

# World Wetland Network



“WWN will help to facilitate the involvement of Wetland NGO's in the implementation of the Ramsar Convention, an aim which the Secretariat supports. We look forward to working with the WWN, and to their support at the next COP in 2012, and look forward to the outcomes of the new World Wetlands Award scheme for best practices in wetland conservation and wise use”

*Ramsar Secretariat, November 2009*

**Annual Report, November 2008-October 2009**

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## Foreword



It seems a long time ago since the excitement and activity of Ramsar's COP10 meeting in South Korea, and at the time a group of NGO representatives were putting together the beginnings of a new network. Some of us had been to previous COP meetings and knew how it functioned, but most of us were new to the experience. One thing we all shared, however, was a feeling that we could be having much more input to the Ramsar Convention's process of work.

We had been provided with a room to use, and once we were organised, held daily morning meetings before the main business of the day started. This gave us a chance to involve as many NGOs as possible, and afterwards, the core group spent extra time preparing documents and doing more detailed work on the approach.

By the end of the conference, we had a work plan, terms of reference and a committee of 11 people identified. A year on, and we have achieved much of what was on the work plan maintained monthly contact with the majority of the members, and successfully got a grant for an international wetlands award.

This is the start of a new stage for WWN, an exciting phase that will see the website properly developed, allow the committee to meet face-to-face and give a focus to new and existing members in actively promoting good wetland management. We look forward to another productive year, and to boosting our membership and effectiveness.

Chris Rostron  
Chair, World Wetland Network

## 1. Introduction

On November the 4<sup>th</sup>, 2008, during the Ramsar COP10, the Terms of Reference were adopted for the World Wetland Network. Discussions on the previous days had led the group to realise the need for a structured grouping of wetland NGOs, after the pre-Ramsar international NGO meeting, and the production of an NGO Declaration.



Colleagues who had attended more Ramsar COPs than they cared to remember, described how at each conference, smaller NGOs were invited to take part, but were often not well organised or prepared, and therefore missed playing a vital role in getting their

messages across. Countless wetland conservation, education and community projects are carried out by grass-roots NGOs, and we want their voices to be heard, to enable us to influence this most important international agreement on wetlands.

Since then, the WWN committee has met on a monthly basis, using Skype and e-mail as a low cost means of maintaining communication, and growing our membership, as well as encouraging all our members to communicate via the listserv. Each member has worked to keep this going, attending meetings early in the morning and late at night, often in their own free time. The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust has generously provided a chair, through its Wetland Link International (WLI) project, for which we are grateful. The WWN committee comprises:

<b>Representative role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Next Ramsar NGO Conference on Wetlands (COP11, 2011)	Mr. Peter Lengyel	UNESCO ProNatura, Romania
Asia	Mr. Minoru Kashiwagi	Ramsar Network Japan
	Mr. Tsuji Atsuo	JAWAN, Japan
Neotropics	Ms. Melissa Marin	FUNGAP, Costa Rica
	Mr. Esteban Biamonte	Union de Ornitologico, Costa Rica
North America	Ms. Becky Abel	Wisconsin Wetlands Association
Africa	Mr. Mbye Baboucarr	Stay Green Foundation, Gambia
Oceania	Ms Cassie Price	Wetland Care Australia
Europe	Mr. Chris Rostron	Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust

An ambitious bid to the Spanish Fundacion Biodiversidad has been successful, and this will allow us to launch an international awards scheme, recognising best practice in wetland management, and drawing attention to examples of situations of wetland degradation. This report charts the progress of the WWN, from a good idea of a group of committed people in South Korea, to a functional international organisation which has grown to be on the brink of a major new project. One year on, and we can feel pleased with what we have achieved, and excited about the challenges that await us.

## 2. Administrative groundwork

The initial meeting developed some basic paperwork for the project, with the input of other NGO representatives present at the Ramsar COP. This included a Terms of Reference, setting out membership of the committee and the aims and objectives of the WWN, a work plan, with short, medium and long-term goals, and a membership list which is maintained by the WWN secretary Esteban Biamonte.

