"Inspiring birds, inspiring people"

"Migratory Birds for People" - NEWSLETTER no. 36 (March, 2020)

"Inspiring birds, inspiring people"

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Introduction:

In February World Wetlands Day has been celebrated again at several wetland- centres in our MBP-network. Some of their stories are in this edition.
Also three stories about gathering plastic waste in the Biesbosch NP (Netherlands), in the Kalissaye Ornithological Reserve (Senegal) and in Reserva Natural Integral do Ilhéu dos Pássaros (Angola).

Since then, much of the flyway has been disrupted as people, organisations, and governments change their plans in order to fight off the new coronavirus, COVID-19. Many MBP members are now working from home, and we wish them health and peace. We are adjusting some of our plans accordingly, postponing some plans for gatherings and schools events until later in the year. However we can still work online!

From the start of our MBP-network, we have strived to have a network of associated wetland centres along the whole East- Atlantic Flyway, on the European continent as well as on the African continent.
This year we aim to have the number of wetland centres more in balance between the two continents.
To underline this intention we will have our Annual Meeting 2020 in October for the first time in Africa!
We also have the pleasure **to welcome 4 new African partners** in our MBP-network!

In this edition we also present some stories regarding results of migration studies.

Enjoy reading!

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

Audrey Cadou and Roelof Heringa (editor team)

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!

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In order to make this newsletter more accessible, we 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

MBP-ANNUAL MEETING IN 2020. (*message Febr. 2020*)

The MBP West Africa group has been working to prepare for the next MBP Annual Meeting which will take place at the Saloum wetland, Senegal,

from the **5th to the 9th of October 2020**.

We are currently approaching partners in Senegal and looking for funding support.
The event aims to have around 30 people attending, with 15 from across Africa and 15 from our European partners.
If you are still planning on attending, please let us know! Contact Chris Rostron (Head of WLI) or Ibrahim Hama (WI Africa) for more information.

Search for MBP-partners in West-Africa

The core MBP committee has concluded that there is still an imbalance in the number of partners between the two continents Africa and Europe along the East-Atlantic Flyway. This is an undesirable situation and we hope that we can improve this in the coming year.
Because the MBP network is a network of cooperating visitor centres in wetlands, it is desirable that some form of education centre be present at the site, which could include buildings, signage and access trails or boardwalks (along with staff that help inform and guide visitors, of course).

In addition, the site should be important for migratory wetland birds on the flyway, preferably designated under the **Ramsar Convention** or similar. The **Ramsar** Convention encourages the designation of sites containing representative, rare or unique wetlands, or wetlands support critical populations of wild birds or other wetland biodiversity. Once designated, these sites are added to the Convention's List of Wetlands of International **Importance** and become known as **Ramsar** sites. One of the programmes under Ramsar applies specifically to the information centres in wetlands: the CEPA programme.

The Ramsar Convention's Programme on communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA), was adopted through Resolution XII.9 at COP12 in 2015.

The Convention's CEPA Programme encourages the establishment of Wetland Education Centres, recognising their value in promoting the Ramsar principles of wetland conservation and wise use.

Wetland centres across the world connect people with nature and raise their awareness of wetland values and sustainable lifestyles. They range from high-tech centres designed to welcome significant numbers of visitors, to simple, non-staffed centres giving small numbers of people a limited but effective wetland CEPA experience. (https://www.ramsar.org/activity/the-ramsar-cepa-programme)

The CEPA Programme identifies the global Wetland Link International (WLI) network of centres as an effective network to link centres and provide an opportunity for sharing experiences, materials and innovative display and engagement ideas. WLI has over 300 member centres and has established several regional networks.

For more information or if you have any questions, please contact a member of the MBP committee, either Ibrahim Hama for MBP Africa ihama@wetlands-africa.org, Chris Rostron at chris.rostron@wwt.org.uk or Roelof Heringa r.b.heringa@gmail.com.

In this edition we are welcoming some new partners in Africa in our MBP-network!

OUTLOOK FOR A SPECIAL MBP-NEWSLETTER and WEBINAR

As suggested during our Annual Meeting 2019, we would like to produce a special MBP-newsletter around the theme: "How to reach schools".

We will also organise a WEBINAR about this subject.

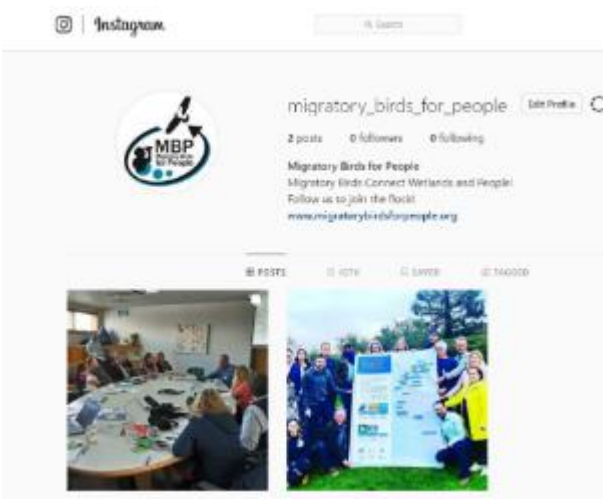
So, we would love to receive your stories about experiences with this subject before the 10th of April.
The newsletter will have more space for content than the WEBINAR, so even if your experience is extensive or limited, please do send it in!
We will hold the webinar in late April, and have most of the content already in place.. Keep an eye on our social media for updates about how to view.

New! INSTAGRAM ADDRESS and Whatsapp for MBP:

A look about your activities at every moment

As part of strengthening our communication tools, and to have more visibility, we have created a Migratory birds for People page on Instagram.

https://www.instagram.com/migratory_birds_for_people



This new tool will allow network members to share their activities internationally. Instagram is all about nice photographs, so if you have some strong photos to illustrate your work please send them, along with a short text description, to Connor or Adil who will post them for you.

We are happy to use the platform to introduce our people, birds, plans, and existing successes.

And if you have a personal or professional Instagram account do feel free to follow!

We have created a **WhatsApp group**, as another way to quickly share your news with your peers across the network. Possible uses include sending your short text, photos, videos, or requests for information.

Any MBP member is welcome to join: contact Connor by email, Facebook, SMS etc. and he will add you.

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PROJECT: Learning Map and Guidebook

Our special **10th anniversary learning map of the East Atlantic Flyway** is now with our colleagues in Tåkern, Terschelling, Remerschen, Oostvaardersplassen, EVOA, and Urdaibai.

The next step is to get a really good user-guide together, sharing games and knowledge so that everyone can make the most of it.
Our goal is to have this available to everyone in time for World Migratory Bird Day on 9 May 2020.

We are missing flyway map outlines for each of our key MBP species; detailed suggestions for games; and some details from every MBP member, as follows:

Name of the centre:

Name of MBP contact person:

Size (Ha):

Country:

Key bird species:

Key habitats:

Number of visitors per year:

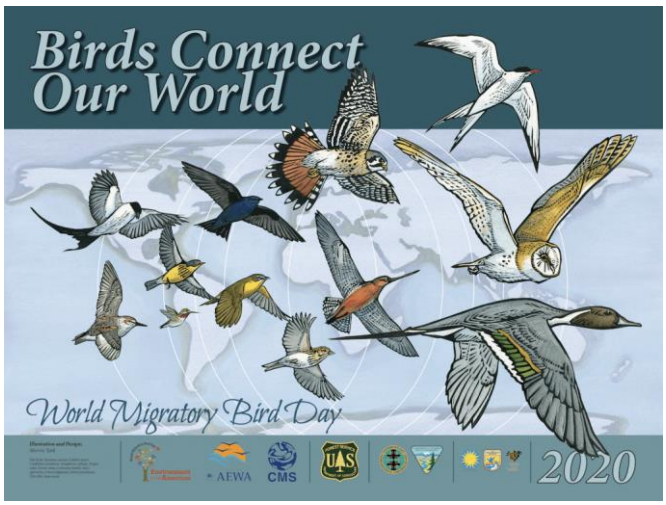
Website:

If you are able to contribute, you are welcome to download the current draft version, and please email Connor Walsh with your input, ideally before **the end of March!**

World Migratory Bird Day 2020 // Birds and Schools

World Migratory Bird Day is an important part of our year.
Due to the Corona-crisis the date will be:
Saturday 10 October.
Proposed date of video conference:
9 October (still flexible!)

This year's theme is ***'Birds connect us all'***, a very suitable one for MBP!
In 2020 we will again run our regular activity of connecting birds and schools–though visits to wetlands centres and video conferences.
Last year we had two video conferences, one in French and one in English.



If you are interested in taking part, please contact Connor Walsh for the English Version, or Olivier Morin for the Francophone version.
For more details on the requirements and format, please see this page, which we will update as we get more participants and suggestions.

MORE INFORMATION: 'Birds Connect Our World'; leading on to tracking bird migration.

The theme for 2020 will be **'Birds Connect Our World**', with the organisers suggesting the main focus be about tracking birds.
So those of you with ringing or tagging programmes will have a great contribution to make.
The organisers in the Americas also have a list of key species, though not many of them are relevant for the East Atlantic Flyway. You can see this list at the end of the brief.

So we will focus on the key MBP species:
Bar-tailed godwit
Eurasian Spoonbill
Common tern
Osprey
Red knot
Plus one local species that you do ringing or tracking work on, e.g. Barn swallow in Urdaibai.

Based on this I have prepared some draft questions.
Please make suggestions, especially if these will not work well with your children, or if you know questions that will work great with them.

