



World Wetland Network

Annual Report 2011





Introduction



The World Wetland Network (WWN) is now in its 3rd year, and 2011 was mostly spent preparing for the Ramsar COP11 and managing and promoting the 2nd round of the Wetland Globe Awards. Building on our previous round of the Globe Awards at the CBD COP in Nagoya, we also saw our membership jump to over 500 this year, which is a healthy increase largely due to members signing up to vote for the globe awards. We have maintained our WWN committee largely unchanged, and have continued to work well together despite not having a single face to face meeting this year. We continue to use skype and e-mail to ensure that we are in close contact, which saves money and also reduces our environmental impact.

We visited the Ramsar secretariat, WWF and IUCN at their headquarters in Gland, Switzerland, to discuss future joint work, communication pathways and opportunities to support the delivery of the Ramsar objectives. This was a very useful forum to improve the way that WWN functions, whilst maintaining our independence from the Ramsar convention, particularly from the point of view of how the Wetland Globe Awards are used to best advantage.

Despite funding pressures, WWN has raised its profile hugely this year, and the members of the committee have been very productive indeed. We are indebted to our funders the Fundación Biodiversidad, and to the energy and enthusiasm of our committee members and sub-regional representatives, and their host organisations.

We hope you find this report useful, but if you would like more information then please visit our website at www.worldwetnet.org

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Rostron'.

Chris Rostron and the WWN Committee





Developing our relationship with Ramsar and the IOPs

In January the chair of WWN (Chris Rostron) and the Neotropics Representative (Melissa Marin) went to visit the Ramsar Secretariat in Gland, to discuss the relationship between WWN and Ramsar. We agreed that the two organisations are distinctly separate, and the WWN needs to maintain its independence to ensure that any decisions we make are neither impacting on or influenced by the Ramsar convention and its members (all of which are governmental). However, we agree that the next round of the Globe Awards could take place at the Ramsar COP, as long as applied for a side event to do so.

The Ramsar CEPA approach also supports the involvement of civil society groups, and WWN is a good means of demonstrating this connection. We agreed that many of the goals of Ramsar, in terms of wise use of wetlands, and WWN are similar, and that civil society groups (CSOs) are keen to support the delivery. However, we would like to see more recognition of our work, and possibly more financial / resource support in order to gain maximum benefit.



In the latter part of 2011, we have used some of the materials produced by the Ramsar secretariat to raise awareness of the forthcoming Ramsar COP. Much material is produced from Ramsar's standing committee, for the draft resolutions that they produce. One of WWN's roles it to alert smaller NGOs and CSOs about the latest developments at Ramsar, and to make the material more accessible by providing summaries of relevant documents.

With the COP11 in mind, our Romanian colleague, Peter Lengyel, worked with the conference organisers to find us an NGO room for the planned international NGO meeting as well as during the whole COP, and asked for support for those NGOs attending. We also applied for a side-event to announce the globe awards, as well as display space during the COP.

Funding and resources

We were successful in our funding bid to the Fundación Biodiversidad to support the second round of the WWN wetland globe awards. Although we received a much smaller amount of funding than the original bid, it was enough to make some upgrades to the website, provide support for some colleagues to attend the Ramsar COP and cover some of WWT's staff time in hosting the project.

The key aims of the bids were to:

- Evaluate and build on the results of the first round of the Wetland Globe Awards.
- Run a second round of the Globe Awards.



- Deliver the results at the Ramsar COP11.
- Integrate WWN further into Ramsar and any other relevant Multi-lateral Environmental Agreement.

We worked with SEO Birdlife (Spain) to put in a bid for a preparatory meeting of the WWN committee with the Ramsar IOPs, which was also successful. The meeting will take place in Segovia, Spain, sometime in early 2012. This will allow some much-needed face-to-face preparatory work before the COP.



Wetland Globes

Although the deadline for the Wetland Globe votes is not until the 31st of March, we took the opportunity to open the voting early, in order to give people more chance to take part. In order to do this, we have to carry out some work on the website, responding to feedback from the first round of the awards. People had told us that:

- Registration should be immediate, to encourage voting.
- It should be simpler, just including the e-mail address as a username and a password.

- The map should show which wetlands have been voted for and the number of votes, to show progress with voting.
- We should reduce the number of awards from three (Blue, Green and Grey) to just two (blue for well-managed wetlands, and grey for wetlands under threat).

These changes were made, and then the website launched in July, giving around nine months for people to vote on their local wetlands. We also distributed publicity for the awards, including a comic strip showing voting,

Communications

Regular communication via our listserve, run by Peter Lengyel, and also through wider networks, allowed us to promote messages extensively. We also created a FaceBook site, linking us in to local people running campaigns, as well as internationally to other colleagues. The website was updated, with news and resources, and the improved voting system has made it more accessible.

We actively supported a campaign to prevent the creation of a soda ash plant at Lake Natron, Tanzania, one of last year's Blue Globe winners, and sent a letter of concern to the Tanzanian government. The Blue Globe award was given for good management of the site, and this was used



by local campaigners to lobby the government to continue protecting the site. Ultimately, the proposal was turned down, which is a great outcome for the site. Whilst this is not entirely due to the Blue Globe, we were told by our local contacts that it helped to persuade the government.



The Olentangy Wetlands (US) were threatened by a planned pipeline which would have had a significant impact on the hydrology of the site. As it won a Green Globe Award, we wrote to support their opposition to the pipeline, citing the Green Globe award as recognition of the quality of the site. Happily, the proposal was withdrawn, again partly due to the Globe Award that it had received.

Regional work

Our regional network has grown a lot during the year. The WWN committee is made up of one representative from each region (continent) but we also made a conscious effort to find new sub-regional representatives to strengthen the network. Their role is both to promote WWN through their own national and regional networks, and to provide us with information on issues in their areas. We now have over 15 sub-regional representatives, in addition to our committee, that work to support the development of WWN and delivery of the Globe Awards.

Thanks

Thanks to the WWN committee that have regularly attended our monthly meetings, and maintained their energy and enthusiasm over the year, without meeting as a group face-to-face at all. Thanks too to the sub-regional representatives that agreed to support WWN. It is very positive to see the civil society sector working so well together to achieve gains for wetlands and the communities that live and work around them. We also thank the Ramsar Convention for welcoming our input, and the Fundación Biodiversidad and WWT for providing funding to support our activities.





Contacts

To contact us, please e-mail the director of WWN chris.rostron@worldwetnet.org, or visit our website at www.worldwetnet.org for more information.