“In the wake of the harmful wetland management policies of some environmentally unfriendly governments worldwide, unsustainable use of wetlands is a social, cultural and economic reality for the poor. Wise use of wetlands is no longer a concern only for the environmentalists, but a sharp focus for the end-users, invariably human-kind.”

*Baboucarr Mbye, WWN Committee Member, Africa*

For more details on paperwork, please see the appendices attached to this report, or the WWN website.

## 3. Finances

Given the lack of funding, we do not have much to report back. The main cost would have been the time spent by members of the committee in attending and preparing for meetings. WWT have agreed to support the Chair’s time in administering the meetings and website. One WWN member kindly donated nearly £200 to the project. Other costs listed below.

Item	Date	Cost (£)	Funds (£)
Skype		£25.00	
Logo design		£230.00	
In kind staff time (WWT)		£3,000.00	£3,000.00
In kind staff time (members)			
Purchase of website names		£100.00	
Translation service		£150.00	
Donation			£190.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£3,505.00</b>	<b>£3,190.00</b>
	<b>Balance</b>	<b>-£315.00</b>	

## 4. Communication

### 4.1 Skype committee meetings

As a low cost means of staying in contact, Skype has allowed the committee to hold monthly meetings of up to 8 people at once, for around an hour each time. Given the geographical spread of partners, some are speaking at nearly midnight local time, whilst others are logging on at 6.00am in the morning. Minutes are written up and posted onto the WWN website. This is generally an abridged version, suitable for public viewing, as we attempt to maintain an open and accessible system for members and non-members.

### 4.2 Website

Currently WWN has a website hosted on the WLI pages of WWT. This allows basic information to be posted by the Chair, at no cost to the group. The website is available in the Ramsar languages (English, French and Spanish) with some resources available in other languages where they have been translated by partners. The WWN has purchased domain name of [www.worldwetnet.org](http://www.worldwetnet.org) for use by the members of the network.



### 4.3 Leaflet and branding

The generous donation of some funding by a WWN member allowed us to pay a designer to develop a WWN logo, in the form of two interlinking waves. This creates a visually recognisable logo, which works across cultures and languages.

The leaflet was developed jointly by the committee, and translated by partners. It is available as a downloadable PDF for use by all members, and can be tailored to local use.

### 4.4 Listserve

Our Europe representative, Peter Lengyel, set up and manages the listserv, which now has well over 200 members. It is open to anyone to join and can be accessed at [http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/World Wetland Network](http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/World_Wetland_Network). There is regular messaging, with members updating each other on projects, alerting each other to information resources, and raising the profile of wetland issues of international importance.

### 4.5 Work with Ramsar and other external groups

The Chair of WWN maintains regular contact with the Ramsar secretariat, including members of the STRP. A meeting between the Chair and the Deputy Secretary General also took place to discuss the World Wetland Health Check proposals.

## 5 . Project development

“The World Wetland Network is providing a unique opportunity for NGOs around the world to stay in close contact and provides a support network on the 'big' issues in wetlands. Through the membership we are able to keep NGOs large and small in our own. Countries abreast of the wetlands world stage – not an easy feat!”

*Cassie Price, WWN Committee Member, Oceania*

*5.1 Membership*  
A list of members is kept by the WWN Secretary, Esteban Biamonte, and reflects the membership of the listserve.



Recently, members have been encouraged to sign up with more details of their projects and activities, using a membership form designed and developed by Baboucarr Mbye, the WWN Africa representative. This has not been widely taken up by members, but sets the scene for our next project, which will require members to sign up in order to vote in the World Wetland Awards scheme.

### *5.2 Wetland Health Check*

Initial plans to create an international project of wetland evaluation, the Wetland Health Check, were developed through active committee members. The extent of the work soon made the committee realise that WWN is not yet at a stage where it can successfully deliver such a project, and that more work on consolidating our network was needed. We also became aware that the IBA scheme of BirdLife international fulfilled many of the aims of the Health Check. For these reasons we have not progressed the Health Check, although it may form the basis of a future project.

