What the WLI team did in 2023

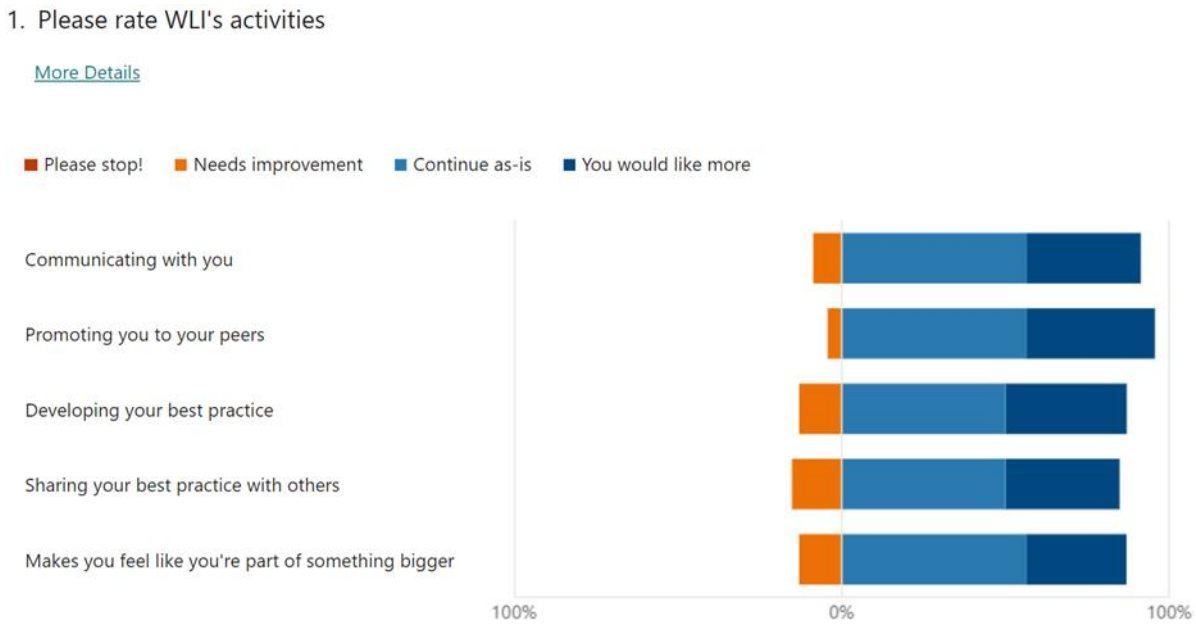
A summary of WLI staff and volunteers' activities in 2023

Small Grants launch and awards

In 2023, WLI launched its first global grant scheme for members of the network. International law firm Eversheds Sutherland funded the scheme. The WLI core team assessed seventeen applications, and six WLI members were awarded grants ranging from £750 to £2000. As our first year, we learned a lot about the processes and we hope to repeat it in the future more efficiently. The total value of applications for the grant was about £50,000, which sets us a long-term goal for the fund.

Your feedback

More than ten percent of WLI members took part in our survey in December, to help shape our work in 2024. The findings are mostly positive or neutral, with a summary to follow.



WLI Asia-Oceania

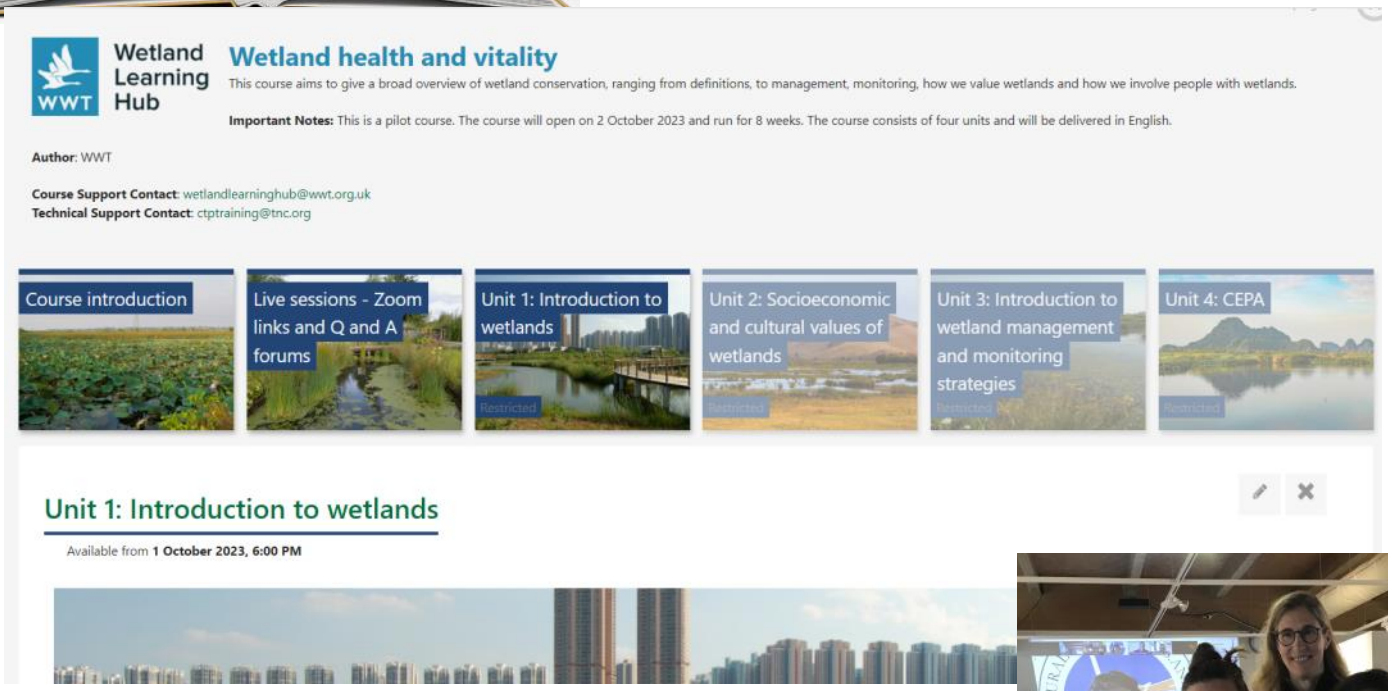
We are working to support the Ramsar Regional Centre – East Asia who are leading on WLI A-O, and preparing for a regional meeting in Sri Lanka at the end of 2024. The team took supported a special presentation at the Symposium to mark the 25th Taipei International Birdwatching Fair, hosted by Guandu Nature Park, with participants including Nature Classroom.

