“Inspiring birds, inspiring people”

NEWSLETTER no. 29 (March, 2018)

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Introduction:

Dear colleagues,

The first edition of our MBP-newsletter in 2018 with snowy stories from the northern part of our network and more warmer adventures from the south, we invite you all to read and disperse this in your team.
For instance about the staff of the *Grand-Lieu Lake Centre* which visited other MBP-centres during wintertime. and the stories about actions around World Wetland Day 2018.
In the meantime preparations for the school-exchange programme in our MBP-network on World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) are on the way. This year celebrated for the first time on (around) the 2nd Saturday of May and October.
This year our next Annual Meeting will take place in the nature centre **La Maison du Lac De-Grand-Lieu in France** (25th and 26th of September). You will read more about that event in our next edition.

Enjoy reading!

On behalf of the core-group "Migratory Birds for People"-network,

Audrey Cadou, Isabelle Zwick and Roelof Heringa

Check also our website: ***www.migratorybirdsforpeople.org***

MBP is also on FACEBOOK : ***www.facebook.com/migratorybirdsforpeople***

Our MISSION can also be found on: ***www.facebook.com/migratorybirdsforpeople***

P.S.: your feedback is always welcome! / vos commentaires sont toujours bienvenus!

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In order to make this newsletter more accessible, we now have put in 'hyperlinks' for your convenience. Look in the index below for the underlined item you want to read and search for the item in the document by clicking "Ctrl + Click left"

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News from the "Migratory Birds for People"- core group

Birds and Schools – connecting for World Migratory Bird Day 2018

We are working with centres to encourage school visits on and around World Migratory Birds Day (WMBD), looking at signs of birds, identifying important issues for them during their migration, and then connecting with other schools along the East Atlantic flyway by skype conference call.

We did this for the first time in 2017, and worked with seven sites, of which three joined by skype (Sweden, the Netherlands and the Basque Country, Spain) to talk about their experiences, and their shared migratory bird species. (see also our MBP-Newsletter nr. 27; June 2017)

If you would like to join, please get in touch with us at wli@wwt.org.uk **by the end of March,** or see the web page **here.**

We will be running two video conferences, one in English and one in French.

Chris Rostron, Head of WLI, WWT Slimbridge, UK

Multi-lingual guidance for wetland centres

In follow-up to the discussions in the Annual Meeting 2017 in Luxembourg, the MBP core group is working on developing guidance on how to deliver to a multi-lingual audience. Luxembourg itself is a multilingual country with four major languages used. The guidance is looking at how to use simple methods to keep language accessible, how to train staff to deal with visitors in different languages, signage/interpretation within the centre available in multiple languages, and new technology and social media methods such as QR codes, automatic translations services etc.

Kind request:
If you have any good examples of working with multilingual groups, please get in touch with Chris, we would welcome methods that you have found useful.

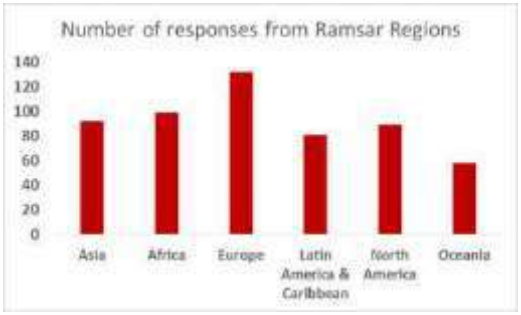
Citizen Science Survey - State of the World's Wetlands, 2017

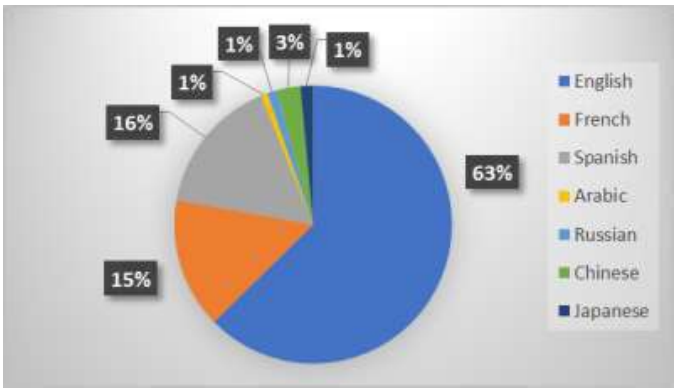
Why did we do the survey?
Wetlands across the globe are in danger: in some parts of the world wetland losses have been as high as 87% since 1700, with impacts on human wellbeing and wildlife alike. To improve our collective knowledge, and to better inform wetland policy and decision-making, WWN (World Wetland Network), SWS (Society of Wetland Scientists) and WWT (Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust) conducted a worldwide

survey to gather better knowledge on the state of wetlands from the point of view of those that live, work and spend time in and around wetlands.