- Did you see a common tern?
- Do common terns visit your reserve at other times?
- Did you see an osprey?
- Do osprey visit your reserve at other times?
- Did you see godwits?
- Do godwits visit your reserve at other times?
- Did you see spoonbills?
- Do spoonbills visit your reserve at other times?
- Did you see red knot?
- Do red knots visit your reserve at other times?
- Did you see any birds with rings on their legs, collars on their necks, or GPS tags?
- What other activity did you do?

Younger children:
Show us the drawings you made or coloured in!

- Can you show us a tern?
- Can you show us an osprey?
- Can you show us a godwit?
- Can you show us a spoonbill?
- Can you show us a red knot?
- Can you show us your local species?

Last year we asked the questions from north to south. We will confirm the order once we know the schools and centres involved.
Flight of the Osprey is scheduled for later in the year and so might work well for the second World Migratory Bird Day 2020, on 10 October. I think we have to just wait and see about that for now.
Consent forms
In order for us to make a video that we can share afterwards, we will require two forms: one from you as the person who created any video from the visit to your centre; and another one from the parents of the children. I have them already from staff of Urdaibai, Almere, and Saloum.

Official WMBD species list:
American Kestrel, Arctic Tern, Baird's Sparrow, Barn Owl, Bar-tailed Godwit, Calliope Hummingbird, Canada Warbler, Fork-tailed Flycatcher, Northern Pintail, Purple Martin, Western Sandpiper, Yellow-breasted Chat.

PROJECT: Optics for Africa

The Optics for Africa initiative has delivered binoculars to Senegal via Wetlands International and Morocco via GREPOM-BirdLife.

The donations have come from WWT members in the UK, and direct from WWT wetland centres themselves. The UK's culture of bird watching has meant we have been getting a lot of optics!

Intern Adil Boulahia has been busy assessing the condition and suitability of every donation, and we have about 50 telescopes and binoculars.
Some need to be repaired, but some are also very high quality.
The two existing deliveries have been used in the International Waterbird Census in Djoudj and school visits in Oualidia.

There are two next-steps: one is to arrange more deliveries to Wetlands International in Dakar who will handle over-land transport to member centres in the region.

Get in touch if you have plans to go between Western Europe and Dakar!
The second step is to see about spreading the net for donations wider, to other MBP member centres who might be able to collect good optics to contribute.
Would your centre display posters about the initiative, even if you cannot take part yourselves?

Please: Let Connor know.!

How to keep working under COVID-19

A look at what WLI members are doing to engage the public and maintain their organisational work while acting to stop the novel coronavirus.

WLI members in China have been working from home since February; in mid-March, Europe and North America members reached a similar stage.

CEPA

Some visitor centres, such as those in France, are shutting completely. The Maison du Lac de Grand Lieu is closed, meaning the public-facing efforts are all now online: they are still producing social media and website updates. They are also hoping to hold group meetings by Skype with other Francophone wetland centre staff and schoolteachers in the East Atlantic Flyway.

Urdaibai Bird Center in the Basque Country has also shut its doors and taken to the internet. Edorta Unamuno is going into the locked visitor centre to use the technology there: he speaks 'down-the-line' to Basque Public Radio about local nature. They have also innovated a new practice with their existing webcam. It livestreams on YouTube and people have been tuning-in for 'ten minutes of calm'. Now, twice a day, Edorta is adding his commentary, to bring context and his birding passion to the images people at home can see. He adds his voiceover live at 10.00 and 18.00 local time.

Not all organisations are closing their visitor centres. In countries that are not on full lockdown, visitor centres are offering the public a chance to benefit from all that nature brings at a time of stress.

WWT in the UK is keeping centres open, where there is safe staffing levels, and making sure visitors know to practice social distancing and to keep washing their hands. They have cancelled all talks and guided events. The Learning teams have been reminding schools of the materials already freely available for them to download, which they designed for use in schools before and after visiting a WWT centre.

Fort Whyte Alive in Canada has closed the buildings but is leaving the gates to the site open for people to visit free of charge.

Environment for the Americas is reaching families with email and online storytime. Using the GoToWebinar platform, they are sharing links to colouring-in sheets of hummingbirds, and then reading the book 'If Hummingbirds Could Hum'.

China is perhaps the most advanced in changing their behaviour, now about 60 days into isolation. MCF's visitor and education centres are closed, but social media continues. After initially helping people cope with the new living situation, social media output has reconnected back to biodiversity and wetlands. In particular they are coordinating with other conservation groups to campaign about the root of the COVID-19 outbreak: wildlife trade and farming for food. The Chinese government announced a temporary ban on selling live wild animals in markets, and MCF and partners want to raise awareness of the problem and change people's behaviour.

The key message is to no longer see the animals as food or threats, but as positive and normal parts of our shared ecosystem.

Regular office work
MCF's educators are using this as an opportunity to refresh their course content, their evaluation and assessment materials, and year plans. They are also working with colleagues to update their own knowledge about the species they encounter in their visitor centres and reserves. This way they will have up-to-date signage and exhibits ready when the centres re-open.

The WLI team at WWT is working from home, using Skype for Business for internal contact, a VPN for file sharing, and regular Skype for meetings with partners around the world. Maison du Lac de Grand Lieu are finding Microsoft Team a very helpful tool, and they continue to plan future exhibitions. MCF were just wrapping up strategic planning when the restrictions came into place so they were able to work from home to develop detailed workplans out of the higher-level strategy.

What about you? If you develop other methods, let us know!

News from the network:

Finland: Liminka Bay Visitor Center

Celebration of World Wetlands Day 2020.

On the 1st of February there was event called **"Winter Of Animals"** in the Liminka Bay Visitor Centre. Many families attended the event and the weather was nice.

The event was arranged mainly by voluntary nature societies.
Visitors got event passports from the info desk.
They walked around the event area and learned about wintering of animals.
There were many checkpoints, for example crafting of mouse nest, bear story, insects of wetland and twitching of wintering birds.
The restaurant offered fish soup and there was campfire outside.

Many birds, like Great Tits, Blue Tits and Yellowhammers were seen on the feeding place.
Also White-tailed Eagle and Golden Eagle were spotted!
Families enjoyed and children were learning new things on every checkpoint.

(Pictures were taken and text was written by schoolgirl Maija Tuomala as part of her work practice program.)