East Atlantic Flyway Youth Forum

We again co-organised the East Atlantic Flyway Youth Forum, with the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative and Youth Engaged in Wetlands. The youth participants received bespoke training in storytelling for wetlands, from Conservation Without Borders and others.

Wetland Learning Hub

This is WWT's first foray into online training and capacity building and offers wetland conservationists an opportunity to develop their skills across a number of areas, including CEPA. Our first cohort of 63 students took part, with lectures from WLI members including Miss Amy Lecciones in the Philippines, Chris Rostron, Dr Sara Thornton, Dr Geoff Hilton, Dr Paul Rose and Dr Sietse Los of WWT UK, Enri Uusna, Estonia, Dr Chethika Gunasiri of Sri Lanka, and Dr Swapan Paul of Sydney, Australia. Find out more here.



MBP Annual Meeting

WLI members were well represented at the Annual Meeting of Migratory Birds for People (MBP), the east Atlantic flyway initiative for wetland centres. Hosted by EVOA, with representatives from Lekki Conservation Centre and Haus Husum, along with Connor and Alex from the WLI core team. You can find a report on the meeting on the WLI website under the MBP tab.

World Migratory Bird Day – Birds and schools

Chris Rostron has been invited to become a technical expert for CEPA issues at the African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA). As our MBP work partly covers that region, we come with experience and contacts long the flyway, and this will allow us to support a more structured approach to CEPA with partners across Africa, Europe and West / Central Asia. WLI will also benefit from a higher profile and access to new partners in these flyways.

Team assistant

The former WLI Internship has now become a part-time, remote role. In 2023 we said farewell to the first incumbent, Ibrahim Hama, and welcomed Khouloud Belhadj. If you use the Arabic version of the WLI website you will have noticed great improvements.

Consultancy

The WLI core team has more support, with the arrival of Project Manager Alex Hughes. Alex's role is firstly to provide consulting services on CEPA, but she has capacity to support WLI as well. If you haven't met her yet, check our pages here.

Webinar

The WLI webinar celebrated some of the Star award winners. The webinars were in English, French, and Spanish, and you can view recordings of them on our YouTube channel. They give insights into the motivations and techniques of Star wetland centres: Liceo Taller San Miguel, Guandu Nature Park, Kansas Wetlands Education Center, and Naturum Vattenriket.

Multiple playlists

WLI webinars in English
Public · Playlist
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Webinaires de WLI
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Seminarios web de WLI
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WLI Members
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MBP 2021 Annual Meeting
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Ramsar CEPA

Chris continues to represent wetland visitor centres on the Ramsar CEPA Oversight Panel. He was joined in 2023 by WLI members Felipe Velasco of Fundacion Montecito, Harison Andriambelo of WWT Madagascar, and Awa Joof of the West Africa Bird Study Association.

WLI and other Multilateral Environmental Agreements

At the Africa Eurasia Waterbird Agreement Chris was selected as the CEPA lead for the Technical Committee, and at TC14 in Bonn we worked with the group to move forwards with a new approach to promoting CEPA across the different workstreams of the agreement. Meanwhile in the East Asia Australasia Flyway Partnership, Chris continues to co-chair the CEPA working group, updating the CEPA strategy plan and preparing for representation at the MOP8 event in Brisbane.

He represented the CEPA OP at the Standing Committee in May, presenting the new CEPA workplan, and making links with the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, the Standing Committee members and the secretariat.

Wetland City Accreditation

This excellent initiative brings wetlands to urban areas globally, rewarding good practice in wetland protection and engagement with urban populations. Chris continues to promote CEPA activities, and he and our new colleague Alex attended the Mayors' round table in Amiens, France.

World Coastal Forum

Chris also worked with the newly launched World Coastal Forum, heading up their approach to CEPA and engagement, and running a plenary panel at their conference in Yancheng, China, in September.

The carbon footprint of our staff for travel in 2023 was 4.8 Tonnes CO2e.

The team's working-from home carbon footprint is estimated at 1.3 Tonnes CO2e.

We sent 56 mass emails in three languages.

We produced two Bulletins in 2023: March, September.

Twelve new members joined WLI in 2023.

Our Facebook page grew to 1,570 followers.
Our X/Twitter account now has 1,030 followers.

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