Number of responses

We received a total of 541 usable responses from 92 countries to include in analyses. Over 50 responses were received for each of the six Ramsar Regions: Asia 92, Africa 99, Europe 132, Latin America & Caribbean 81, North America 89, and Oceania 58. The survey was available in an online survey monkey format (84%) as well as an excel file (16%) for those with poor internet connections.

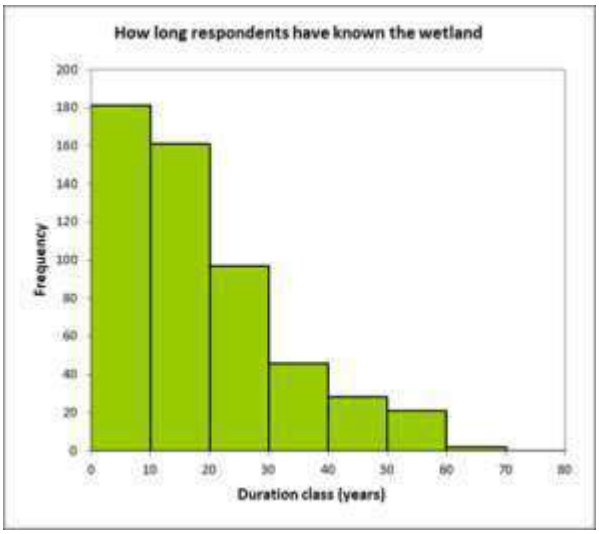




Who responded?

Survey responses came from non-governmental organisations (NGOs, 33.1%) and academia (researchers, 21.6%). National and local government were 20.4% of the total, with relatively few responses (7.1%) received from local people "on the ground" at a wetland. The survey was offered in seven languages, with responses from 63% in English, 16% Spanish, 15% French and relatively few from other languages.

Responses were received for 176 (7.7%) of all 2,290 Ramsar Sites, covering 14.4% of global Ramsar Site area. The size of wetlands reported on varied greatly. Of 509 responses for which an area was provided, 45% (227) were for wetlands of 100-10,000 ha, with a further 21% (109) of responses for wet-lands of between 10,000-100,000 ha. When asked how long the respondents had known the wetland, the maximum was 68 years and the minimum less than one year, with a mean length of 16.6 years.



What next?

Full results are being analysed by the core team and prepared for scientific journal publication in 2018, with more details of the drivers influencing wetlands globally.

We aim to showcase the full results at a side event at Ramsar COP13, October 2018 in Dubai, as well as to prepare printed information for distribution.

We plan to further improve the survey process, and run a second survey in coming years, learning from the experience of our first attempt. Possibly linked to Ramsar's 50th anniversary of signing, in 2021.

Some preliminary results on wetland state and drivers

30% of responses reported wetland as being in currently "good" state versus 24% as in "poor" state and 46% as fair. Most widespread reports of "poor" state were from Africa, Latin America & the Caribbean, and Europe. However, more wetlands were reported to

be deteriorating in state (36% of responses) than improving (21% of responses). Reported deterioration in state was particularly widespread from Latin America & the Caribbean and Africa. Of the 23 drivers reported on, three were widely considered to be positive – local community awareness, implementation of conservation management measures, and tourism.
Many other drivers were widely reported as negative, particularly urban/industrial pollution, species introduction, agricultural run-off, erosion, urban development/infrastructure, and industrial development/infrastructure. All drivers, both positive and negative, were more widely reported as increasing than decreasing.

We plan to further improve the survey process, and run a second survey in coming years, learning from the experience of our first attempt. Possibly linked to Ramsar's 50th anniversary of signing, in 2021.

For more information, contact Chris Rostron.

PROJECTS:

Life project Awareness Campaign about the relevance of wetlands for migratory birds

Update LIFE proposal (October 2017)

In recent months we have been working with new energy to a LIFE communication project. Consultation has been done with the Staatsbosbeheer Oostvaardersplassen and Staatsbosbeheer NP Biesbosch. Natuurpunt Belgium has shown a serious interest in the project just like WWT did too.

In a first skype-meeting flagship species are defined: osprey, curlew, black tailed godwit and sandwich tern. Also a first thought about communicative actions was given. Project could focus on

- use of social media
- role of wetland centres
- training of groups
- creation of ambassadors who are the first in the field to spread the messages
- Focus on local entrepreneurs, citizens, young people, hunters and farmers.
- Development small showcase and demonstration projects for well-targeted groups, especially local communities; those local projects should also contribute to (other) local threats
- Involvement of scientists and outcome of research, translated to the audience

At this moment the organisations mentioned above, are reflecting on their contribution to and their role in the project.

The aim is to submit the LIFE application in 2018 call.

Please, consider joining this exciting project and send me your interest.
For more information, please contact: Theo de Bruin; theodebruin@nlrnt.nl

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News from the network:

Finland : Liminka Bay Visitor Center

World Wetland Day was celebrated in February in snowy and cold conditions at Liminka Bay Visitor Centre.

More than thousand (!) people enjoyed snow and winter fun and learned how species survive during winter. This year we have had a proper winter with lot of snow.