### *5.3 World Wetland Awards*

In looking for a project that would build our membership, develop our skills as a campaigning group, and provide resources such as a stand-alone website, we needed a recognisable and effective challenge. Part of the WWN rationale is to provide an independent commentary on international wetland conservation, supporting the delivery of ‘Wise use of wetlands’ and bringing the spotlight on examples of internationally important wetlands that are being neglected or destroyed.

The World Wetland Awards bid was submitted to the Fundacion Biodiversidad in September 2009 by Melissa Marin and Chris Rostron, with input from other committee members particularly Minoru Kashiwagi and Esteban Biamonte. We have recently heard that they are likely to support it. The scheme will work through the regional networks and a central tailor-made website. We will ask local NGOs to provide examples of internationally or nationally important wetlands that may be managed by themselves, through private groups, or by governments (local or



national). We will ask them to categorise the award as either positive or negative, and allocate a category (e.g. community involvement, sustainable / unsustainable agriculture, habitat management, wildlife management etc).

The Awards will then be decided by the WWN committee, and presented at the CBD COP10 in Japan in October 2010. The awards will then be repeated for the Ramsar COP11 meeting in Romania in 2012, in conjunction with the international NGO meeting.

## **6. Campaigning**

### *6.1 CBD involvement*

Our Asia representative in Japan is working with the CBD Alliance, supporting civil engagement in the CBD COP of 2010. Based in Japan, Kashiwagi-san has taken part in the CBD Alliance discussions, and will play a role in supporting Wetland NGO engagement in the CBD meeting.

### *6.2 South Korea*

Since the Ramsar COP10, and commitments made by the South Korean government, news has emerged that some major wetland destruction schemes are not only planned, but also being carried out. Active WWN members in South Korea are campaigning against the 4 rivers 'restoration' scheme, with help and support from other WWN members via the listserv, and information uploaded on to the WWN site by the Chair.

## **7. Regional work**

Whilst we are waiting for decisions on funding the regional work has been limited, but notably the Africa representative (Baboucar Mbye) has been very active in promoting and communicating the role of WWN across the region. We hope to carry out much more of this type of work once we have confirmed project funding for the World Wetland Awards.

## **8. Future plans**

The WWN still has areas of its work plan that need addressing. Critically, we need to focus on the following areas:

### *8.1 Recruitment of new members*

Because the WWN has spent the last year planning and developing its approach, there have been few 'concrete' projects to attract new partners and external interest. Despite this fact, the listserv has grown to nearly 220 members, and we have started to collect membership forms for those interested. We anticipate that the World Wetlands Awards project will attract many more members with an interest in their local and national wetlands.



### *8.2 Stronger links with other IOP members*

Although we have contacts with Ramsar, IUCN, Wetlands International and BirdLife, we would like to formalise these relationships, and have more regular communication with them. This will take place over the next year.

### *8.3 Website and content, including case studies.*

The website has the structure to accommodate case studies, regional news and other materials that would be useful to members. With the development of the website under the World Wetlands Awards, the website will grow to be better populated, with more local input. The regional committee members will be given access to upload materials themselves.

### *8.4 Development plan*

The work plan has served its purpose for the first year, allowing us to progress the priorities identified at the Ramsar COP10. We are planning to meet physically in 2010, and this will give us the chance to work in more depth on a development plan.

## **9 Sustainability**

The WWN committee works via Skype and internet, and has not met face to face since the initial meeting in Changwon, South Korea. The carbon costs of a central meeting in the UK for 7 members of the committee equates to around 17 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emitted. This makes the committee a very environmentally effective way of developing an international project, and we hope to keep our environmental costs to a minimum to reflect our environmental mission.

## 10 Appendices

### 10.1 Terms of Reference

#### NGO World Wetlands Network (WWN)

(4<sup>th</sup> November 2008, Changwon, Korea)

#### **Goal:**

Develop an international tool for communication among NGOs about conservation and wise use of wetlands.