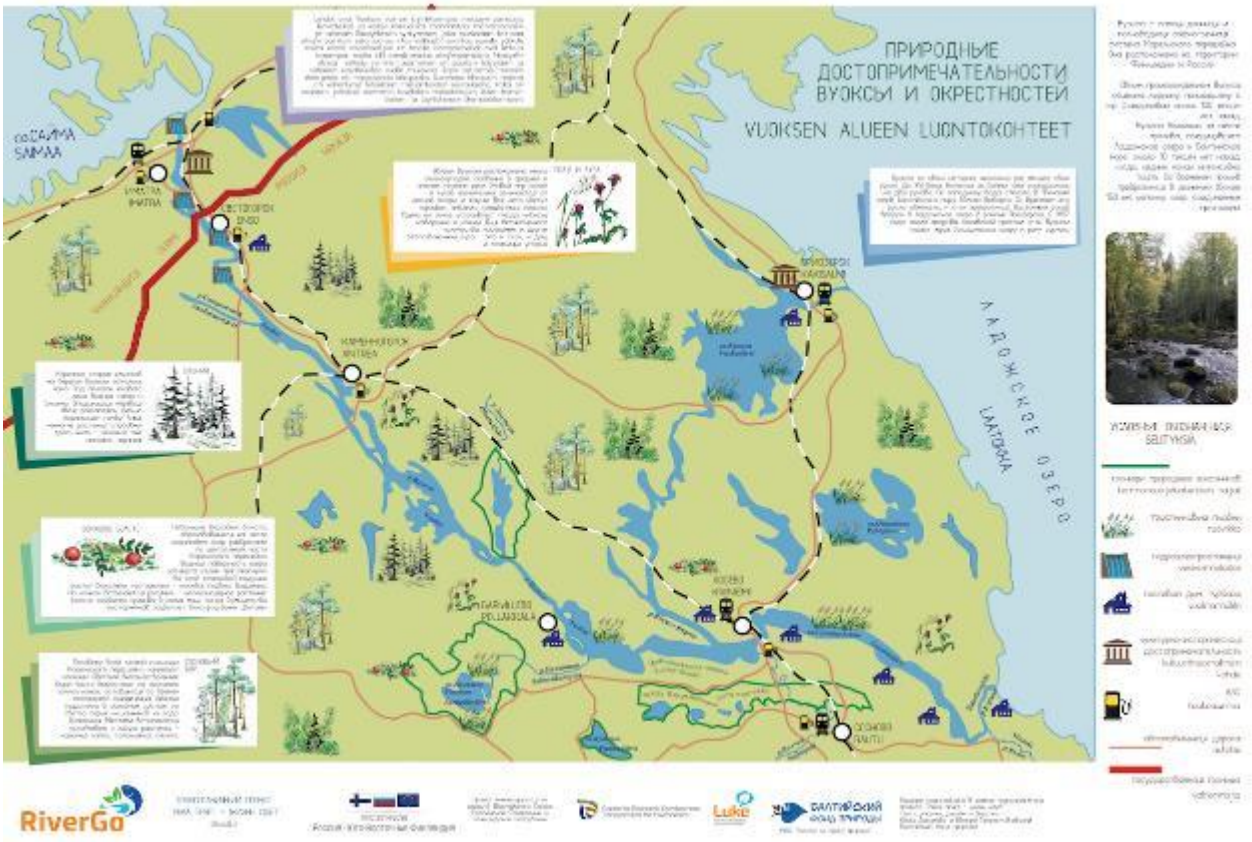
Heli Suurkuukkaa

Norway: Fetsund Lenser, Nordre Øyeren wetland centre

Russia: CEPA-team St. Petersburg

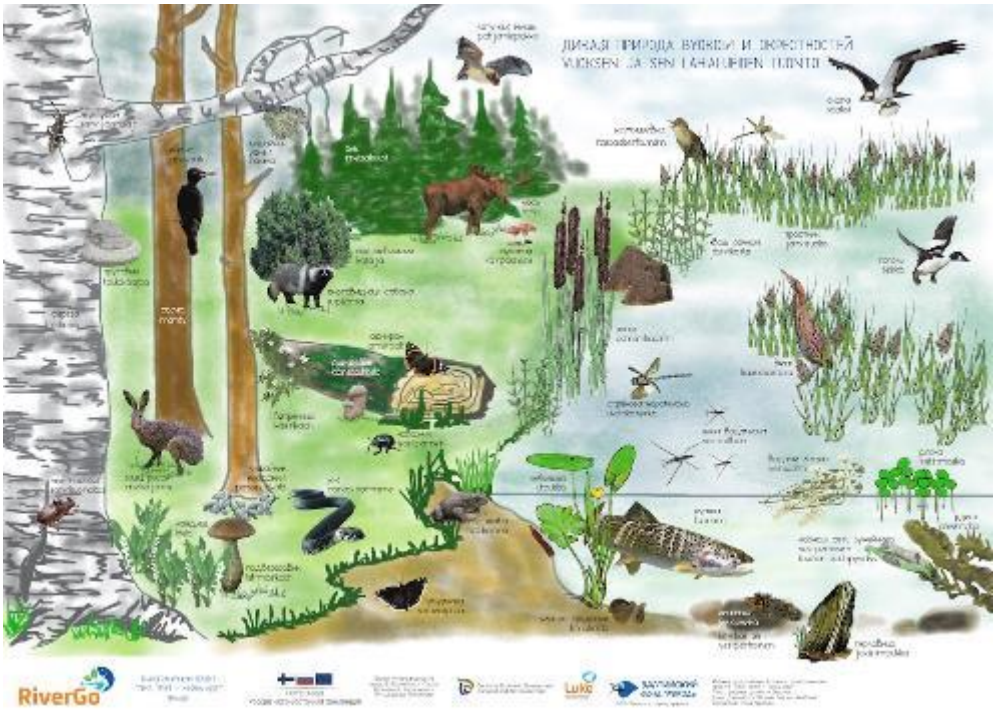
New posters and visitor maps of the Vuoksi River valley

We should know more about our rivers to better protect unique habitats and wildlife of these important ecosystems. Rivers connect people and cities, and bring water to our homes and industry.
More importantly, rivers are the routes of fish migrations, of those the regular migrations of **Atlantic salmon** are remarkable feature of rivers across Northern Europe.



Now we are involved in a RiverGO project connecting experts from Russia and Finland in order to explore and find better way of sustainable management and conservation of River Vuoksi. The three year project is aimed at establishing better contacts among local and regional authorities managing the river as well as to attract people from local livelihoods and weekend tourists to the importance of keeping the valley as

wild as possible. Vuoksi is among the largest rivers in the region connecting Saimaa Lakeland in SE Finland and Ladoga Lake in NW Russia.



BFNs outreach activities in the project started from creating the **visitor maps** that will be available later this year in local stores, fuel stations and museums. This simplified map shows just the Vuoksi River system and presents regions of conservation importance in line with potential destinations for forest walks or birdwatching at grasslands.

For those who are interested in learning typical animals and plants occurring at the river valley, a posters are also available. We hope that these materials will be helpful for developing a different kind of tourism in the region that might be more nature-friendly and will also support the introduction of citizen science for better understanding bird migrations and distribution of such nice water flowers as white water-crowfoot (*Ranunculus aquatilis*) or even the water voles.

Contact: *Eugene Genelt-Yanovskiy and Yulia Danilova*

Sweden: Naturum Lake Tåkern

Sweden: Naturum Getterön

Sweden: Naturum Hornborgasjön

The cranes are coming!

Soon the cranes are about to arrive here in Sweden.
Spring is approaching.
In the middle of March we will open our visitor center Naturum Hornborgasjön by the lake.

Dancing cranes. Photo: Kent-Ove Hvass

We will then offer a wide range of activities including guided tours about the migrating cranes.
By the end of March, between the 23rd to the 29th March, it is time for the "Crane Festival".

The cranes' dance and trumpeting call are a sure sign of spring and they attract at least 150,000 visitors to Lake Hornborga during a four-week period!
It is a real experience to watch the graceful cranes hopping around in their lively dance!
On their way from their winter quarters in Spain to their breeding grounds, some 10,000 cranes rest at Lake Hornborga. They usually stay for a week or two to eat, dance and rest.

The ones that are heading furthest north arrive last, as they have to wait until spring arrives at their final destination. At most, there can be more than 10,000 cranes here on any day during the Crane Dance.

This is a week when there is plenty of activities both for visiting tourists and for school classes.

Welcome to lake Hornborga!

Best regards, *Josefin Nilsson, Nature guide*

Denmark: Amager, Copenhagen

Denmark: Vadehavscentret, Ribe

Germany : Nationalpark - Haus Husum

Netherlands: Terschelling

Winter works on Terschelling

This winter no hibernation for the rangers. It's quiet on the island and there are only a few tourists in this period, but in the forest of West–Terschelling there was quite some action.
A forest thinning took place at the beginning of this year. The forest thinning work was also done to expand the grazing area for our 'natural lawn mowers'.

Forest thinning
Large parts of the forest on Terschelling still consist of pines which are close to each other, resulting in too little light for deciduous trees. To change that, Staatsbosbeheer is removing pines to create more light on the forest undergrowth. Ultimately this leads to a more varied forest with more species of flora and fauna resulting in a healthier forest.

For example, since there are more deciduous trees and dead trees in the forests on Terschelling, the number of breeding woodpeckers has increased considerably.
In addition, more than 400 plant and animal species live on an oak. On a pine "only" 50-70.

Expansion of grazing area
Hereford cattle, Exmoor ponies, Shetland ponies, goats, Galloway cattle and Konik horses: the dunes of Terschelling have been largely managed by these animals for years. Grazing the dune area ensures that grasses and shrubs do not get the upper hand and dune plants get a chance again. We do this to reduce the negative effects of nitrogen on the dune nature. Forty animals - 15 Galloway cattle and 25 Exmoor ponies - will soon be walking in this new area. At the moment there are 8 Galloways and 13 ponies. There are relatively fewer animals in a larger area. When determining the right grazing type, five points apply to Staatsbosbeheer: nature result, effect on recreation, effect on the landscape, safety and animal welfare.

Staatsbosbeheer organises various excursions to involve the island-people in above activities. This way we can inform the islanders why certain measures are needed for management. Informing the islanders is important to create understanding.

Greetings from a stormy Terschelling and see you soon during World Migratory Bird Day,
Feline and Wanda.

Netherlands: Buitencentrum "Oostvaardersplassen"

Winter guests in the Oostvaardersplassen

Monthly bird censuses are carried out in the "Oostvaardersplassen" in the outer quay section.
In recent months, large numbers of **Whooper swans** have been observed in the area. At the last count in February, the counters counted no less than 56 specimens.

The wet winter is not very attractive for us as humans and also for the large grazers in the area. But many bird species benefit from the wet grasslands in the Oostvaardersplassen. Last week, for example, more than **10,000 golden plovers** and at least as many **lapwings** were counted. The first redshanks of the year have also been seen again.

Of course, there are also plenty of geese in the area.
Especially the barnacle goose is well represented at the moment. It is estimated that there are 400,000 geese present.
With the greylag geese it is already good to see that pairs are being formed.
The number of Greylag geese and Greater White-fronted geese is considerably lower.
In the past week, respectively 400 and 500 of them have been counted.

Mikal Folkertsma (Warden)

Netherlands: Biesbosch

Hundreds of volunteers clean the river banks

In February we had very high water levels in the Biesbosch NP, a fresh water tidal area in the south western part of the Netherlands.
It was caused by a high discharge of the river Rhine in combination with the storm Ciara.
Polders were submerged, including the roads.
Hares and Roe deer had to look for higher and drier locations. After a few days water levels dropped gradually, and lots of plastics remained in the area.
The Directorate-General for Public Works and Water Management and Staatsbosbeheer (= *the State Agency for Forestry and Nature management)* arranged a cleaning up, supported on a large scale by the press.
Hundreds of volunteers responded and cleaning actions were undertaken, resulting in countless packed and stuffed bags, with all kinds of garbage.
The volunteers came from divers regions and collected a lot of plastic bags, bottles, cotton swabs, caps, ropes, slippers, basins and hoses.
There will be three weekends in total organised for picking most of the plastic waste.

Plastic products

Plastic pollution has become one of the most pressing environmental issues, as rapidly increasing production of disposable plastic products overwhelms the world's ability to deal with them.
Plastics made from fossil fuels are just over a century old.

