

MBP Newsletter

Migratory Birds for People



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West Africa Wetland Centres

Working with local people



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Working with local people and groups is a vital part of delivering wetland conservation work across the continent. Unless local people understand why wetlands and their

wildlife are important to us, what problems the wetlands face and how they can live sustainability within the wetland, it will be very difficult to change behaviour to positively manage and protect the wetland. MBP is working with partners across the East Atlantic Flyway, and we can see great example of our colleagues at wetland sites in Africa working well with local people.

Schools are one of the key groups – education and site visits are a big part of the work, bringing schools out of the classroom into the wetlands. It is important to remember that their teachers also need support and training to help them understand how wildlife, the environment and water are related to their teaching activities, and to give them a positive and structured visit to a natural site.

Local people are also getting involved, helping to count and monitor birds and the state of their wetlands, as well as carry out practical activities such as cleaning up rubbish in wetlands, and learn how ecotourism can bring livelihood benefits

We hope you enjoy reading about these great examples from our colleagues in West Africa.

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Kallisaye Ornithological Reserve, Senegal



The Kallisaye Ornithological Reserve (ROK) has developed a system of regular surveys on its site, which is based on local engagement and awareness raising. Local people were heavily involved in collecting information, and went out on boat trips to get a hands-on experience in the wetland itself. They identified that ecological survey work should take place based on three principles; current, looking at the different abundances of species within the ecosystem; spatial, looking at distribution, and mapping species,

ecosystems and individuals; and temporal, tracking the changes over time. In addition, three distinct causes were identified, including social (human activities such as hunting or fishing, habitat fragmentation), ecological (state of the ecosystem or changes in abundance) and wider environmental impacts (storms, tides etc).

These pressures impact on the habitat and species dynamics across several areas. In terms of economics, the ecological

survey shows the impacts on food, pharmaceutical, industrial and genetic resources. For culture, we can show the

impacts on traditions and the aesthetic value of the landscape. And for ecological impact, it gives information on the carbon and water cycles, the changes in species distribution and climate variations.

The analysis of these results leads to two potential options. Either we make no intervention, and leave the environment to reach an equilibrium of its own. This could, however, lead to increased vulnerability or even extinction of species.

The other option is take an active intervention in the management of resources. It is this option that we have chosen for ROK. This requires detailed



knowledge of the local history, biology and values. This also requires involvement of local people, awareness-raising and education activities, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits that arise from effective wildlife conservation. As you can see from the pictures, our recent beach cleaning activity with local school children was very successful, and raise their awareness of the issues about rubbish in the wetlands, and its impact on both wildlife and people.

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GREPOM – Ecological Visitor Centre of Walidia, Morocco. CEPA over 2017



The visitor centre carried out a huge range of activities during 2017 including:

- Celebration of World Migratory Bird Day
- Winter survey of birds in the lagoon wetlands of Sidi Moussa Walidia.
- Guided visits for the public, groups and schools

Celebration of the World Migratory Bird Day was marked in the visitor centre, starting on the 7th of May and finishing on the 11th of May. It was celebrated in three sets of activities:

- School group visits to the centre
- Educational activity a Ouled HLAL school, in the locality of Oualidia
- Visit to go birdwatching.

The celebration of WMBD included visits to the centre of well over 100 school children from two schools, including spending time in the centre, and site visits to watch birds in the local wetland. There was also an audio-visual education session and a site visit on the salt flats for birdwatching. Students helped with an educational activity including presentations on the ecological value of



the lagoon, bird migration, the importance of the lagoon for the migratory birds,

and the conservation of the lagoon.

The centre also participated in the 8th international wildfowl and wetlands day at Khénifra, with an illustrated poster of the activities of the centre. A survey of bird mortality in the Walidia wetlands was carried out after the discovery of bird corpses around the marshes near the Walidia wetland on the 21st of September.

Under the International Waterbird Census (IWC), the winter survey of waterfowl in the lagoon wetlands of Sidi Moussa Walidia was completed. This year was marked by the participation of Dutch observers in the survey campaigns. In addition, other sites in the region were visited.



A range of visits were supported, including a self-guided visit of the poster exhibition in the centre, which showed the heritage, ecological, countryside and socio-economic values of the Walidia wetlands. Also, notably, an exhibition of bird photos (by Gérard Schmitt), at which the visitors (mostly school children and their teachers) took part in an oral presentation on the Sidi Moussa lagoon complex in general, and in the Walidia lagoon in particular. This presentation focussed on:

- the lagoon complex of Sidi Moussa Walidia and its designation as a Ramsar site; the morphology of the Walidia lagoon, and the ecological values of the lake (flora, fauna, shells, birdlife);
- economic values (commercial oyster farming, lagoon fishing, collection of shellfish, harvesting of seaweeds, agriculture);

- bird migration; the link between the beak-shape of birds and their feeding habits. In addition to the centre visit, site visits to see the migratory birds were organised.

