outdoor and learning activities and how to design habitats and visitor management. At a personal level, living the British culture with its language, different accents and culture will be certainly a great experience.

Through Slimbridge Centre, WWT is simply bringing the Wildfowl to the urban area and thus to the people, its design as a wetland educational centre is one the best that I have ever seen or even heard of. More than an Educational Centre, Slimbridge is the birthplace of wetland and wildfowl conservation all around the planet.

For more information contact Abdallah at: Abdallah.khazene@wwt.org.uk



MBP Annual Meeting 2016, Amager Nature Centre, Copenhagen

The MBP Annual meeting at Amager nature centre, Copenhagen, was an

excellent opportunity for the group to find out about what Amager are doing at their site, learn from each other and discuss future developments and opportunities for MBP. The group took part in education sessions at the site with a school group, saw the activities involving local sourcing of food (including some ducks, deer and pheasants from the site!) We also learnt about management of the site, and how they engage local people and schools.

A group discussion about MBP's progress pointed out that we are doing well in maintaining an active core group, with communication well across the network, and with the excellent annual meetings. We also agreed to update the website, create a searchable tool for projects across the network, and

to make a clearer and more constructive relationship between WLI and MBP.

As usual, we tried to involve our MBP Africa colleagues by Skype, but the poor connection did not allow much conversation. In order to further build the relationship, the Head of WLI, Chris Rostron, will attend the Pan African Ornithological Congress in October 2016, holding a workshop and a round-table discussion on wetland centres, CEPA and public engagement in wetland bird conservation – we will report back.

A trip to the deer park was an amazing natural phenomenon seeing the deer rutting (as well as all the cameramen from across Europe!) We also had some fascinating lectures from birdlife and the local university on the phenomenon of



migration and an excellent trip to the National Aquarium in Copenhagen, learning about their education work, seeing behind the scenes, and experiencing their state of the art interpretation.

For more information contact Roelof Heringa at r.b.heringa@gmail.com

WLI future plans

The next big job for us is renewing the website. It is several years now since it was created, and is showing its age. We have just sent out an evaluation survey which will ask about feedback for WLI with a section specifically about the website. If you have time, please do give us some feedback. We realize that the website could be better used, and it is our main tool for communication and sharing of resources.

Our intern, Abdallah, will be here for the next six months and we hope to use his support to really build the MBP

Africa network, and the WLI network in the Middle East. His experience of working in the region, and his French and Arabic skills will be invaluable in doing this.

The flight of the Swans project will also provide a lot of work with local partners, and also we hope bring in great examples of how they are promoting conservation of wetlands and migratory birds. We will keep you posted on Sacha's epic adventure.

Contact

Head of WLI

Chris Rostron

WWT, Slimbridge, Gloucestershire GL2 7BT, UK

T +44 (0)1453 891214

E chris.rostron@wwt.org.uk

W wli.org.uk