Production and development of thousands of new plastic products accelerated after World War II, so transforming the modern age that life without plastics would be unrecognizable today.
The conveniences plastics offer, however, led to a throw-away culture that reveals the material's dark side: today, single-use plastics account for 40 percent of the plastic produced every year.
Many of these products, such as plastic bags, bottles and food wrappers, have a lifespan of mere minutes to hours, yet they may persist in the environment for hundreds of years.
Jacques van der Neut, Ranger Staatsbosbeheer, Biesbosch NP

Luxembourg: Biodiversum Remerschen

Haff Réimech: an important flood plain

Every winter, after heavy rainfall, the Moselle valley is flooded.
Regularly, damage occurs in the villages in the Moselle valley, e.g. in Schengen or Remich.
How important wetlands are in such times and what water masses they can absorb becomes clear.
For example, the water level at the pond around the Biodiversum rises by over 50 cm within a very short time.
The Moselle flood enters via pipes below the Moselle road, which cuts the wetland off from the watercourse.
Nobody considered the importance of the wetlands as flood protection when this road was built in the 1980s….

Today, however, this is regularly pointed out: During the International Wetlands Day, Patric Lorgé was able to broadcast in prime time on RTL Radio Luxembourg to inform the public about the importance of wetlands and to invite listeners to the upcoming visits to wetlands.
After the heavy rains and the storm "Sabine" some paths in the *Haff Réimech* had to be closed due to flooding.

Fewer water birds

The mild temperatures of this winter brought only few water birds to *Haff Réimech*: never more than 2 Great Bittern and no Smew were reported.

On 1 January and for the first time, the five European Grebe species could be observed together on one

pond: in addition to the **Great Crested Grebes** and **Little Grebes**, a **Black-necked Grebe**, a **Slavonian Grebe** and a **Red-necked Grebe** could be seen there.

Patric Lorgé

Belgium: Nature centre "het Zwin"

Belgium: Informatiecentrum Uitkerkse Polder

Wild Outdoor-day:

On Sunday April 5th we will organize for the first time a "Wilde Buitendag" (= Wild Outdoor-day), from 13h30 till 17h30.
The focus will be on our newly created playground, with various guided do-it-yourself activities along our nature experience trail Kievitspad. A mobile petting zoo is also present.
This day will be part of Natuurpunt's national campaign in Flanders with 'Wilde Buitendagen' on 4 and 5 April in various Natuurpunt visitor centres.
This also includes a 50 things map with nature experiences that you have to experience before you turn 12 of age.

All details, see announcement in appendix and www.natuurpunt.be/wildebuitendagen or www.natuurpunt.be/50dingen :-)

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2. Cooperation between Natuurpunt Blankenberge and **visitor centre "Uitkerkse Polder"** with local partners (accommodation and some attractions)

Blankenberge, 11 February 2020
PRESS RELEASE

Natuurpunt Blankenberge attracts ecotourists to the Uitkerkse Polder.
Natuurpunt Blankenberge will from now on collaborate with tourism entrepreneurs and the operators of Bed and Breakfasts and holiday centres in the region of the Uitkerkse Polder.

Natuurpunt can already count on the enthusiastic cooperation of about 15 partners from the neighbourhood.
The local entrepreneurs can leave their business cards in the visitor centre. From now on, their holiday home, centre or attraction will be listed on the Natuurpunt website, under the heading "Overnight stays in the neighbourhood" or later also under "Uittips in de buurt".

Natuurpunt will therefore put their establishment in the spotlight. In exchange, the entrepreneurs will make their guests enthusiastic about the (activities of Natuurpunt in the) Uitkerkse Polder and actively refer them to the visitor centre. Moreover, they will also be able to make their own arrangements with Natuurpunt.
Just like Natuurpunt Blankenberge, the entrepreneurs and managers of the holiday accommodation and the ecotourists are convinced that the protection of our environment and the support of our local economy are necessary to ensure the sustainability of our coastal region.
Through Natuurpunt Blankenberge they can contribute to the preservation of the natural heritage and biodiversity in and around Blankenberge.

Anneleen Lybeer

United Kingdom : Slimbridge

Internship at WWT Slimbridge… Something for you or a colleague?

WWT hosts an international internship every year, which can include supporting MBP— those of you at the last Annual Meeting will of course remember the current intern, **Adil Boulahia**, from Morocco.

The internship may be of interest to your team members who have recently graduated and are interested in CEPA work, mostly digital.

The successful intern will be based with Chris Rostron and Connor Walsh in Slimbridge, UK from approximately July 2020 to June 2021.

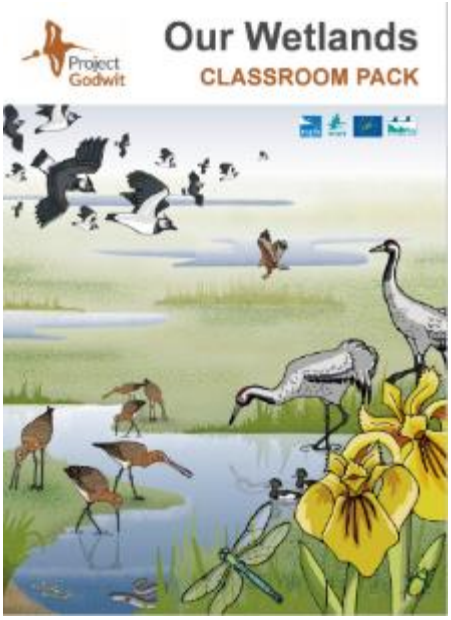
Please feel free to share the internship notice with your volunteers and colleagues! Deadline is the 17th April 2020.

Adil acting as 'cook' during our Annual Meeting Oct. 2019!

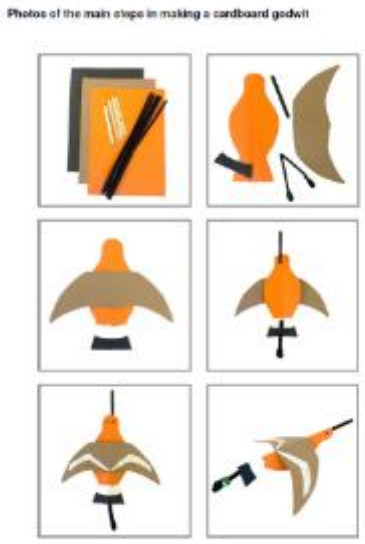
United Kingdom, Welney

PROJECT GODWIT

Whilst the headstarted black-tailed godwits are away at their wintering grounds, the staff that work on Project Godwit can catch up on important office time completing reports, planning for the next headstarting season, and for the engagement team – making new education resources.



We are about to produce our Education Pack that will be promoted throughout the remaining two years of the project. A resource for teachers and educators to use as an aid to help them bring the topic of wetlands into the classroom.
Our teaching pack aspires to showcase wetlands and the Fens as a focus for teaching primary subjects and to connect children to the wildlife and landscape around them. We want to bring excitement, pride and a sense of ownership and real-life relevance to young people.



The teaching pack contains:

- **Background information** for teachers covering the wetlands and wetland wildlife of the Fens, including Sustainable Development Goals chart and thematic curriculum ideas
- Example **curriculum maps** using wetlands as a term topic
- **Lesson plans** for Key Stages 1 and 2 in Maths, English, Science, Geography and Art & design
- In-school **activity ideas** for Key Stages 1 and 2
- Ideas for classroom **wall displays**
- **Supporting materials** including worksheets, colouring sheets and printable animal cards and posters.

  We hope that this will be used by classes that take part in our free Project Godwit Outreach sessions.

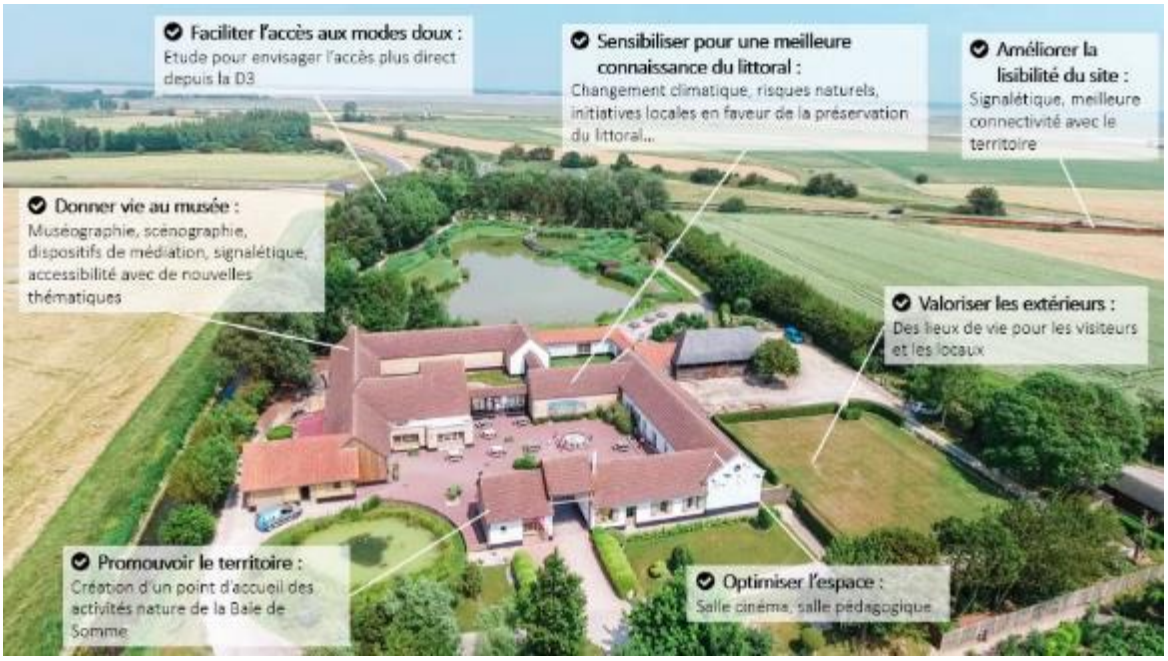
Jess Owen (WWT, project leader Godwit project)

France: Baie de Somme

Great developments in Maison de la Baie de Somme!