Snow helps wintering species, but cold weather has also caused bird disease epidemics because big number of garden birds gather to feeding places. This winter we have had also a lot of berry eating species (e.g. Pine grosbeaks and **Bohemian waxwings**) since it was good year for rowan berries.
Now most of the berries have been eaten and birds are heading to the south.
But within a month first migratory geese and swans are expected!

Wetlands will be hot topic for this year, as we are preparing wetland simulator to our exhibition, planning wetland education for school teachers and applying large project funding for wetland education and communication.

Best regards,

Liminka Bay Visitor Center

liminganlahti@metsa.fi

Pictures activities: Metsähallitus/Jussi Riikonen

Norway: Fetsund Lenser, Nordre Øyeren wetland centre

World Wetland Day

Here at the Visitor Centre Wetland Nordre Øyeren we celebrated the World Wetland Day with outdoor activities for families and a lecture on our local nature reserve. Some examples of the activities were nature trails with wetland related questions and tasks, a large wetland themed **puzzle**, an open event for learning about tracks and tracking some of our wetland animals, a lecture about our nature reserve from a nature photographer and **a competition/quiz** for kids where the prize was an insect catching kit.

It was quite cold with quite a bit of snow and ice this day. But the sun was out and people came with families to enjoy a day out in the winter weather.

There were roughly 150 people around and inside the centre during the hours we had this event going. All in all it was a good day for us and our visitors.

Birds and feeding activity

Every Tuesday from the 30th of January until the 6th of March people can enjoy the birds on our feeding table, lend binoculars and learn more about the most common birds and what they like to eat.

Also we show them how they can contribute to the national database called www.artsobservasjoner.no by entering birds from their local neighborhood.

Latest news from Nordre Øyeren nature reserve

Despite winter, there is still open water along the main river into the delta-area and rather large areas of water are still available for the waterbirds.

Some 234 Wooper swans were counted at the 8th of January.
Mute swans, tufted ducks, mallards, common goldeneyes and goosanders are still around.
A white-tailed eagle has also been seen occasionally.

Trude and Henning Flørenes

***Russia*: CEPA-team St.Petersburg**

Wetlands for future St.Petersburg

Celebrating World Wetlands Day Baltic Fund for Nature arranged an outreach event at Zelenogorsk Youth Library. The event attracted nearly 50 participants from schools located in St.Petersburg and Leningrad region.

To learn and discuss the WWD 2018 theme, *Wetlands for a sustainable urban future*, five school teams took part in a quiz about history of St.Petersburg and major wetlands located in and around the city.

The quiz was followed by an interactive education activity aimed on learning diversity of plants, birds, mammals and other animals inhabiting wetlands within nearby wetlands.

There also was a lot of fun with wetland wildlife face painting, tying boating knots, folding and colouring the Ramsar DIY paper frogs.

Evgeny & Yulia

Sweden: Naturum Lake Tåkern

Malin Granlund Feldt (Manager and nature guide, Naturum Tåkern visitor center, Sweden)

Sweden: Naturum Getterön

This winter has been quite extraordinary because of a special bird.

The 22nd of December a Greater yellowlegs (Tringa melanoleuca) was discovered along the coast. The site was called Amundsö, in southern Gothenburg. This wader is a very rare bird and is normally found in Northern America, and this bird was just one hour from Varberg and Getterön. It was the fourth finding of the species in Sweden, the second one in the 21st century.

They have been known to disappear shortly after being discovered and many birdwatchers got worried when this bird was found right when the Christmas holidays were about to start. Luckily this bird stayed a few days and many got to see it. A fantastic Christmas gift for sure!
One day it was gone and the coast was searched from Amundö to Varberg, but no one found it.

Ten days after its leaving it was rediscovered in **Getterön's nature reserve**, but it was soon on its way again but only a few kilometers away. Since the beginning of January, it's been at Smedsgård, just south of Getterön, feeding together with curlews.

Greater yellowlegs (Photo: Mikael Johansson)

One of the reasons the Greater Yellowlegs has stayed is because of the extremely mild winter weather with temperatures above zero throughout December and January with only a few days below zero.

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The sun found its way through the clouds the 27nd of January and two northern lapwings showed up at Getterön's nature reserve that day. Finally, this year's first sign of spring!
We have just entered the second month of 2018 and now is when the winter temperatures decide to appear. The nature reserve is dressed in a white cloth and the white-tailed eagles sits on the ice watching the geese.
Luckily February is a short month, I can't wait for the real spring to arrive!

Kind regards!
Linnea Henriksson
February - 2018
Naturum Getterön

Sweden: naturum Hornborgasjön

NEW !

Introduction:
The information centre known as naturum Hornborgasjön stands on pillars in the lake at Fågeludden (the point). It was opened in 1986, when the restoration project started in earnest.

