



WLI is recognised as a key implementer of the Ramsar CEPA programme

WLI Annual Report, 2011





WLI is recognised as a key implementer of the Ramsar CEPA programme

Contents:

Section	Subject	Page
1.	Introduction	p. 3
2.	Resources	p. 4
2.1	Pilot distance learning course	
2.2	Materials	
2.3	Virtual lectures	
2.4	Regular updates and news	
3.	Priority themes	
4.	Regions	
4.1	Europe	
4.2	Asia-Oceania	
4.3	The Americas	
4.4	Africa	
5.	Future planning	





WLI is recognised as a key implementer of the Ramsar CEPA programme

Introduction



2011 represented a big year for WLI, the 20th anniversary since starting in 1991. It seems a landmark occasion, and a chance to look at what WLI has achieved over the past two decades. Although the WLI programme has had periods of little funding, it has managed to survive and is now flourishing, with a full-time project manager based at WWT, UK, and an active set of over 300 members, as well as regional steering groups and new initiatives, that are keeping the network an exciting place to be.

Looking back at the original launch 20 years ago, we still have most of the original members active and involved – the Hunter Wetland Centre, Australia, the Pointe-a-Pierre wetland centre, Trinidad and Tobago and the Mai Po Marshes Education centre to name a few. It's a good sign that our members are still going strong and still committed to the network. In addition, we have many new members, and new initiatives starting up such as the Migratory Birds for People Programme, a WLI Russia network, and active partners in the Neotropics and Africa, regions which were formerly less well represented.

This report gives a flavour of what's been happening across the network over 2011, and we hope that you find it stimulating reading. Please feel free to pass it on to other wetland centres and colleagues, we welcome new members and hope to provide a tool that will support those working in wetland education centres. After all, inspiring and educating our future wetland conservationists is one of the most important jobs around.

Best wishes,

Chris Rostron,
Head of WLI



2. Resources

2.1 Pilot distance learning course.

Working with partners from academic and conservation organisations across the UK, we have helped to produce the first distance learning course for site-based conservationists. The pilot course aims to allow those that work at both wetland and other sites delivering education activities to develop their abilities and knowledge. Working through London South Bank University allowed us to build on their existing Masters course on sustainability, producing a masters-level course with modules including the principles of learning, conservation marketing messages, and educators as agents of change. This pilot was attended by 12 students, and was seen as very helpful for developing their capacity, as well as testing the robustness of the course. We are working amongst the partners to find funding to run the course again.



2.2 Materials

A celebratory leaflet was designed to mark the 20th Anniversary, but also to provide an attractive and accessible document to communicate what WLI is, and how wetland centres deliver valuable outcomes. The leaflet has a tailor-made design, from a local artist near WWT, and is available in English, French and Spanish (Chinese and Russian are to follow!) The leaflet folds out to make an eye-catching poster to display in your centre. Contact us if you would like one in the post, or it can be downloaded from our [website](#).



WLI is recognised as a key implementer of the Ramsar CEPA programme



Rob Shore, WWT, gives online lecture

2.3 Virtual lectures

WLI was approached by the Pakistan Wetlands Project to offer support for a new MSc course in Wetland Conservation, the first to be delivered in Pakistan, and run through a partnership between WWF and the University of Lahore (UVAS). We were keen to support our colleagues, but aware that the skype link between us is not always good enough to deliver a 45 minute lecture. The solution was for WWT staff to pre-record the lectures, and send them to be used during the lecture. The WLI Manager was then on hand to answer

questions at the end of the lectures, providing an interactive session for the students.

Najam al Huda-Kahn said: 'Having these pre-recorded lectures has really added value to the Masters course, giving students a much better idea of how wetlands function, and examples from across the world.'

2.4 Regular updates and news

The website is regularly update with resources and materials, and we provide a monthly update introducing new members, projects at WLI partners, and news of international news through Ramsar and WLI global. We also produce a twice-yearly newsletter, with more in-depth articles on what the WLI partners are doing and WLI progress generally.

We have also started to use Facebook, and now use an e-mail distribution tool to make our communications look and feel more professional (reflecting the content, of course!) We hope to develop our use of social media over the coming year.