The former "Ferme du petit Terratu", now the Maison de la Baie de Somme (MBDS) is located south of the estuary.
It faced the sea at the beginning of the 20th century and was dedicated to birds at the request of the owners. A collection of naturalized birds is presented in dioramas.
Today it receives about 30,000 visitors each year. The museum has 13 rooms on 700 m² including an outdoor route.

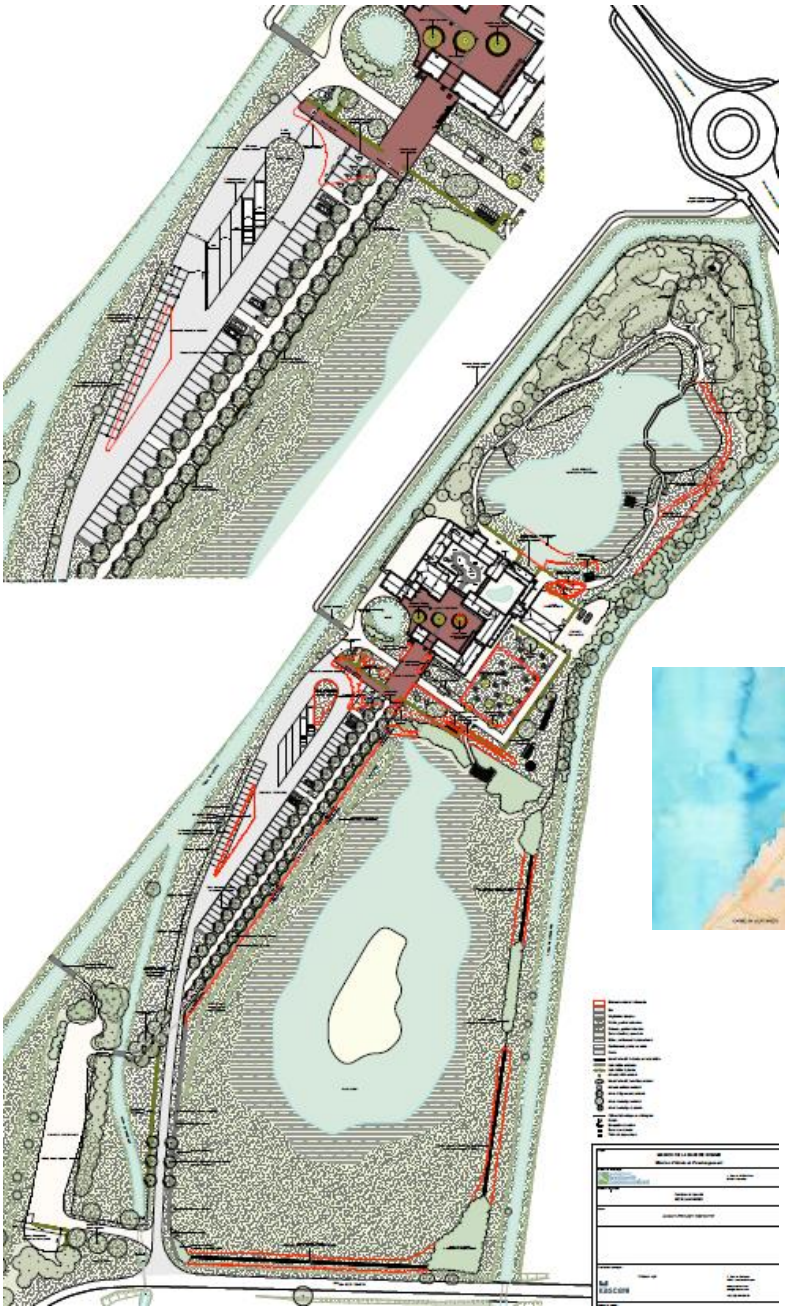
With the passing of time, silting... the museum has moved away from the coast, with new risks of marine submersion over a large part of the territory.
Ponds have been dug to accommodate the birds in the vicinity of the building.



This new project consists in accompanying the museum to a real site structuring the territory.

- Reconnecting the MBDS to the coast by means of soft paths, creating an information point so that visitors can understand the area correctly.
- Propose new services (bike rental, food-truck with local products, temporary exhibitions...)
- To broaden the museum's themes (very hunting and traditional activities oriented) by giving a showcase as close as possible to the natural, architectural and human heritage.

New interpretation equipment will be installed in the museum (winter 2020-2021) with a new scenography aiming at the widest accessibility (linguistic, age, disabilities...).
Three rooms will be completely renovated, in particular:
- a laboratory and bird observatory (theme of migration, banding, bird food...)
- a seal room (in connection with data from local associations and the Marine Natural Park)
- a climate change and submersion risks room to raise awareness among locals and visitors of the fragility of the coastline



Contact: Nathanaël Herrmann ,

- Responsable projet / développement -

France: La Maison du Grand Lac de Lieu

The Grand-Lieu Lake Centre World Wetlands Day 2020

On the initiative of the Grand-Lieu Lake Centre, the 4 Ramsar sites of the region joined forces for World Wetlands Day. During February, activities (conferences, trips, workshops, exhibitions, etc.) were held to discover or rediscover these wetlands on the territory: the Grande Brière, the salt water marshes of Guérande and Mès, the Grand-Lieu Lake and the Breton Marsh.

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The Grande Brière, the salt water marshes of Guérande and Mès, and the Breton Marsh *(pictures from www.ramsar.org)*

Lots of water!

The rains we have received during the past few months have raised the lake's water level. We have not seen so much water in the flood meadows for several years.

The Grand-Lieu Lake © *La Maison du Lac de Grand-Lieu*

Best regards, Audrey Cadou

France: Réserve naturelle nationale de Camargue

World Wetlands Day

We organised 3 events for the World Wetlands Day 2020:

- We opened our wetland centre "La Capelière" freely the full weekend of the 1st and 2nd of February.
- One of our volunteers stayed in a hide on a marsh hedge the full morning of the 2nd to show the water birds, to help the people to identify them and to explain nature, discussing with the people who wanted.
- The 8th morning: guided visit in a site we manage with 2 other organisations. The conversion of this site is in progress from old saltpans (salt production) to an area located in the seacoast becoming an outdoor laboratory about climate change. So we spoke about current biodiversity and about the works in progress.

Pictures: Week-end de garde picture of Anaïs Cheiron/ SNPN
and the 2nd tour qualité d'eau picture of Silke Befeld/ SNPN).

About the last bird count in January 2020:
41 species, a total of 9666 ducks, 5221 flamingos

Common Shelduck	357
Wigeon	50
Gadwall	441
Common Teal	162
Mallard	6913
Pintail	50
Shoveler	1693

3769 Coots, 1560 dunlins, 1111 great-crested grebes, 1140 yellow-legged gulls.

Kind regards, Livia Vallejo

Spain: Urdaibai Bird Center

Feeling younger everyday!

Urdaibai Bird Center and old people´s homes project.

The "Active aging project" being run by Urdaibai Bird Center and Arrotegi Rest Home is in full swing in Busturia.
It's proving not only to be active and engaging for the participants, but also rejuvenating.
They are becoming real scientific researchers!

The residents are taking part in 'Garden Birds', a project which helps people get to know the birds which live around them. The birds can be observed from the Rest Home as feeders have been placed in the grounds to attract them.

Observation Room

Every day the participants carry out a census of the birds they see from their special observatory. Colourful goldfinches, siskins, finches, robins, blue tits and great tits are counted every morning and the data collected is reported to the Urdaibai Bird Center.
When the winter is over we will analyse and compare it with the data of the more than 100 participants who take part in the project annually.

Weekly Census

In addition to doing the census, participants also attended a bird ring sessions.
Next on the agenda is the installation of nest boxes. It’s very exciting and everyone is looking forward to following the progress of new arrivals in spring.

Thank you for sharing your wealth of knowledge with us!

Spain: Aiguamolls de l’Emporda

Spain: las Salinas y Arenales de San Pedro del Pinatar

GO BIRDING IN WINTER IN THE PROTECTED NATURAL AREAS OF THE MURCIA REGION!

The mild winter temperatures in the Region of Murcia and its variety of landscapes allow us to welcome, every year at this time, many travelling birds from Central and Northern Europe. The beauty and songs of these living beings will make our walks through the Protected Natural Areas more enjoyable.
Dress up, don't forget your binoculars and travel with us through the Region of Murcia in search of its winter visitors!

In the Salinas de San Pedro you can see the black-necked grebes diving from the Paseo de los Molinos, or the unmistakable spatulas in Las Encañizadas, among flocks of small waders.

In the forests of the region, such as El Valle and Carrascoy, you are sure to hear the robin's ticking sound. You will also see the redstart touching the ground repeatedly with its striking tail or the mosquito nets and charcoal burners balancing on the fine branches.

In the Pozos de la Nieve, near the peaks of Sierra Espuña, you may be greeted by the **ring ouzel**, with dark plumage interrupted by a white "shield", in the shape of a half moon, under its breast.

In the wildest stretches of coast, such as in Calblanque and Calnegre, sea birds such as the **great cormorant** or the Atlantic gannet can be found.

In the wetlands and riverside forests such as the Cañaverosa Nature Reserve, you can see the "blue arrow" looking for its lunch: **the kingfisher**.