Naturum Hornborgasjön. *Photo: Länsstyrelsen Västra Götalands län*

It is situated on the eastern side of the lake, where the Billingen table mountain rises out of the water and forms the backdrop. The surrounding countryside with its many old stone walls bears witness to its ancient traditions and, in mid-May, the cherry trees fill the hills with white blossom.Naturum Hornborgasjön contains an exhibition about the history of the lake and its bird life, a beautiful slide show, a viewing tower with a lift and a souvenir shop . If you follow the foot-bridge to Fågeludden, you pass two hide-outs. If you are quiet and have a little patience, you can watch birds at very close quarters. Fågeludden is one of the very best places at the lake to watch birds. You can see grebe, ducks, coots, wading birds and

Photo: Kent-Ove Hvass

Sweden's largest colony of black-headed gulls.

Lake Hornborga

Lake Hornborga is one of Europe's most important wetlands. The lake is a paradise for resting and breeding wetland birds. Every year, the lively dance steps of the resting cranes attract huge crowds of spectators.

Sofie Stålhand & Mathilda Frey

Denmark: ***Amager, Copenhagen***

New waterways in Kalvebod Fælled - which is part of the Amager Nature reserve - brings better living conditions for the wading birds

The wading birds do have a hard time finding suitable areas to lay their nests. The Danish Ornithological Society has written a report, in which is determined that the biggest threat to the ground-nesting birds is the lack of areas with shallow water in June and the disturbance by predators. Especially fox and crows are the species looting the nests. We try to prevent this with a severe regulation of both species and by cutting down trees from where the crows can scout for the nests and cutting down bushes where the fox can move unseen.
This is an ongoing care, which we will be taking on for a lot of years to come.

In order to give the ground-nesting birds even better hatching possibilities, we want to create more areas with shallow water during the hatching period - from April till June.
There is a dam around the area of Kalvebod Fælled, which makes it impossible to establish the natural flooding of the marsh. Therefore other possibilities of flooding the area have been explored.

Our area, Naturpark Amager, is situated very close to the train connection and the highway to Sweden, which is below the groundwater level.
The water from the roadbed is pumped into a big basin just on the outskirts of the park, from where it is slowly leaking into the sea.
In this project the purpose is to lead the water from the basin and irrigate the marsh in the early summer.
The water is pumped through a pressure line and into **wide trenches** which winds through the area. *(see picture)*
The trenches are shallow and wide, so the grazing animals are able to cross them and the newly hatched waterfowl can access them to forage.

The project will be inaugurated April the 18th and we look very much forward to see, if there will be a positive development in for the wading birds.

Contact: Rune Schultz (manager Nature Center Amager)

Denmark: *Vadehavscentret, Ribe*

The first year of the new Waddensea Center – the gate to the Wadden Sea UNESCO World Heritage

Between the opening of the new centre on the 2nd of February 2017 (World Wetlands Day !) and the end of the year we had 116.000 visitors, which is more than 4 times the number we had in a normal year in the old centre.
It is good to combine good architecture with good design in the exhibitions and a good storytelling.. The main topic and the experience is, "The migratory birds the Wadden Sea".

We try to focus on the core of the storytelling about the Wadden Sea – the birds – and it works.
We created a nature exhibition with a high design and aesthetic way to look from top to bottom.
And that is the reason for our success in our first year. Journalists from all over the world write and tell the story about the New Wadden Sea centre – so every week people can read and see something about us in the media. We were in the media more than 500 times last year.

The visitors in our exhibition are very satisfied. E.g. on Google we are ranked 4,8 out of 5, and in our own survey it is the same.
What impresses me is that when I go through the exhibition I can see the visitors active. They visit the centre for 2-4 hours, they are sitting inside the exhibition and relaxing. They discuss together in their families and visitor groups and white other visitors. They understand our thinking in the use of our place.
In our room "The departure" where the bird movie is going on 560 led screens- almost like a work of art- the visitors can sit for a long time and enjoy. (**see picture**).

The microscopes are in use all the time and of course the "touch aquarium" is a top-activity for both children and adults. That will never be out of date.

Many visitors have bought a year subscription. 1019 visitors have agreed to be a member of our support group and nearly 1500 have a year card. Some of them have been here more than 10 times with new guests, These visitors are some of our very good ambassadors.

With a new centre our staff are more innovative and have new ideas all the time. They are proud and like to work here. The level of activities are every day rising and we are today a much better group, because the staff can feel that our guests like the place.

Our group activities are going from 450 activities in the old centre to more than 900 activities in 2017.
In the old centre we had 4-5 persons and today we have 12 employees plus in our staff group.
If we look outside the centre, we can say that the service sector has earned more money due to our activities. Around € 6.200.000 in accommodations and restaurants on 100.000 guests.
We are proud of that we make a difference every day and tell the story about a unique area.

Contact: Klaus Melbye Direktor Waddensea center Denmark

Germany : Nationalpark - Haus Husum

Nationalpark-Haus Husum, at the World Heritage Site Wadden Sea

Contact: Hans-Ulrich Rösner

Netherlands: Terschelling

Voluntary bird watchers wanted for Terschelling 2018 via 'Echt Terschelling'

The new breeding season is imminent and that means that it will not be long before the birdwatcher post is placed on the Noordsvaarder. The Noordsvaarder is the western part of the island where, since last year, a new bird post has been installed to protect the beach nesting birds. It is mainly the little tern and the ringed plover, but of course also all other birds that breed on this part of the island.

