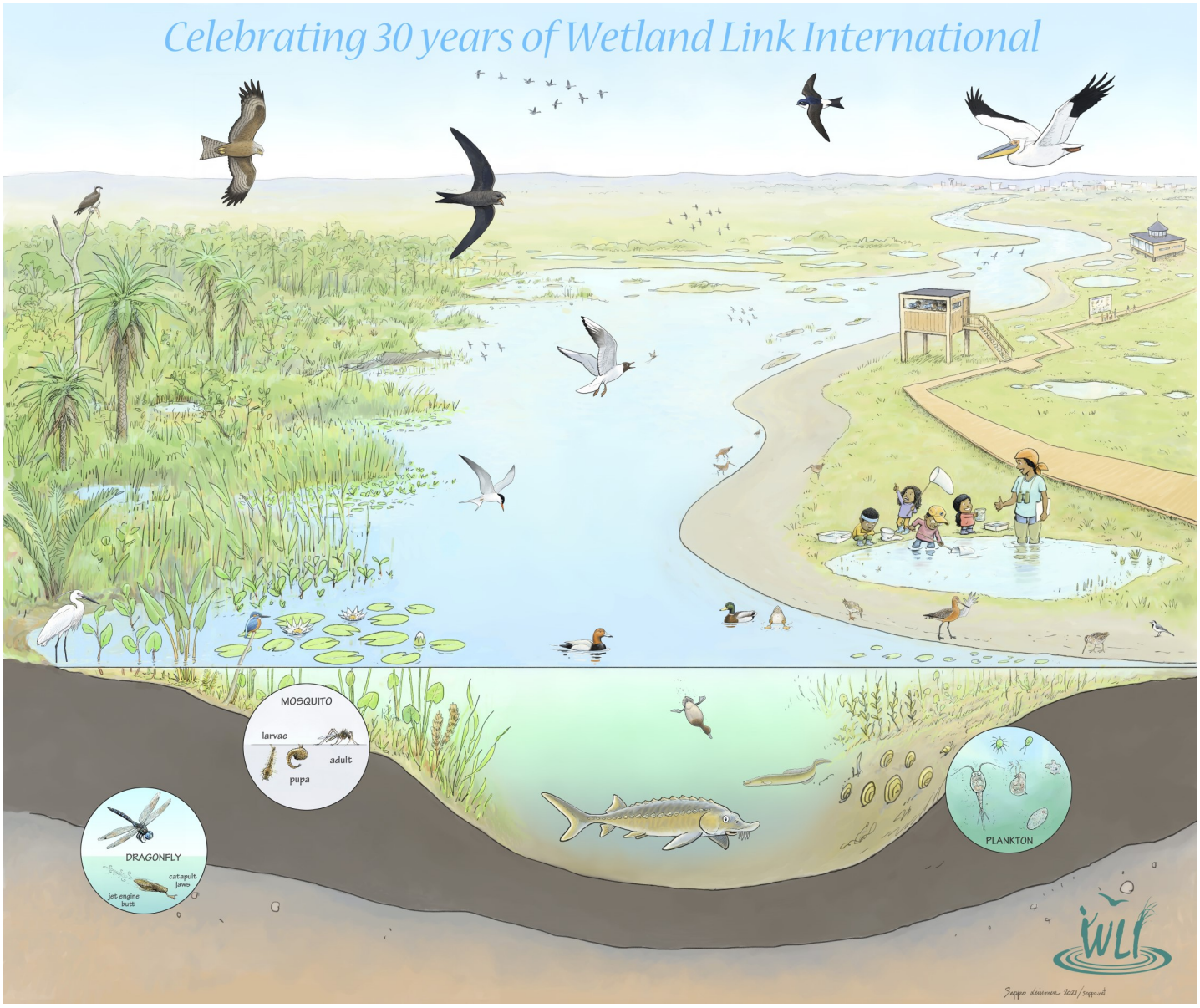
What the WLI team did in 2021

A summary of WLI staff and volunteers' activities in 2021.

30th Anniversary

In 2021 we marked 30 years since WLI was founded. It is a great achievement, and we are very grateful for all the support and project activities across our member centres and partners. Most of our celebration was online but we also created two very tactile tributes.



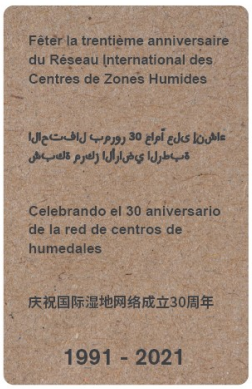
Artwork

After a callout to WLI members for suggestions, we commissioned the environmental artist Seppo to create a picture celebrating wetland visitor centres. He created a joyful scene that shows some of the shared elements of what WLI members do. The 1m x 80cm fabric poster is intended to support your teaching and engagement activities particularly with schools, showing a generic wetland scene with different habitats showing temperate, tropical and mangrove scenes. You can order a free copy via the WLI website.