#### **Objectives:**

- a) Facilitate and coordinate the preparation of NGOs' statement and draft resolutions prior to every Ramsar COP.
- b) Create an international platform to share knowledge about the best practices for wetland conservation and wise use.
- c) Facilitate a technical space for the identification of conservation gaps in wetlands locally and globally.
- d) To establish working groups on specific issues related to the wise use of wetlands.

#### **Structure of the coordination group:**

Representative role	Name	Organisation
Next NGO Conference on Wetlands (COP11, 2011)	Mr. Peter Lengyel	UNESCO ProNatura, Romania
Asia	Mr. Ma Yong-un	KFEM, Korea
	Mr. Tsuji Atsuo	JAWAN, Japan
Neotropics	Ms. Melissa Marín	FUNGAP, Costa Rica
North America	Ms. Becky Abel	Wisconsin Wetlands Association
Africa	Mr. Mbye Baboucarr	Stay Green F., Gambia
Oceania	Ms Cassie Price	Australia
Europe	Mr. Chris Rostron	WLI, United Kingdom

Chair: Chris Rostron (WLI)

Co-Chair: Peter Lengyel (UNESCO- ProNatura)

Secretary: Melissa Marín (FUNGAP) and Esteban Biamonte (UOCR)

#### **Technical Advisers:**

W. Chad Futrell. KFEM Consultant. U.S.A.

Kashiwagi Minoru. JWAN, Japan.

4<sup>th</sup> November 2008, Ramsar COP10, Changwon

## Action plan for WWN 2008-12

### 1. Infrastructure

Objective	Task	Lead	Term
1.1 Work to gain support from Ramsar structure	Find existing resources for local NGOs within Ramsar including Ramsar website, forum and key contact. Link to Ramsar website.	WWN / Chair	Short
1.2 Lobby / campaign around specific sites and issues	Use website and network to collect letters/petitions for specific wetlands that are being threatened by development	WWN	Medium / Long
1.3 Use existing networks to provide support	Find best examples of networks (e.g., JAWAN, KFEM etc) and work out how to build national networks into WWN.	WWN	Short
1.4 Establish regional hubs and networks	Create regional committees to make links within / between regions, including gathering information about activities within their region; provide bi-annual reports.	Regional reps	Medium
1.5 Manage information	Provide overview to make sure that website is being well managed. Establish regional links to manage uploading.	Chair, reg reps secretary	Medium
1.6 Keep in touch	Use telecommunications such as teleconference, SKYPE and / or other means to hold committee meetings twice yearly	Chair	Short

## 2. Web resources

Objective	Tasks	Lead	Term
2.1 Content	Include examples of NGOs successfully managing / restoring wetlands, and other cases of best practice.	WWN	Medium
2.2 Find host for website	World NGO Conference already have website – could be good start and extends usefulness of that site. Tool for uploading messages / photos / resources to Bulletin Board	WWN	Short
	KFEM as host of website; and have the NGO that just hosted the COP to host the website and then pass it on to next NGO after COP	KFEM	Short
2.3 Links	Need comprehensive links to Ramsar site. Ramsar website has a forum that we could utilize to post photos and documents.	WWN	Short
2.4 Create own website	Create own page if WWN outgrows host pages. Wetland Wiki page (extraordinary flexibility in terms of what can be uploaded / edited / elicit opinion). Bulletin board hosted in short term.	WWN	Long

### 3. Development

Objective	Task	Lead	Term
3.1 Grow the network membership	Recruiting new members – individual NGOs and national coordinator to find the existing NGOs/networks in our own countries in order to better link these organizations	Chair and regional reps	Medium
3.2 Development plan	Need development plan to get ready for next COP	WWN	Medium
3.3 Advisory support and joint work	Host/mentor organization. Work with IoP's and Ramsar. Particularly support from IUCN. Closer partnership with IoP's	WWN	Short
3.4 Funding support	Fundraising, host organization, and capacity building	WWN	Medium

### 4. Communications

Objective	Task	Lead	Term
3.5 Regular direct communication	E-mail list of all interested members (held on website?)	Secretary	Short
	Six-monthly newsletter	Chair	Short
3.6 Regional communication	Need for regional lists for topics/issues that are not global	WWN	Medium