By **'Echt Terschelling'**, a support board for Staatsbosbeheer Terschelling, a survey was conducted on the protection of shorebirds. The panel members consist of 500 islanders and 500 non-islanders who through this forum give their opinion on all sorts of subjects concerning the nature of the island. This time it was about the protection of the beach nesting birds. Questions such as: did you know that there are birds that breed on the beach, how do you think about depositing the breeding area during the breeding season and who would want to work as a volunteer bird watcher? No less than 94 people indicated that they were interested in this last question! Islanders and non-islanders. Of course we are very happy with this and hope to be able to man the breeding area every day during the breeding season.
Following the results of this survey, unlike last year, we will mark the breeding area with a thin rope. Last year the breeding area was only deposited with signage, which resulted in visitors still entering the area.

Hopefully we can prevent this now. Furthermore, we will distribute an informative leaflet on the island and hope for a successful breeding season.
Let the breeding season begin!

Greetings from the Netherlands
Feline Zwaan en Wanda Bakker
Staatsbosbeheer Terschelling

https://www.echtterschelling.nl/

With kind regards,
Feline Zwaan
Wanda Bakker
Staatsbosbeheer Terschelling (the Netherlands)

Netherlands: *Buitencentrum "Oostvaardersplassen"*

World Wetland Day: The marsh in focus **2nd February 2018**

(a story by *Boswachter Mikal Folkertsma in Oostvaardersplassen*)

Photo: Anneke Schaap

"Inspiring birds, inspiring people"

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The 2nd of February is 'World Wetland Day'. A day for extra attention worldwide for wetlands. My first day as warden in the Oostvaardersplassen at the 1st of Sept. 2017 I had my first experience with the marsh area. My colleague Jan guide me in the canoe through the marsh. After a few hundred meters in the canoe we slid gently in another world. I felt like an intruder in this beautiful silent surroundings.

Large carp were swimming on the left and right side and also some smaller fish jumped out the water from time to time. water birds like mallards and ruddy ducks floated in their own kingdom. Around us lots of reed, but also swamp ragwort and broadleaf cattail. Slowly the vegetation became more dense and we arrived at what appeared to be a small island. Leaving the canoe I experienced that appearances are deceiving: I stood knee-deep in the mud! (**see picture**).

How it all begun.
The story of the marshland in the Oostvaardersplassen is especial. It developed spontaneous after the drainage of "Zuidelijk Flevoland". Because everyone was busy with the development of other parts of the polder, the marsh area got the change to develop. The reed, sown by small aircrafts as first step in the development, was thriving. On the mud flats pioneer plants like golden dock and swamp ragwort settled. Also birds, in some cases not seen for many decades in the Netherlands, found their way to the marsh.

The Ramsar convention.
The Oostvaardersplassen is one of the more than 40 so-called wetlands in the Netherlands. Wetlands in general are wet nature areas with an impressive ecosystem. The Oostvaardersplassen have been designated as Ramsar site in 1989.

Today, on World Wetland Day organisations worldwide seek extra attention for 'wetlands' and the protection of these sites. In the Oostvaardersplassen we will organise a special 'World Wetlands Day-marshwalk'. For more "marshwalks and other events you may have a look at our website: nieuwe moeraswandelingen.

World Migratory Bird Day 2018.
Staatsbosbeheer will team up with Foundation "Flevolandschap" and possibly "Natuurmonumenten" fort he WMBD at the 12th of May. This will take place in the framework of the collaboration in the National Park Nieuw Land. A shuttle bus will contact the several nature areas and at each location lectures and excursions will be programmed.

Contact: *Hans-Erik Kuypers*; *(warden Wetland centre)*

Netherlands: Biesbosch

Huge 'stop-over' for Godwits in the "Noordwaard".

Adjacent to "de Biesbosch" National Park lies the "Noordwaard".
Before 2015 still an intensively managed arable farming area. For water safety reasons, this area has been designated to relieve the Nieuwe-Merwede River at very high water levels.
An area of 4500 ha was redesigned. Lowered polder dikes and an intertidal area have been developed over the years into essential stopovers for waders, ducks, geese and fish.

Striking are the gigantic numbers of godwits. As you may know, 90% of black-tailed godwits in North-Western Europe are breeding in the Netherlands. Unfortunately it goes very bad with this beautiful orange-brown elegant meadow bird for various reasons. They travel to the Netherlands early in the year. They overwinter in West Africa and then spend the end of winter in Portugal. From Portugal they fly to the Netherlands in one stretch.

From a bird-eyes view "De Noordwaard" is strategically a large snack restaurant for Godwits. Due to the branches from the river, mudflats fall dry and meandering channels run through the area. This area is very rich in nutrients.

map of the northern part of the Biesbosch NP.

