



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

# WLI Annual Report, 2012

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## 1. Introduction

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For many of us, 2012 was a year to remember as one of scarce resources and feeling the impacts of the global economic crisis. We have been facing tough challenges in finding resources, whilst still trying to deliver our work as well as we can, and there has been a lot of activity across the WLI network, including 23 new members joining this year.

It was the year of the 11<sup>th</sup> Ramsar Conference of the Parties, offering an opportunity to meet with existing colleagues and make new contacts. It was a good chance to take part in

discussions around wetland conservation in general, and for wetland CEPA in particular. WLI attended the conference and played an active role, with a side-event on wetland centres and flyway projects, an information stand and engagement during the plenary.

2012 was also a year for planning. We have set in train a lot of actions that will lead to conferences and events in 2013; we hope that these will take place in Asia, North and South America, Russia and Europe. Despite the dearth of resources, we have still been actively communicating with our lead representatives in each continent, and we owe a lot to their continued support and enthusiasm. We are also still actively developing regional projects through our Migratory Birds for People Programme (Europe and West Africa), with Wetlands International in Russia; through WLI Asia; and through our Chilean partners, the Fundación Kennedy, in the Neotropics.

Finally, our new website has now taken shape, with additional pages available in Chinese and Russian, and new resources such as our wetland information sheets, image library and regional pages. We thank our many members, partners and volunteers who have helped make 2012 a fruitful year, and look forward to continuing to work with you.

Best regards,

Chris Rostron,  
Head of WLI



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## 2. Resources

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### 2.1 WLI information sheets.



Smolensk Students, Russia

After requests by many partners for information on several core wetland centre activities, we decided that it would be useful to produce a set of information sheets to offer guidance in a short, easy to digest format. The sheets act as a 'taster' to activities that have been successfully delivered by partners in the network, starting with those at WWT. These information sheets are available in English, French and Spanish, and can be downloaded from the resources pages of the website. The first four include wetland treatment systems, master planning for wetland centres, engaging the public in captive breeding projects, and analysing your visitor characteristics. We plan to produce more in 2013.

### 2.2 WLI web pages

We have moved the WLI site to a new, public access-based web page called WordPress, which allows us much greater flexibility in how we manage the site.

We have also spent some time updating partner profiles, and the content of the site, so we hope that it is much more useful. As WLI works through regional contacts and networks, and so we have created regional WLI web pages to allow access to regional partners/members, host regional initiatives, and post regional news. These act as a portal for WLI members to find out who is doing what in their areas.

We have also increased the amount of documents available in French and Spanish, and have provided training to some of our Chinese and Russian partners to increase the amount of content available in simplified Chinese and Russia. We hope that this will become more and more accessible as they progress.

### 2.3 Image library

A new image library tool has been added to the website, offering images across a range of subjects (people, visitor centres, species and habitat) that can be downloaded and used for 'non-profit' purposes in your wetland centres. So, if you need images for publications, displays or your websites, then these could be just the thing for you. We would welcome new additions, so please do send us any images that you think other people might find useful.



World Wetlands Day, Evros Delta, cr: Eva Stets



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## 2.4 Regular updates and news

As usual, we have been updating the website with news on a monthly basis, with reports from partners, lists of new members, and regional and international news that our members might find useful. We have also been through all our membership forms and asked for updates and amendments, as well as removing those members that are no longer active.

We are continuing to use Facebook, and our membership is growing – if you use Facebook, please do make contact. As we've discovered, it's a great tool to share pictures, websites and news items with a wide range of people. We have also started to use Twitter, which allows us to update on daily activities and news items.



Ramsar COP11, Bucharest

## 3. Ramsar and WLI

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WLI is recognised as a key delivery mechanism for CEPA at wetland sites, and mentioned in the resolution X.8 as well as through an MoC (Memorandum of Cooperation) with the Ramsar convention on wetlands. This year, COP11 (the 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Ramsar contracting parties) took place in Bucharest, Romania. The WLI Team

attended, and had an information stall at the conference, ran a side event on 'wetland centres and flyways' and took part in the plenary sessions.

It was a great opportunity to meet up with fellow wetland CEPA colleagues from across the globe, to catch up on joint initiatives that we are working on, and to feed in to discussions on plans for the next three years of the Ramsar convention's activities. The WLI manager also attended a meeting of the CEPA oversight panel, and has been put forward to sit on the panel from 2013.

