



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



WLI Annual Report, 2016



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1. Introduction

Dear WLI Colleague,



2016 has been a great year for partnership working, and WLI and our members have been involved in a huge range of projects across the globe. The interest in delivering education and engagement through site-based projects is always growing and whenever we talk about the wetland centre approach, we get very positive feedback. With the flyway approach becoming more popular with our members, it's also a good time to think about how we can connect centres; a recent survey showed that most of those asked would like to visit other centres to learn about how they do things.

This annual report is shorter and more succinct than previous versions, aiming to give a snapshot of the highlights of 2017, without going into too much detail. If you would like more information, please do visit our [website](#) where stories from the last year are still available.

Best regards,

Martin Spray, CBE
CEO Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust



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Vital statistics for 2016:

Number of members: 321

Number of countries with WLI members: 82

Number of visits to the WLI website: 10,434

Number of Facebook followers: 881

Carbon footprint of the WLI manager: 64 tonnes (representing 42,433 miles)

Hours of skype discussions: 250



Europe and Africa, Migratory Birds for People

The East Atlantic Flyway network for WLI, MBP, was very active this year and we have produced materials and activities as well as attending international meetings in both Europe and Africa. Our Dutch colleague continues to produce the excellent MBP newsletter and we held an annual meeting hosted at Amager wetland centre, Copenhagen, Denmark. The head of WLI also attended the Pan African Ornithological Congress (PAOC) in Senegal and delivered a workshop and round table discussion on wetland centres and CEPA. This was a great opportunity

to meet and spend time with our African colleagues, and make more contacts particularly at the regional network level. For more information, see the MBP website at www.migratorybirdsforpeople.org.

Participants of MBP in Copenhagen

WLI Russia was not so active this year, although we have built the numbers of partners, particularly through communication via their protected sites network. We also worked closely with partners at the Baltic Fund for Nature as part of the Flight of the Swans project (see below).



Abdoulaye Ndiaye and Chris Rostron at the PAOC



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Sacha Dench in the field

Flight of the Swans was a cross-departmental project at WWT, supporting the ambitious flight of Sacha Dench by paramotor along the northern European Bewick's swan flyway. The Bewick's swan population has decreased by 50% in the last 20 years, and this was a chance to use publicity associated with the adventurous Ms Dench to generate meetings, events and scientific gatherings along the route. WLI members were keen to take part and organise events at wetland centres and with local stakeholders, and we made contact with new wetland centre members too.

The outcomes included meetings between conservationists and hunters, production of a community toolkit and resources to support events, and an agreement between recreational paramotorists and wetland site managers to establish a no-fly zone during important periods for migratory birds.

The Americas

The planning group was active during 2016, and we made the decision to merge WLI North and South America, to try to highlight the flyway link between them. This has led to more work with WHSRN (Western Hemispheric Shorebird Reserve Network) which has been useful. We are also indebted to our colleagues at ASWM (the US Association of State Wetland Managers) who continue to support us. They allowed us to hold a webinar at the end of 2016 with around 200 participants, on the subject of engaging local stakeholders on site.



Detail from Americas webinar presentation, Laura Chamberlain

Asia / Oceania



Mr Suh and Chris Rostron sign MoU

WLI global now has an official MoU with the Ramsar Regional centre East Asia (RRC-EA) signed in early 2016, who are taking a lead on the WLI Asia initiative. Their headquarters in Suncheon, Republic of Korea, are growing with new communications and networking staff, who will further support the development of WLI Asia. We continue to work with the EAAFP (East Asia Australasia Flyway Partnership), Wetlands International China, and key local wetland centres from across the region.

The head of WLI attended the 10th INTECOL meeting in China, using the opportunity to meet with the Chinese State Forestry



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Colleagues, present the WLI and wetland centre approach to a new audience, and improve contacts with other partners such as WWF, Wetlands International and members of the Ramsar secretariat.

Communications

As usual we continue to produce monthly news updates and twice yearly bulletins featuring wetlands centre-related stories. The web page continues to attract good numbers of views (insert figure) but is now starting to look a little dated. Work has begun on canvassing members of WLI for their opinions on the site, how we can improve it and what content should be included. We aim to overhaul the site in early 2016.

Member survey. 50 members responded to our survey to tell us what they thought of WLI, with 48% NGO, 38% as governmental and 16% privately owned. 29 responses came in English, 11 in Spanish and 10 in French, indicating that we still need to improve our support to languages other than English. Around 40% said they visited the website monthly, but comments included keeping the different language up to date, and more rigour in ensuring articles were proof read properly.

The key findings were that most members that replied were satisfied with the amount of communication and areas of support that WLI provides. When asked what they would like in the future, most said the opportunity to visit each other and attend conferences, and more materials relevant to delivery of CEPA activities on site. Interestingly, not many were interested in online training and capacity building.



Polistovsky Centre, Russia

WLI staff capacity



Abdallah Khazene, Conference, Oxford

WLI relies heavily on its regional steering groups, who play a key role in supporting delivery of the network across the work. The MBP group, WLI Americas and WLI Asia groups are crucial in supporting activity across the networks.

In the WLI office in Slimbridge, an intern programme was launched, and resulted in our first WLI intern being recruited from Algeria. Abdallah Khazene brings experience of working with local communities on wetland projects, and also speak French and Arabic to help us to develop the network in North and West Africa and the Middle East. We also have several WLI volunteers that help regularly with a range of activities too.



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6. Contacts

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