Birds have discovered this area in huge numbers. The first Godwits arrived at the beginning of February. In March the numbers will increase again to 2500-3000. These birds are then joined by thousands of teals, shovels, ruffs and plovers.

It is nice to see how an area that contributes to flood risk management is nevertheless indispensable nature for migratory birds.

Contact: Thomas van der Es (Warden, Staatsbosbeheer)

Luxembourg: Biodiversum Remerschen

Wintertime at the Biodiversum

The winter is not only the "slow time" for nature, but also for us in the nature center Biodiversum. Visitor numbers are low, but school classes visit us regularly and want to know what animals are doing in the wintertime. So main activities concentrate on winter behaviors and bird feeding of birds.
On the birding site, winter and harsh weather conditions often bring interesting birds: highlights of this winter were Luxembourg's 3rd Great Northern Diver, only the 6 record of Bewick's Swan and 1 Velvet Scoter. The mid-winter water bird count led to 1.279 birds of 22 species.

Bringing colors to the gray season or how to increase visitor numbers?

Johan De Crem is a famous bird and nature drawing artist who has a long tradition in collaborating with nature protection associations. His paintings are well known for showing birds in their natural habitat, choosing a very artistic approach.
Dominique Rautureau is a French sculptor who was responsible for the bird exhibition at Biodiversum. He creates bird models of wood which are painted in exact the way birds appear in nature.

Both artists showed their work in a joint exhibition in December.
In that way, we tried to get people to visit Biodiversum who normally would not do so.
Thus, combining nature and art can contribute to rise visitor number even in the low season.

Next up will be the "Week of nature books at Biodiversum", which will take place during carnival holidays and aimed on lectures and family activities.

Patric Lorgé, Isabelle Zwick
www.biodiversum.lu
biodiversum@anf.etat.lu

Belgium: Nature centre "het Zwin"

Zwin Nature Park: where the action is!
It took some time to get it started, but eventually ringing birds was back. As before, common birds like tits, robins and blackcaps, but also rare species like wryneck were caught.
But in September a very rare bird the long-tailed shrike (an Asian species) visited the Zwin area and got ringed.

During the last months we started with making 'visitor tours' in the park which was very successful.
Each holiday families could follow a route on which guides informed them about different aspects of the Zwin

habitats and species.

Of course the children could take part in different activities.

Making necklaces with peanuts, storytelling or **showing the last monstrous larvae of dragonflies** (amazing) had a great impact.

And what are these **hearts of clay**? They contain seeds of poppies and other flowering plants. In Dutch when they are in the shape of a ball, we call them 'seed bombs'. Wonder if that is also the name elsewhere?

Leo Declercq
Environmental Education
Zwin Natuur Park
www.zwin.be

"Inspiring birds, inspiring people"

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Contact: Chris Rostron

United Kingdom, Welney

Contact: Leigh Marshall

France: Baie de Somme

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Responsable d'explotation Maison de la Baie de Somme.
80230 Lancheres
Tel. +33 322 26 9393
Mobile: +33 632547881

To watch a short movie about Baie the Somme: go to: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=alsaB4qSEjw

France: La Maison du Lac De-Grand-Lieu.

Study trip on the East Atlantic Flyway

In mid-December, during the closure of the centre to the public, all the *Grand-Lieu Lake Centre* staff visited two wetland centres in the East Atlantic Flyway to share practices and experiences! The first stopover was at *La Maison de la Nature* (close to Bordeaux, France) and the second one was at the *Urdaibai Bird Center* (Basque Country) where we were warmly received by Edorta Unamuno and his colleagues. It was a very instructive moment with wonderful birdwatching!

Birdwatching at the "Maison de la nature" (France) – © La Maison du Lac

Visiting the Urdaibai Bird Center (Spain) – © La Maison du Lac

Here is the rain!

After one-year drought, the rain is back increasing the lake water level! Contrary to February 2017, the Pavilion is standing into the water this year. The Pavilion is the birdwatching place of the centre.

Grand-Lieu Lake November 2017 – © La Maison du lac

Grand-Lieu Lake February 2018 – © La Maison du lac

World Wetlands Day

For World Wetlands day, the centre organises diverse activities (workshops, exhibitions, field trips and conferences) with local organisations during February. Although not usually permitted, people can go boating on the lake with wildlife managers of the nature reserves joined by professional fishermen.

For any information, please send your mails to a.cadou@maisondulacdegrandlieu.com

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Rejoignez-nous sur Facebook

Spain: Urdaibai Bird Center

Second attempt to locate Cousteau in Senegal. Chapter 2.