Pin badges

We created commemorative pin badges for the anniversary as well – all WLI members should have received some in the post – let us know if you didn't.

As usual we published two issues of our WLI World newsletter but made it look visually similar to the first newsletter from 1991.



30 Ideas

On the website we created some new categories to mark the anniversary. We published profiles of some of the founders of WLI. We set about collecting '30 Ideas' about wetland visitor centres. This is a simple resource showing simple case studies of what works in wetland education.

The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT) also profiled founder of WLI Doug Hulyer, in their Waterlife magazine.

Webinars

We used this 30th year to launch our series of webinars, that we plan to do regularly every year. We learnt a lot! We held three, one each in English, French and Spanish; each webinar had a launch of Seppo's posters, an introduction to the new Star award scheme, and case studies from three examples across the world. Thanks to everyone who supported us, and those that tuned in to watch.

Star Wetland Centres

Our pan-global panel continued to develop the wetland centre accreditation scheme, ultimately settling on the Star Wetland Centre Award. The award aims to recognise good practice at wetland centres, providing recognition for them but also learning across the network. Massive thanks to Amy Lecciones and her team for developing the logo! We will open the award scheme to applicants on World Wetland Day 2022, with awards presented at next year's Ramsar Conference, so look out for developments soon.

Website

We continued to update the WLI website which was relaunched in late 2020. With the help of volunteers Ann-Marie Dunbar and Dave Rogers we made sure every member profile is available in English and a locally relevant language from one of Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian, or Spanish.

We continued to add your resources and news items, as well as articles on increasing your digital engagement, to work with COVID restrictions.

New team member

Later in the year, WWT Senior Consultant on wetland centre design, Anna Wilson, started working more on WLI. This included advice on a World Wetlands Day activity in Nigeria, as well as researching international CEPA at WWT to help plan for the future.

WLI Asia Conference

We worked with our colleagues at the Ramsar Regional Centre East Asia (thanks to Seongbo especially for all her hard work!) and Amy Lecciones and her team at the Society for the Conservation of Philippine Wetlands to hold the online 8th WLI Asia Conference. It was a great opportunity to catch up with partners across the network. This is part I of the conference and we hope to work together to support the face-to-face conference in the Philippines in 2022.

Migratory Birds for People

In the East Atlantic Flyway, we continued to support the Migratory Birds for People (MBP) initiative. We coordinated 12 committee meetings, produced three newsletters and completed the guide to our giant flyway map. We also held the online annual meeting with partners giving guidance on bird ringing, using binoculars with children and dealing with difficult visitors. We also had some great guest speakers and did some planning for next years' meeting in Senegal.

The Flyway Youth Forum, co-organised together with Youth Engaged in Wetlands (YEW) and the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat. About forty people aged 18 to 35 joined in four half-days of online workshops under the theme 'Taking off from Africa to the Arctic'. Out of that a group of Flyway Youth Ambassadors has emerged who prepared a Declaration and Post-Forum Action Plan, to be released in 2022.

BioWet

The BioWet project concluded, despite delays due to the pandemic. BioWet was a collaboration with five other partners in Europe to enable teenagers to measure climate change at wetland visitor centres. It was funded by the European Union Erasmus+ programme. EVOA, Dokka High School, Randsfjord museum, and Urdaibai Bird Center held mutual visits, following on the visit to WWT Martin Mere in 2019. The Norwegian leads also arranged a seminar at Dokka wetland with diverse speakers, including remote participation by Chris Rostron and Connor Walsh.

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

External events participation

Chris Rostron was an active part of the INTECOL conference on wetlands. He co-chaired and facilitated sessions on engagement, citizen science, WLI case studies, and WWT's proposed school of wetland conservation. The conference was hosted virtually from New Zealand, with Chris joining in the UK night-time.

Although we couldn't attend the IUCN conference in person, our WWT colleague took binoculars over as part of the MBP optics for Africa scheme, and took part in an online webinar with West Africa partners. We also meet lots colleagues and attended webinars, all virtually.

Anna Wilson presented remotely to conferences arranged by UK World Heritage and Interpret Europe.

Team WLI took part in Global Bird Races in May and October with teams in three continents, simultaneous with World Migratory Bird Day.

Chris has also been actively involved in the rejuvenated EAAFP (East Asia Australasia Flyway Partnership) CEPA working group. We are delighted to see this becoming more active and excited to be part of the planning group to lead on its development.

The carbon footprint of our staff and volunteers for travel in 2021 was 0 Tonnes CO2e. Had travel happened as-planned it would have been 13.3 Tonnes CO2e.

The team's working-from home carbon footprint is provisionally estimated at .93 Tonnes CO2e.

Four new members joined WLI in 2020.

Our Facebook page grew to 1,368 followers. Our Twitter account now has 793 followers.

We sent 49 mass emails in three languages.

We produced two Bulletins in 2020: Bulletin 1, Bulletin 2.

For more information on WLI, please contact:

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Or visit the website at www.wli.org.uk

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

The WLI network is coordinated by WWT