In the fields and bush areas you can find the "discreet" thrush, while in the steppes of Yecla, the fleeing **bustards** will defy the limits of gravity by exercising their "right to fly".

Source: Source for this article: Naturally Connected Magazine, Winter Edition 2019-2020.

Portugal: Tagus Estuary Birdwatching and Conservation Area

Morocco, Sidi Moussa Oualidia

World Wetlamds Day at Walidia Ecological Information Centre

As usual, GREPOM/BirdLife Morocco celebrates **World Wetlands Day** through its regional units covering most of Morocco.

The Oualidia Ecological Information Centre (CIEO) managed and animated by GREPOM/BirdLife Morocco did not let this occasion go by without celebration.
It organized an awareness day under the theme "Wetlands and Biodiversity" for the benefit of secondary school students and their teachers.

The day's programme was rich and diversified, including lectures on wetlands and their importance, as well as on bird migration.

The day was crowned by a field trip to the wetland area of the Sidi Moussa Oualidia complex, a "Ramsar" classified site, which aroused the interest of the participants on the importance of the wetland and bird watching.

Banc d'Arguin, Mauritania

Parc National Djoudj, Senegal

Sénégal , Centre d'Education de Kalissaye

The Conversion of the plastic threat into an ecotourism opportunity

The Kalissaye Ornithological Reserve (ROK) was created by decree 78-809 of 28 July 1978. The ROK's vocation is to protect a complex ecosystem so that it plays the role of host to breeding colonies of birds and turtles, to ensure good breeding conditions for migratory birds and to promote tourism and scientific research. The ROK is the only Wetland of International Importance located in the southern part of Senegal. It is also recognized as an IBA and winner of the 2016 Conservation Award.

The Kalissaye Ornithological Reserve capitalizes on several years of waste collection, sorting and recycling. The plastic waste is transformed into art objects (necklaces, dustbins, statuettes, etc.) which are exhibited in the hotel sites and sold to

tourists.
These actions allow to transform the plastic threat into an eco-tourism opportunity. In 2020 the ROK obtained support from the French Fund for the Global Environment. This support, allocated through the PPI, has enabled the implementation of the project to consolidate the biological recovery of Laridae and marine turtles by strengthening the governance of the Kalissaye Ornithological Reserve in Senegal.

The project is based on three main axes: Improving Local Governance in the ROK, Stimulating the reproduction of migratory species and reducing anthropic pressures through the development of alternative economic activities.
Within the framework of the stimulation of the reproduction of migratory species, several activities have been planned among which the sanitation of the breeding areas including the collection, extraction, sorting, transformation of plastic waste, lost nets and packaging and solid objects. Indeed, the problem of waste is particularly critical with regard to plastic. This waste is a serious threat to migratory birds.

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Within the framework of the stimulation of the reproduction of migratory species, several activities have been planned among which the sanitation of the breeding areas including the collection, extraction, sorting, transformation of plastic waste, lost nets and packaging and solid objects. Indeed, the problem of waste is particularly critical with regard to plastic. This waste is a serious threat to migratory birds.

- Plastic gets into the stomachs of birds and pollutes water resources and breeding grounds for birds and sea turtles. These areas choke under plastic waste. The same is true for birds, which play an essential role in the pollination of flowers, the protection of crops, the cleaning of beaches, the identification of fish areas, etc.".
- Plastic is also used as nesting material. Many birds collect pieces of plastic that they then use to line their nests, instead of using leaves or twigs, which can cause injury and impede mobility in chicks.
- Abandoned monoxyl nets are responsible for most bird bycatch at sea, in rivers, lakes and even on land. Seabirds are the most affected.

In view of its ecosystemic, biological, ornithological, hydrological, etc. potentialities, the ROK is capitalizing on several years of cleaning and maintenance of breeding islands for migratory birds and marine turtles. In 2020, this activity coincided with **World Wetlands Day**.

This Day was locally celebrated under the theme "Kalissaye Ornithological Reserve is full of Life, Let's Act for its Biodiversity". The World Day was celebrated in partnership with the management committee of the site, the Eco-guards GIE, the Environmental Education Centres, the pupils of the school 2 of Kafountine, the women's groups of the island villages. The day mobilized 63 participants.
In order to solve the problem of plastic pollution in the reserve and reduce the number of birds that are victims of ingestion and entanglement, activities have included extracting waste, sorting, transforming it into necklaces, art objects, statuettes, rubbish bins and carrying out an environmental campaign targeting industrialists, hoteliers, families and individuals to take concrete measures to reduce their own plastic footprints.

This campaign has allowed to exchange with the actors on the objectives of the project of Consolidation of the biological upwelling of Laridae and marine turtles by strengthening the governance of the Kalissaye Ornithological Reserve in Senegal, the provisions of Law n° 2015-09 of 04 May 2015 relating to the prohibition of the production, importation, possession, distribution, use of plastic bags of low micronage and the rational management of plastic waste. It also made it possible to invite the populations to massively adhere to the zero waste policy launched on 04 January 2020 by his Excellency Mr. Macky SALL President of the Republic of Senegal.

For more information
Contact: Centre d'Education, de Sensibilisation et de Partenariat (CESP_Kalissaye)
Tel; 00221 77 655 96 91 // rok.kalissaye@gmail.com

Bijagós Archipelago, Guinea-Bissau

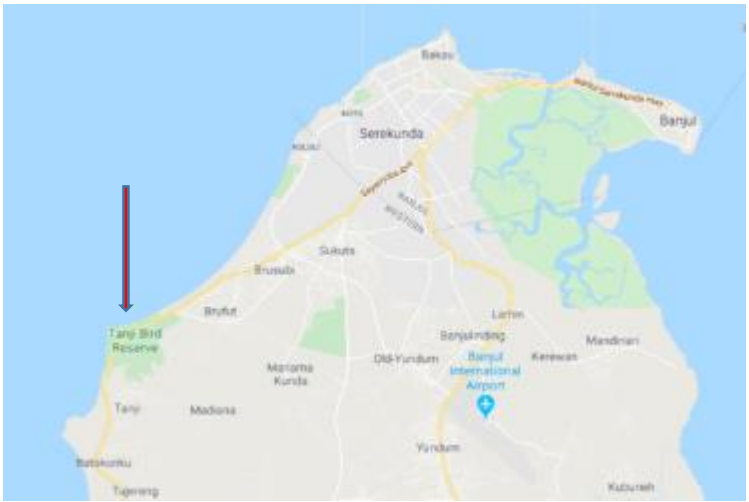
Gambia: Tanji Bird Reserve

NEW !

We welcome our new MBP-member in Gambia!

The **Tanji Bird Reserve** is a bird reserve in The Gambia. Established in 1993, it covers an area of 612 hectares (1,510 acres). It is also known as **Karinti**, the **Tanji River Reserve** or the **Tanji National Park**.

The Tanji Bird Reserve lies 3 km to the north of the fishing village of Tanji and includes the Karinti River. The protected reserve, which incorporates an area of the Bald Cape and the Bijol Islands (Kajonyi Islands), is located 1.5 km from the Atlantic Ocean coastline. The Bijol Islands are The Gambia's only offshore islands. The Bijol Island consist of two islands which are joined together at low tide.



The Tanji Bird Reserve incorporates mangrove, dry woodland and coastal dune scrub woodland. Along the coastal

part there is a series of lagoons, and off shore Bijol islands which are important sites for breeding marine turtles and for roosting birds.

Birdlife:
The Tanji Bird Reserve has had around 300 species of birds recorded within it, including 82 species of Palearctic migrants. The reserve has been declared as an Important Bird Area by Birdlife International. Species seen regularly on the reserve's lagoons include Black-headed heron, white-fronted plover, Caspian tern, spur-winged plover, sanderling, Western reef heron, royal tern and lesser black-backed gull. While the Bijol Islands are an important feeding and roosting area for substantial numbers of shorebirds, seabirds, ospreys, and other birds,[1] including Gambia's only breeding seabirds, including colonies of grey-headed gulls, slender-billed gulls, royal terns, Caspian terns, long-tailed cormorants and Western reef herons.

(source: Wikipedia)

Contact: Nuha Jammeh ,
Department of Parks and Wildlife(NFP- AEWA)
Email: jammeh05@gmail.com.
Jerreh Njie Tanji Bird Reserve,
Email: jerrehkiang@gmail.com

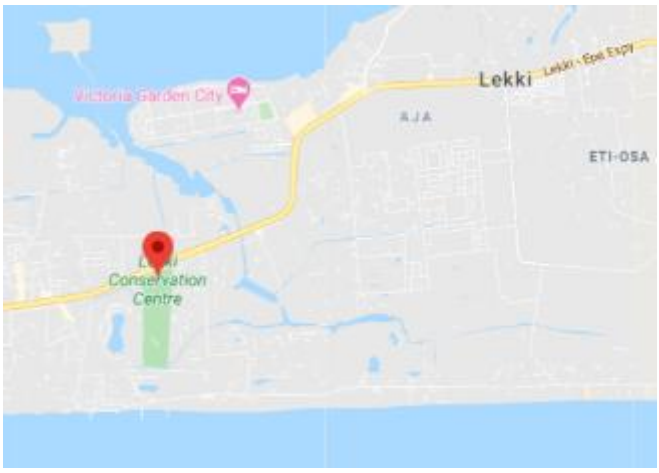
Nigeria, Lekki Nature Reserve

NEW !

We welcome our new MBP-member in Nigeria!