"Cousteau"

Cousteau is one of the ospreys which were released in the Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve. He was tagged with a satellite device which sends a signal at regular intervals and allows us to know his exact position. In September 2016, Cousteau migrated to the Senegalese region of Casamance and he has remained there ever since. Last year we went to his favorite location to observe him in situ. Sadly, however, our attempts resulted in failure. This was due to the fact that Cousteau moved from his customary wintering grounds just one week before our arrival.
Last autumn, Aitor Galarza made another trip to Senegal in the hope that he would be able to locate our osprey, get to know the area which he inhabits and also take photos and videos of him. This is a chronicle of part of his journey.

Sunday 19 November

Knowing that procedures are often lengthy at the border crossing into Gambia, I arrived at the Karang checkpoint first thing in the morning. I then made my way to Barra to catch the ferry which would take me across the mouth of the River Gambia and on to the capital, Banjul. I was planning a quick journey to Jiboro, a checkpoint next to the Senegalese region of Casamance. Despite the fact that there are only 100km between the two points, I was obliged to stop at 8 different police controls. To my surprise, I was only asked for "a financial contribution to the police" at one of them. My previous experiences had required numerous donations!

At the mouth of Gambia River

Having crossed the border, I headed south on the road to Ziguinchor in Casamance. The area had been in the headlines of late, as four Spanish tourists had been attacked there. This is highly unusual as the area is generally calm and peaceful. It is, however, under the strict control of the Senegalese army.

Mosque next to the road

I soon reached Baila, a small village next to a vast area which is flooded by the River Casamance. Roy Dennis had informed me that an adult osprey, Azul DF, had frequented the area but that its satellite device had stopped emitting a signal. Acting on Roy´s request, I tried to locate this individual. Exploring the zone, I did spot an osprey in the distance but I was unable to see whether it was ringed or carried a device due to the intense heat shimmer. The temperature was around 35º.

The wintering area of Cousteau

Having had no luck locating Azul DF, I continued my journey south. I had set my heart on finding Cousteau and I was going to start my search in the area which had been indicated by the Argos satellite. After passing through Bignona, I drove down an extremely bumpy dirt track, which, much to my surprise, was full of small buses laden with people and goods. The track ran through a wetland which was surrounded by a wooded landscape. On the way I had the pleasure of photographing a sacred ibis (Threskiornis aethiopicus) which was fishing and some hooded vultures (Necrosyrtes monachus) which had been attracted by carrion.

African sacred ibis

Hooded Vulture

I finally arrived in Koubalan, a village situated on the edge of the marsh. It was there that I hoped to locate Cousteau. I parked the car and took a look around.

Koubalan

In the evening light the landscape was spectacular. The huge intertidal zone was dotted with mangroves and several dry trees. Around it were palms and other larger trees. As there was no sign of any ospreys, I crossed the marsh by car and then I ventured further in on foot, walking along a dyke. This dyke isolated the rice fields from the tidal flow and created an excellent habitat for waders, heron and other water birds. Of particular interest were the black crowned crane (Balearica pavonina) and a flock of spur-winged geese (Plectropterus gambensis).

The sun was going down, which made it difficult to see but I could just make out an osprey perched on a trunk on the other bank.

Spur-winged goose and Ruffs next to the rice field

My heart skipped a beat! Even in the poor light I could see that the ring it wore was surely yellow! Time was running out. Soon it would be dark. In the distance, drums began to sound. I drove back to Koubalan in order to get to the nearest part of the riverbank as quickly as possible. However, this was a serious mistake. As soon as I got out of the car I was surrounded by a swarm of children shouting "Lulu" ("White man" in the Diola language).

By the time I managed escape from them and get down to the water´s edge, the ringed osprey had disappeared. It was getting late so I decided to take the main road back to Ziguinchor and look for accommodation. There my luck took a turn for the better. On my arrival, I attended a local dance performance which was led by the Naisse, one of the three masked dancers in the Diola culture.

Edorta Unamuno (Urdaibai Bird Center)

Please have also a look at the webcam of Urdaibai
Perhaps you can connect it to one screen in your centre.:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=XQiAZv5f5M8

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Spain: Ebro Delta

Contact: Xavier Escuté

Spain: las Salinas y Arenales de San Pedro del Pinatar

HOW TO COPE WITH THE COLD IN THE SALTFLATS?

The temperature of the water in the salt flats of San Pedro is much lower than that of the sea during the winter. In order not to get too cold, the animals that live in the salt water have their little tricks.

The Spanish tooth carp is an endemic fish of the Spanish Mediterranean in danger of extinction. It has a short and intense life, growing very rapidly and ready to reproduce in just a few months. However, its reproduction requires such a big effort that not many individuals see their first winter.
The survivors spend the hard winter keeping their movements to a minimum in order to survive until the next spring brings abundant new food.

For the aquatic birds like flamingos, avocets or storks, their feet and beaks are not covered by feathers. Because of this, when the cold arrives, they can be seen with a single foot in the muddy ground whilst keeping the other next to their beak, in the shelter of their feather, thus avoiding as much as possible any loss of heat.

"Inspiring birds, inspiring people"

NEWSLETTER no. 29 (March, 2018)

Springtime life erupts!