Benin Environmental Education Society



WLI is recognised as a key implementer of the Ramsar CEPA programme

3. Priority themes



Khakassky cranes, Russia

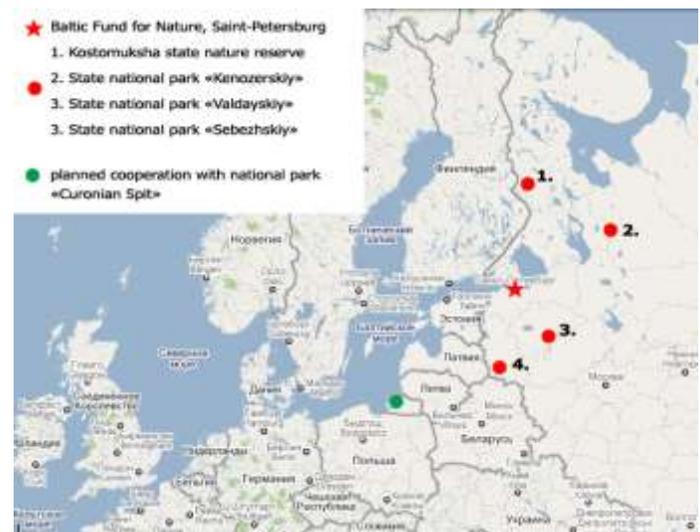
As usual we have provided updates on the key themes for WLI, and offer guidance to how you can use them at your wetland centre. The priority themes are still **climate change**, **migratory birds**, **invasive species** and **wise use of wetlands**. With a range of international issue days (World Wetland Day, World Migratory Birds Day) and a host of materials available online, this aims to give a reminder of how the materials can be used. WLI members also send us stories and pictures of their activities, which add to the website, showing good-practice examples of their work.

4. Regions

4.1 Europe

Migratory Birds for People programme remains our key approach to link European wetland centres along the East Atlantic flyway. The group has been very active this year, with 13 partners and a meeting hosted at Aiguamolls de L'Emporda to plan the work between partners. The group worked together to plan for a LIFE funding bid, and used the time to share experiences of working at wetland sites.

Regular MBP updates were produced, thanks to our enthusiastic Dutch colleagues from Staatsbosbeheer, showing what each of the partners has been doing on site. We also held quarterly skype meetings, keeping regular communication between us, and held a second planning meeting in Brussels. We successfully made contact with colleagues in Africa through our Wetlands International partners, and now have three new wetland centres added to the network in Senegal, Mauritania and Guinea-Bissau.





WLI is recognised as a key implementer of the Ramsar CEPA programme



Theo de Bruin, MBP planning

WLI Russia. The network continues to grow and be more active, and planning for a meeting resulted in a video conference with partners across 4 locations in Russia, as well as representatives from the Ramsar Secretariat, involving around 30 people. The conference call was a great opportunity to find out what each of the partners was doing, and plan for future work. We also supported Wetlands International Russia to put in a successful bid to grow the WLI network and to develop a CEPA action plan for Western Russia. This will be delivered over 2012-13, involving workshops, development of materials and engagement with the Russian government to produce the CEPA plan.

4.2 Asia-Oceania

Work with partners in Asia and Oceania on a bid to create new posts, develop materials and hold a training meeting was unsuccessful, but underlined the need

for more support in the regions. Colleagues in Mai Po wetlands, Hong Kong, held several exchange visits, and further developed their work with wetland centres in South China, and we continue to have regular Skype meetings.

4.3 The Americas

Regular skype meetings continued in North America, with planning for a network-development meeting. Funding efforts have not been successful so far, but the group is still keen to develop the wetland centre network.

In the Neotropics, we have had increased contact with partners, including new partners, and contact with Birdlife Americas and the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network. We are also working with the Fundacion Kennedy, planning exchange visits with staff and students, and supporting them to plan for a WLI Neotropics regional meeting in the near future.

4.4 Africa

As mentioned in the MBP update above, we have had some new members from West Africa, working through Wetlands International West Africa. Our partners worked on a Darwin bid together, and although this was not successful, we plan to continue efforts to fund-raise for improving linkages with and capacity of the wetland centres.



Chami education centre, Banc d'Arguin, Mauritania



WLI is recognised as a key implementer of the Ramsar CEPA programme

6. Future planning

Much of our work is ongoing and we are fortunate to have active and committed partners across the world. Our key areas for work next year include the following:

- Attending the Ramsar COP meeting in July 2012, and hosting a side event for WLI.
- Developing links in South America to plan for an expansion of the network, and a regional conference within the next two years.
- Pressure to continue the distance learning master course with partners, and extend it to an international audience.
- Continuing work with the Migratory Birds for People partnership to find funding for a major project across the network.
- Develop the wetland centre exchange programme, encouraging partners to arrange for visits either to advice or learn from their colleagues at different sites.

7. Contacts

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