Description of the centre

Lekki Conservation Centre (LCC) has grown into one of Africa's prominent and most-diverse urban Nature Parks due to its high species richness. It is in the coastal environs covering an approximate land area of 78 hectares, extending from kilometer 19 along the Lagos-Epe Expressway and ends up a very close distance to the Atlantic Ocean near Okun Ibeju Village, Eti-Osa Local Government Area in the Eastern district of Lagos State. LCC can be accessed through the Lagos-Epe Expressway.



Name of organisation: Nigerian Conservation Foundation

Number of staff: 25
Number of visitors per year: 110,000

Overall aims of the centre
The Centre serves the purpose of environmental education, ecotourism and research

(Source: Wetland Link International, Slimbridge)

Contact : Balikis Abidemi Balogun
Email : Abidemi.balogun@ncfnigeria.org

Nigeria, Finima Nature Park

NEW !

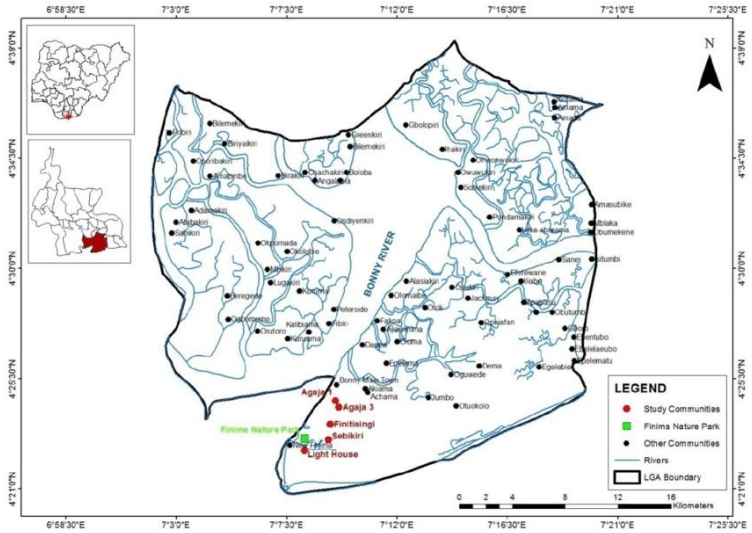
We welcome our new MBP-member in Nigeria!

INTRODUCTION:
The **Finima Nature Park** is a natural park in Bonny Island, Rivers State, Nigeria covering an area of approximately 1000 ha (3.9 sq mi). It was established by the Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas Limited with the aim of conserving nature and biodiversity in the region.

Ecology

Description of the centre: The site is a freshwater swamp forest lying along Nigeria's southern coastal area of Bonny Island, River State. FNP is divided into the Eastern and Western blocks. It is approximately 1000 hectares, with a core area of about 700 hectares and buffer zone of about 300 hectares. The park is home to a wide variety of ecosystems and forms of wildlife such as endangered species of Psittacus erithacus (African Grey Parrot).

Finima's reserve area is covered by tropical rainforest and mangrove swamps, some parts contain sand with freshwater ponds and tall timber between the swamps and the beach.



Flora
Vegetation of the park has progressively developed into a high forest considering the form from which it began in 1999. The interior of the forest is very shady and various sedges form thickets on the forest floor.

Fauna
Finima Nature Park is home to some wildlife species of high conservation value, a variety of mammals, birds and reptiles including crocodiles, snakes and alligators. The site of the nature park is the natural habitat of salt water hippopotamuses. The area is protected by park rangers and hunting is prohibited.

Number of staff: 26 / **Number of visitors per year:** 15,000+

Overall aims of the centre: The aim of the Park is for conservation, recreational activities and research in flora, fauna and cultural heritage of Bonny Island.

NIGERIAN
CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

2020 World Wetlands Day at Finima

The Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF) commemorated the 2020 World Wetlands Day between 1st – 3rd February 2020 at its headquarters and across project sites (Calabar, Cross-River State; Finima, Rivers State; Nguru, Yobe State).

The event was held at the Sand-filled Iyana Oworonshoki wetlands. In attendance were members of the NCF conservation club, teachers, volunteers, community members etc.
The participants were engaged in different activities ranging from Bird watching, awareness-raising, beach clean-up and school presentations.

Below are images from the different locations:

Images from Lagos

Participants at Calabar, Cross-River State

Attendees at the World Wetlands Day program

After the clean-up exercise in Finima, Bonny Island, Rivers State

Invited guests at the event cross-section of participant

School presentations

Contact : Usman Shittu, (Nigerian Conservation Centre)
Email: usman.shittu@ncfnigeria.org
Website: www.finimanaturepark.com
Tel.: +2348061154038,
finima.nature-park-f@nlng.com
(Sources: Wetland Link International, Slimbridge and Wikipedia)

Angola: Reserva Natural Integral do Ilhéu dos Pássaros

We welcome our new MBP-member in Angola!

INTRODUCTION:
The Reserva Natural Integral do Ilhéu dos Pássaros (= Bird Island) was established as an Integral Natural Park in 1973. Located 8 km south of Luanda, it occupies an area of 1.7 km².
It is a small island that suffers periodic flooding, so the predominant type of vegetation is the mangroves. The coldest months are July and August, with an average of 20ºC. March is the warmest month with 27ºC. It rains an average of 54 days a year, with a total of 449 mm. There are few mammals, but there are many types of migratory birds. The fauna is composed of nesting colonies of numerous species of herons, herons, ibis and other water birds.

Funding support: Wadden Sea, Wetlands International
Number of staff: 3
Number of visitors per year: 1200
Overall aims of the centre: Environmental awareness of wetland conservation issues

Contact: Miguel Xavier,
National Institute for Biodiversity and Protected Areas (INBAC), Angola
Email: miguel_xavier2003@yahoo.com.br,
https://wli.wwt.org.uk/2019/10/members/reserva-natural-integral-do-ilheu-dos-passaros/#tab-1
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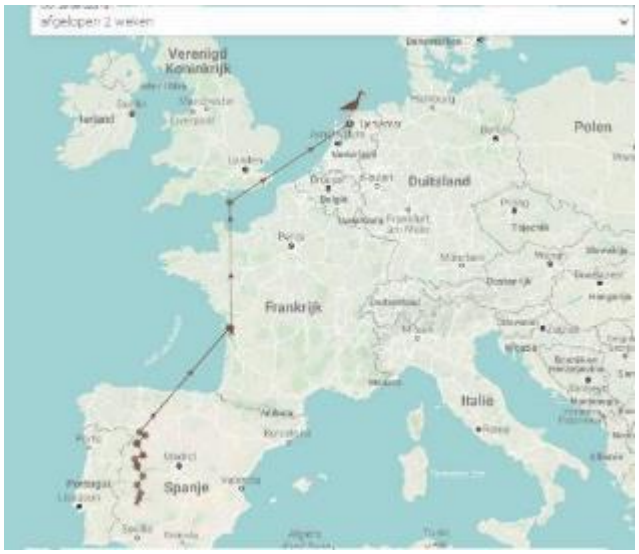
Other Flyway news

Following the Godwit…



On Facebook I found a message from Wim Tijsen (NL), who travelled to Spain earlier this year to look for Godwits, which have been ringed and provided with a transmitter.

He wrote:
"Transmitter black-tailed godwit "Tjerkemar" flew with us… I filmed her on the 16th of February at Hernán Cortés in the Extremadura at our research for the University Groningen (RUG). She left Spain with us immediately at the end of the afternoon on the 20th to the north. And arrived a day later in France, where she had a 2 day stop, to fly on to England, but she changed her mind in time and that night headed for Friesland, her birthplace. In the movie you can see that she already has a slight bulge between her tail and legs, as a sign that she is nicely fattened up and ready for the next stage, and that turns out! "
(see also Facebook : https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=wim%20tijsen&epa=SEARCH_BOX)

(Roelof Heringa)

Last ice age still affects curlew dispersal area

(Article from Naturalis Biodiversity Centre, Netherlands, *with consent*) 21-DEC-2019 –

The distribution range of curlew subspecies can be traced back to the last glacial maximum some 20,000 ago.
This is shown by research by biologists from the Naturalis Biodiversity Center, among others. They compared the DNA of curlews and rain whelps in Eurasia and North America to explain why which subspecies occurs where.

The **Curlew** (Numenius arquata) occurs in large parts of Eurasia and is divided into three subspecies, each with its own distribution area. In order to get a better picture of the different populations, the researchers took blood and tissue samples from subspecies of the Curlew and the Whimbrel. Based on small differences in the DNA of curlew subspecies, the researchers were able to reduce the current differences to three groups of curlews during the last ice age.

The distribution area of a bird species is influenced by many different factors. Current and historical geography play a role, but behaviour, distance of migration, and presence also have an influence. All these factors together make the explanation of a distribution area complex.
By comparing the DNA of the curlew subspecies, the researchers were able to reduce the subspecies to three populations during the last ice age.
The ancestors of today's curlews have hid in three different places from the huge ice caps that covered Europe and Asia during the last glacial maximum. These populations formed the basis for today's subspecies.