The heavy rains of last winter have resulted in a spring full of live in the Regional Park of the Saltpans of San Pedro

The spring of 2017 was full of colour in every corner of Murcia. In the Regional Park of San Pedro's visitor centre the artificial freshwater pond was completely full, bringing the saltflat birds to come and drink and groom their plumage.

During the months of April and May, with the start of the breeding season, a pair of mallards settled in, as well as a pair of stone curlew and more than ten pairs of stilts! All found a peaceful spot in which to expand their families.

Thanks to the hides around the pond, it was possible to see the first steps of the many chicks, which in just 30 days started to fly off to the saltflats of San Pedro.

Stone curlews and their chicks

Mallards and their ducklings

Stilts and their offspring

Contact : Teresa López Aledo, Dirección General de Medio Ambiente -Consejería de Presidencia de la Región de Murcia

Portugal : Tagus Estuary Birdwatching and Conservation Area

Contact: Sandra Paiva Silva

"Inspiring birds, inspiring people"

NEWSLETTER no. 29 (March, 2018)

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Parc National Djoudj, Senegal

Gabin Agblonon
Project manager
Wetlands International Africa

Bijagós Archipelago, Guinea-Bissau

Contact: Mr Meio Dia, coordinator of Reserva da Biosfera do Arquipélago de Bolama Bijagós

Other MBP- network news

News from our MBP-partner EUROSITE:

The European Commission's public consultation on the Pollinators Initiative

Animal pollination is a vital process in nature and is essential for our food production. In Europe pollinators are primarily insects like bees, hoverflies, butterflies, moths and beetles. Some of these species are domesticated, like for example honey bees.

Despite taken measures, in 2015 the mid-term review of the EU biodiversity strategy to 2020 showed that animal pollination services might be significantly decreasing in the EU.
The Council also stressed the need to protect pollinators and their habitats in order to mitigate and stop their decline. The need for a strategic intervention across different sectors was highlighted in the first global assessment of pollinators issued by the IPBES.

In December 2016 the Convention on Biological Diversity endorsed its conclusions and highlighted the important contribution of pollinators to the Sustainable Development Goals.

That action needs to be taken is also of importance for our birds. Forming a main food source, especially migratory birds rely on insects as a source of fuel for their long flights.
For many species, insects are a primary diet.

In order to preserve pollinators, and thus our birds, all individuals and organisations are invited to respond to the European Commission's public consultation on the **Pollinators Initiative**.
The consultation aims to collect views on the decline of pollinators in order to inform the development of the Initiative.
The deadline for responding to the consultation is 5 April 2018.

Please find the consultation **here.**

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Eurosite

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"Migratory Birds for People" certificate

The core group has a certificate available by which the participating visitor centre can show that they are a member of the `Migratory Birds for People`- network.

This certificate can be obtained for free.

Just write an email to **r.b.heringa@gmail.com** and we will send you a certificate.

Ce certificat peut encore être obtenu gratuitement.
Il suffit d'écrire un courriel à **r.b.heringa@gmail.com** *et nous vous enverrons un certificat.*

"Migratory Birds for People" T-shirt and Mug can still be ordered!

We have created our own MBP-t-shirt. (price: approx.. € 10,= / excl. mailing costs)

Please let me know if you are interested and send me your details about number and size .
You could also obtain your own MBP-mug.
The price of this item is: € 5,= (excl. mailing costs)

Send your message to:
r.b.heringa@gmail.com

The team of the Urdaibai Center wearing our MBP-T-shirt with pride!

Watching breeding birds?

Click on the link to webcams of "Vogelbescherming Nederland" (= Dutch Society for the Protection of Birds):

www.vogelbescherming.nl/beleefdelente

Supplement:

MBP
Migratory Birds for People
Participating wetland centres
(January 2018):
1. Finland: Liminganlahti
2. Russia : St. Petersburg [CEPA-team]
3. Sweden: Lake Tåkern
4. Sweden: Getterön
5. Norway: Nordre Øyeren
6. Denmark: Vestamager
7. Denmark: Vadehavscentret Ribe
8. Germany: Husum (Wadden Sea)
9. Netherlands: Terschelling (Wadden Sea)
10. Netherlands: Oostvaardersplassen
11. Belgium: Het Zwin
12. Belgium: Uitkerkse Polder
13. United Kingdom: WWT, HQ, Slimbridge
14. United Kingdom: Welney
15. France: Baie de Somme
16. Luxembourg: Haff Réimech
17. France: Camargue Gardoise
18. Spain: Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve
19. Spain: Aiguamolls de L'Emporda
20. Spain: Ebro Delta
21. Spain: Las Salinas de San Pedro
22. Portugal: Tagus Estuary Birdwatching and Conservation Area
23. Mauritania: Banc d'Arguin
24. Senegal: Parc National Djoudj
25. Guinea Bissau Bijagós Archipelago
26. Netherlands: De Biesbosch National Park - Biesbosch visitor centres
27. France: Maison du Lac de Grand-Lieu
28. Sweden: Hornborgasjön

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