## 4. Priority themes

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Our priority themes remain as follows: wise use of wetlands; climate change; endangered species; and invasive species. Information is available on our website, and we also send out reminders when international wetland-related events and dates occur such as World Wetlands Day and World Environment Day. The themes aim to be relevant to all of the member centres, and act as a support to help get these vital messages out to visitors and the general public. For pictures and stories from our members, take a look at the website.



Cattle egrets, Hong Kong Wetland Park



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## 5. Regions



MBP group at Uitkerkse Polder

### 5.1 Europe

The Migratory Birds for People programme remains our key approach to link European wetland centres along the East Atlantic flyway, with an active core group taking a lead. We held a face-to-face meeting at the beginning of 2012 in Belgium, at Natuurpunt's Uitkerkse polder wetland centre, planning for the year and visiting some sites with our partners. We also held monthly skype meetings, and a face-to-face planning meeting with the core group at EuroSite's meeting in Genk, Belgium. Our

focus remains to support exchange of information between centres and to promote joint project working, and we are planning some more funding bids

to develop this.

The WLI Russia network continues to grow and be more active through work with Wetlands International and their Matra funded project, which is strengthening the network of wetland centres, developing new CEPA tools, and creating a CEPA Action Plan for Western Russia. We have continued to meet via skype, whilst our colleagues deliver projects at wetland centres. The WLI manager will attend a workshop in St Petersburg and a conference in Moscow in early 2013.

The WLI manager also attended the MedWet meeting in Agadir in early 2012, marking 20 years of the MedWet regional Ramsar initiative around the Mediterranean. We had a display and took part in discussions about the role of wetland education in the region, particularly working through the wetland NGO sector.



BFN guided walk, St Petersburg

### 5.2 Asia-Oceania

Close contact has been maintained with our colleagues in Asia and Oceania. Hong Kong Wetland Park and Mai Po continue to be active lead contacts, as do colleagues in South Korea and Singapore, and we have been planning the 4<sup>th</sup> WLI Asia conference, to be held in Suncheon, South Korea, in April 2013. This will take place at the newly developed wetland centre, which was supported by WWT Consulting and by visits to the London Wetland Centre by the architect team.



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Denise Crosbie of Cockburn Wetland Centre, Australia, visits NCC Bangladesh

We have also expanded links with the East Asia Australasia Flyway Partnership (EAAFP), through a workshop at the Ramsar COP, and with the Communications Officer of EAAFP now on our WLI Asia steering group. WLI is also mentioned in the EAAFP CEPA strategy, and is actively working with us to help prepare the WLI Asia Conference.

We have developed more pages in Chinese on our website, to allow access to those centres that are rapidly developing in China. Exchange visits have also taken place between partners in Hong Kong, China, Taiwan and South Korea, and regular stories from our Asian colleagues are uploaded to the website.

In Oceania we maintain contact via our lead partners, the Hunter Wetlands Centre, Australia. Cockburn Wetland Centre (Australia) took part in an exchange visit with the Nature Conservation Commission in Bangladesh, an illuminating trip to share best practice and offer advice.

### 5.3 The Americas

North America has seen the working group meet several times, and agree to hold a WLI North America conference in late 2013, at the Oak Hammock Marsh wetland centre in Manitoba, Canada. The conference will aim to attract those people working at wetland centres and in wider wetland networks, in a forum to discuss the best ways of linking wetland education to positive outcomes for wetlands and their wildlife. The WLI manager also presented WLI at the US Ramsar Committee via skype.



Oak Hammock Marsh Centre, Canada

Working through our partners in Chile, at the Fundación Kennedy, we are also planning a conference on a similar theme in South

America. A partnership with the Fundación and a local university, the Universidad Chileno-Britannico de Cultura (UCBC), saw two colleagues visit WWT Slimbridge, UK, for a month helping to prepare for the Ramsar COP, build the network in South America and translate resources into Spanish. The UCBC will also play a role in the forthcoming conference.





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## 5.4 Africa



Mangrove education in Benin

Africa remains one of our less well-developed networks, apart from activity with partners through the MBP project in West Africa. The three centres on the coast of West Africa in Mauritania, Senegal and Guinea Bissau have now completed membership profiles, and we are working closely with Wetlands International West Africa. However, we hope that activities with partners in MBP will lead to further development in the region.

## 6. Future planning for 2013

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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:

- Developing regional conferences through our partners in South America, Russia, Asia and North America.
- Continuing work with the Migratory Birds for People partnership to find funding for a major project across the network.
- Creating a new WLI steering group of relevant people to guide and monitor the programme.
- Making better use of the social networking tools such as facebook and twitter.



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## 7. Contacts

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