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Migratory Birds in the Mussulo Bay, Angola



In Luanda, the capital of Angola, you can often see migratory birds on the Luandan coast from many sites

across 150km of the surrounding coastal zone. The Mussulo Bay is different from the other sites in its importance both for wetland migratory birds (image 1), as well as for the potential for ecotourism. However, there are still many threats which affect these important migratory bird sites, notably the ‘Saco de Falmingos’, ‘Ilha de Cazang’ and the ‘Ilhéu dos Pássaros’ migration sites.

One of the most important threats for these sites is the build-up of rubbish which come from the wider urban area of Luanda. This rubbish is



brought into the bay by the tidal movements that characterise it. The amount of plastic is striking, even at first glance (image 2), and represents a menace for migratory birds.

In order to reduce the negative impact of the rubbish and particularly plastic bags on migratory birds and their habitats, an awareness-raising campaign was launched by the Angolan Ministry of the Environment and some Luandan universities, financed by the Wadden Sea Flyway Intivi-



ties (WSFI). Through this collaboration, several successful cleaning events took place at important sites across the bay (image 3). During this day, the important sites were cleared of rubbish, and these activities will be carried out periodically.

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Involvement of local schools in Nouakchott in environmental education in site visits to Diawling Park, Mauritania

The park welcomed two groups of school children from Bourge College and from the private secondary school at Méharées, Nouakchott, as part of the park's school environmental education programme.

These school visits took place between January and February 2017, led by the park staff and accompanied by the school teachers. The visit gave the pupils the chance to understand the management of the park and the different work areas: the two hydraulic work areas.).

How the different ecosystems function was explained as well the different actions taken by the park in order to protect natural resources. Bird watching and monitoring indicator vegetation, such as flamingos and mangroves, the *Sporobolus robustus* used for producing Mauritanian mats), and the water lily, were accompanied with detailed explanations. At the end of the visits, we noticed the start of raised awareness and the development of an affinity for the environment as well its conservation by the pupils.

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Delivery of a programme of environmental education activities in the Diawling National Park 2017, Ziré Sbeikhat and Ziré Taghrédient Schools.

For this first mission, three activities were carried out by each institution from the 22nd to the 25th of March

2017. The first activity comprised a teaching session in the school for each institution. This first school session allowed the students to learn about the different activities of the programme, then to develop an understanding of the park's natural environment, and how to preserve it for future generations. This was achieved through the three modules given to the students in the educational booklet produced with the support of BA-CoMaB (trust funds) by the environmental education team. This is the park's biodiversity module, aiming to raise the student's awareness of biodiversity issues, and what constitutes better environmental conservation. The second module looks at techniques to fell trees, and awareness raising on the issue of deforestation and to give the younger generation an understanding of wise use and sustainable use of natural resources. And finally a module on the management of bushfires where the pupils learnt about the risks that bushfires pose to the park's activities in particular and to the wider impacts on flora and fauna in the park in general. The park's environmental educational leaflet was distributed to students during the session to improve their knowledge.

During this first visit we noticed that there had already been some work started by the Ziré Sbeikhat School on awareness-raising and learning about the environment through the setting up of a school environment club. This club encourage a selected group of pupils to discuss themes linked to the environment, to write environmental songs and to put in place awareness-raising programmes for pupils and the general population.

The activities of this visit were finished off by

Group photo from World Migratory Birds Day 2017



Site visit for pupils of Nouakchott



clean-up sessions as part of a monthly Environment Day started in the two educational establishments as part of the programme framework. The objective was to teach the pupils about cleanliness, school hygiene through cleaning of the school as well as hand-washing after each activity

To support delivery of these projects, a batch of materials was delivered to the school, including bin bags, disinfectant, tissues and detergents, wheelbarrow, shovels, rakes and brooms). At the end of this first visit, we again noted the raised awareness and positivity towards the environment and its conservation. These activities were possible thank to the financial and technical support of Gret through the project Conserve Biodiversity in Diawling National Park through Sustainable and Participative Development.

Celebration of World Migratory Bird Day in Diawling National Park

Diawling National Park took part in the celebration of World Migratory Bird Day on the 12th May 2017, in partnership with the schools of Ziré Sbeikhat and Ziré Taghrédient, both located on the edge of the park. The day was celebrated by the organisation of field visits with the students to discover and explore wetlands locally. It was also an opportunity for the students to

carry out sessions of bird watching and identification for the migratory birds that visit or stay in the natural areas of the Diawling Park.

During the outing the pupils learnt about the protection of migratory bird species, about the different migration routes, as well as the importance of the protection of their habitat for the protection of important species and for biodiversity in general.

This World Migratory Bird Day was also marked by the pupils' sketches, poems, proverbs, songs and drawings all linked to the theme of conservation of bird habitats, awareness-raising of the banning of hunting birds and stealing birds' eggs.

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Site visit to watch migratory birds and explore their habitat

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