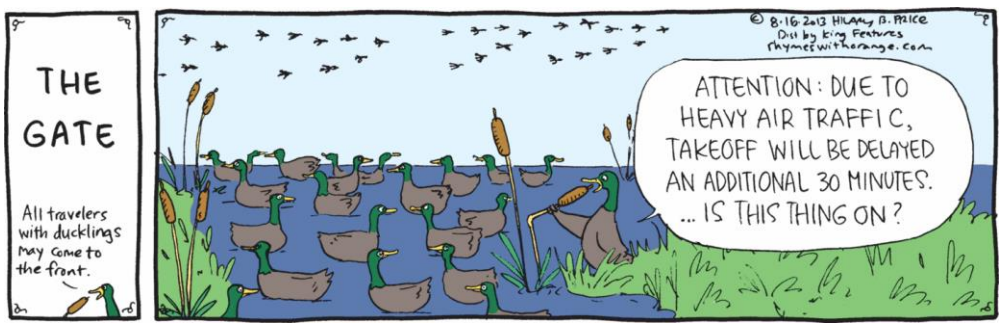
Because curlews do not migrate far and have a great preference to always nest in the same place, the genetic differences between the groups increased. Over the years, the build-up of these differences has led to the populations of those days becoming subspecies now.

Whimbrel

This contrasts with the **Whimbrel** (Numenius phaeopus). Populations of this species in Eurasia became less fragmented during the last ice age. In addition, the whimbrel migrates over greater distances than the curlew, which results in populations becoming less isolated from each other. However, the research shows that there is a large gap between curlews in Eurasia and North America.

More research is needed to determine exactly where the groups of curlews hid during the Ice Age.
Justin Jansen, who was involved in the research on behalf of Naturalis, is already working on a follow-up study. Jansen: "A new research based on museum pieces gives us, together with the fresh material, a clearer picture of this very widespread group of birds. Except in Antarctica, they are found all over the world."

Text: Mark Reid, Naturalis Biodiversity Center (with consent)
Photo: Dirk-Jan van Roest



Other MBP- network news

News from our MBP-partner EUROSITE:

Bird tracking in Europe

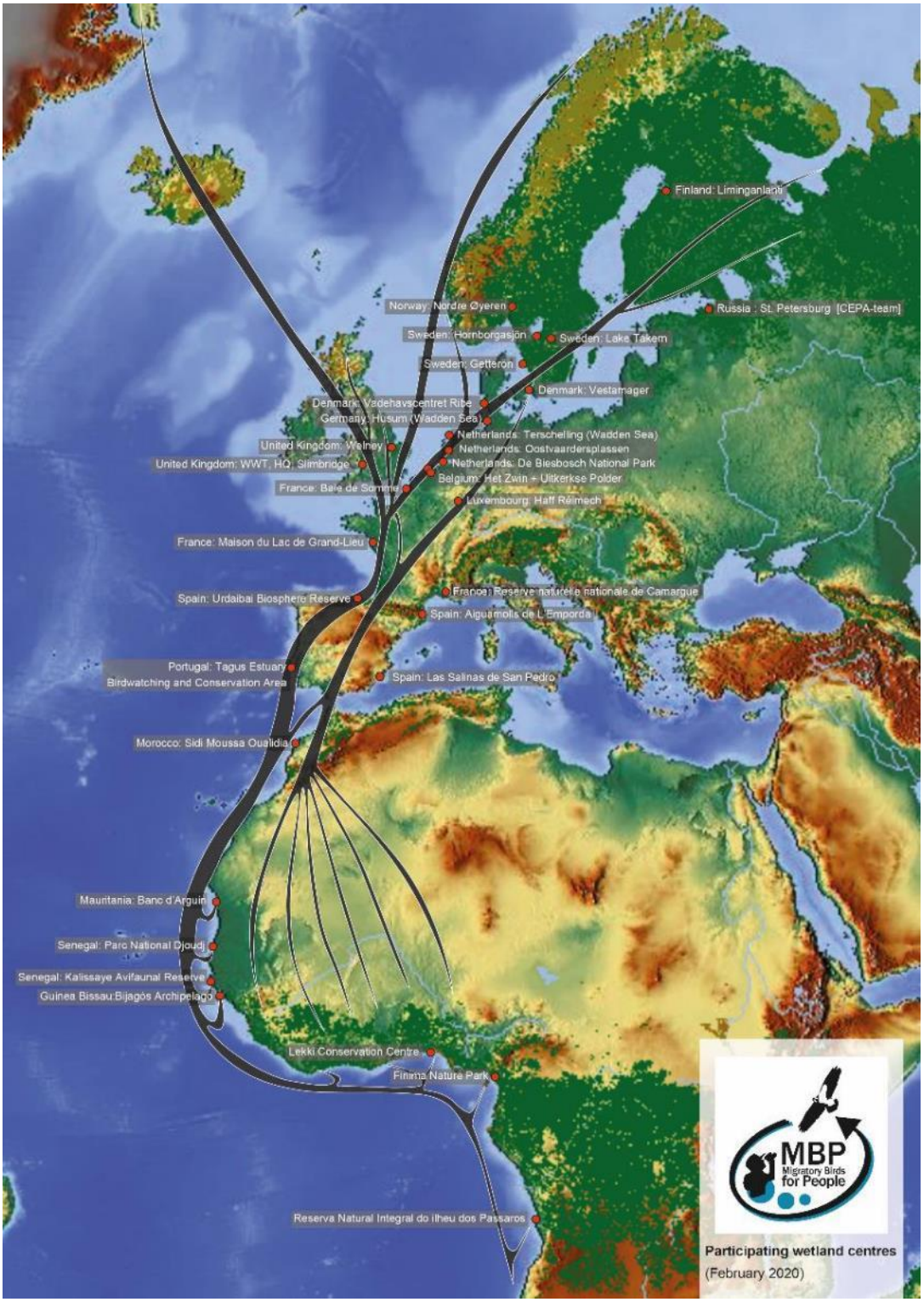
Eurosite member "Dutch Montagu's Harrier Foundation" recently changed its Dutch name. Whereas previously called "Werkgroep Grauwe Kiekendief" (Workgroup Montagu's Harrier), the organisation is now called "Grauwe Kiekendief – Kenniscentrum Akkervogels" (Montagu's Harrier – Knowledge Centre Farmland Birds) to more accurately reflect their broad scope of work on farmland birds.

Initially the Dutch Montagu's Harrier Foundation focused on practices related to the protection and monitoring of and research on Montagu's harriers. Nowadays, however, the resulting knowledge and measures from these activities can be applied to research and protection of a far wider range of farmland birds. The English name of the organisation will remain the same.

Among the many interesting projects of the Dutch Montagu's Harrier Foundation is the tracking of several GPS-tagged birds species throughout Europe. The website provides the opportunity to follow rough-legged buzzards, Montagu's harriers, marsh harriers and red kites during their migration and the possibility to gain more insight in their habitat use and dispersion patterns. Such knowledge could also be interesting to other Eurosite members working on projects related to bird ecology and migration patterns. You can find more information on the Dutch Montague's Harriers Foundation's website.

27 February 2020 | Hannah Löwenhardt

OUR MBP-FLYWAY MAP : *latest update* ***(with many thanks to Theo de Bruin !)***



List with updated contact details is available for MBP-members. *Email: r.b.heringa@gmail.com*

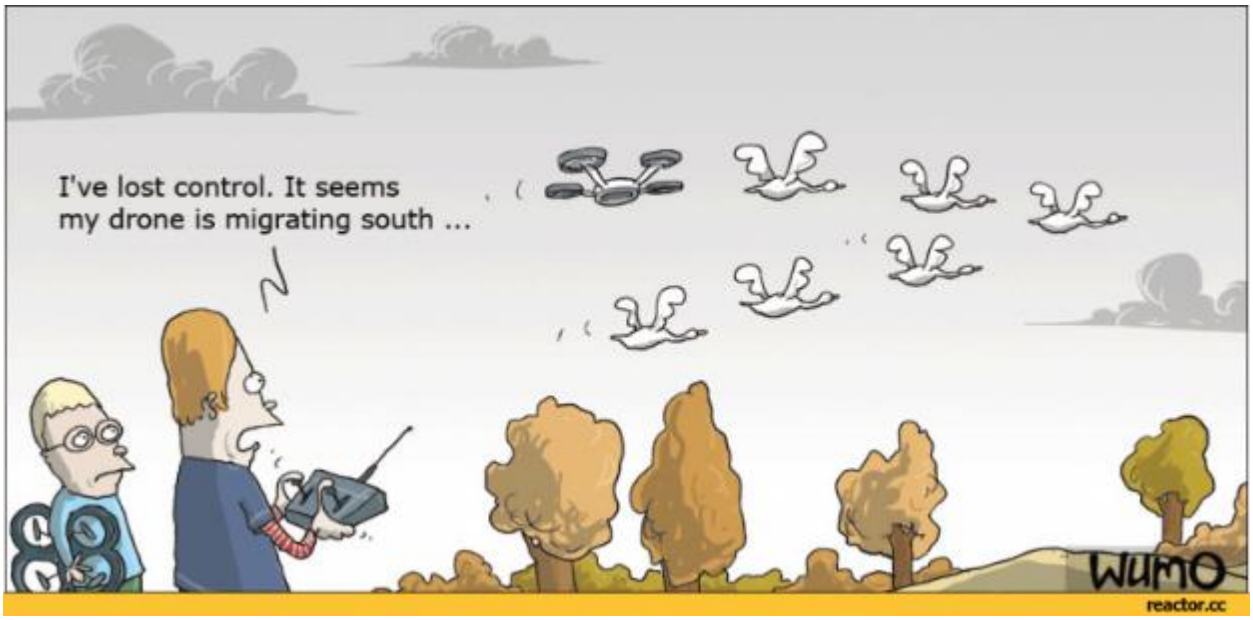
"Migratory Birds for People" certificate

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.

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: approx.. € 7,= (excl. mailing costs)
Send your message to: **r.b.heringa@gmail.com**