

The Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative

Report 2013 for the Monitoring project



Counting group in Guinea-Bissau during the simultaneous waterbird count January 2014 (foto Lars Maltha Rasmussen)

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Brief activity report 2013 of the Monitoring project of the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative

This work was funded by the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs through the Programme Towards a Rich and Healthy Wadden Sea Ecosystem. Within the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative (WSFI), the monitoring project has been carried out in close cooperation with the project on capacity building (as coordinated by Tim Dodman). Both projects are steered and advised by a steering and advisory group under the coordination of the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat (CWSS). Secondly close cooperation existed with the Conservation of Migratory Birds (CMB) project as coordinated by Birdlife International and the International Waterbird Census (IWC) as coordinated by Wetlands International.

The overall project consists of four outputs; progress in 2013 towards targets are presented below:

- Output 1. An integrated Monitoring Framework for the East Atlantic Flyway.
This consists of a plan for the organizing of integrated monitoring in the whole coastal part of the East-Atlantic Flyway. Covering the regions Arctic, NW-Europe, West Africa and Southern Africa and the monitoring types abundance monitoring, vital rate monitoring and environmental monitoring.
 - After the preparing of a consultation draft in 2012, comments of the ad-hoc expert group and the advisory board of the WSFI have been collected and integrated in the document. This version is available on the website of the CWSS (http://www.waddensea-secretariat.org/sites/default/files/downloads/flyway_monitoring_plan.pdf). The document will now be printed in 2014.

- Output 2. A strategy and guidelines for waterbird monitoring in West Africa.
This consists of a plan for the monitoring of coastal sites at the Atlantic seaboard of West Africa with emphasize to the countries Mauritania, Senegal, Gambia, Guinee-Bissau, Guinee and Sierra Leone. Here are the most important wintering grounds for populations from the Wadden Sea. Secondly it consist of guidelines for national coordinators, site coordinators and observers in best practices in waterbird monitoring. Thirdly part of this output is the making of so called site protocols, detailed accounts of the best way to carry out total counts at complex key-sites. These documents are as such an implementation of several recommendations from the overall flyway plan (output 1). The focus in West Africa is first on abundance and environmental monitoring.
 - After the preparing of a consultation draft of the monitoring strategy in 2012, comments of the participants of the Dakar 2012 meeting and of the advisory board of the WSFI have been collected and integrated in the document. This version is now available on the website of the CWSS (http://www.waddensea-secretariat.org/sites/default/files/downloads/west_africa_monitoring_strategy.pdf).The document is after that,integrated with the monitoring guidelines for the region(see below) and will be printed in 2014.
 - In 2013 it was decided to integrate the monitoring guidelines, as drafted in 2012, with the monitoring strategy document. The monitoring guidelines itself have been updated in 2013 on the basis of the experiences with the counts in January 2013. It was not possible anymore to have the combined document printed before the January 2014 counts. Instead detailed instructions were provided to each counting team. After including experiences from the January 2014 count, the combined document will be printed in 2014.
 - The site protocols as drafted in 2012 were expanded on the basis of the January 2013 experiences. They will be finalized in 2014 on the basis of the January 2014 experiences and becoming available as pdf files.

- All winter counts of non-breeding waterbirds of coastal sites in West-Africa will be (as far as possible) included in the IWC database. A part of these counts are already available at this database but several others need to be added. In 2013 a contract was given to the University of Dakar (UNCAD) under which older count data have been entered into a uniform database and site- and counting unit boundaries digitized. This information will be handed over to Wetlands International for inclusion in the IWC database.

- Output 3. Pilot counts in West Africa

Within the three year project period 2012-2014, it is aimed to carry out pilot counts at a selection of sites in January 2013 and at as many sites as possible in January 2014.

 - In January 2013 counts have been carried out successfully in all seven West African countries. In each country several sites have been counted. The results were reported in the first half of 2013. The data have been send to WI and incorporated in the IWC database.
 - In April 2013 a meeting of CMB in Guinee was visited with additional financial support from WI and BirdLife. Feedback on the results of January 2013 was given and further training of monitoring methods provided.
 - During 2013 preparatory work for the total count of January 2014 was carried out, including:
 - o Asking and guiding the West African countries to make a proposal (including budget) for the count.
 - o Recruiting and instructing foreign experts for participation in the counts.
 - o Finding extra funding for the counts, both to improve the quality in West Africa and enlarge the counts to countries further to the south along the Atlantic coast (Ivory Coast, Ghana, Benin, Togo, Nigeria, Cameroon, Gabon). This succeeded with extra funding from Webs, UK , Government Niedersachsen, National Park Wadden Sea Niedersachsen and National Park Wadden Sea Denmark, World Wide Fund the Netherlands. This on top of the funding available from PRW and CMB.
 - o Counts could also be carried out in Liberia, Congo and Angola as part of a training program as organized by the capacity building project of the WSFI and in Namibia and South Africa as part of their normal activities for the IWC.
 - o Providing all countries with instructions about sites, counting units, counting forms, forms for IBA monitoring etc.
 - o Providing extra information about the counts to the countries and the outside world (see appendix 1).
 - In December 2013 a meeting of AEWA and a regional training workshop of the capacity building project of the WSFI was visited in Dakar and Djoudj, Senegal. Several presentations were given and meetings were carried out with national coordinators for the counts in January 2014. Especially the contacts with southern countries for the involvement in the total count 2014 was important.

- Output 4. Investigating future prospects for continuation of the monitoring in West Africa after 2014 and implementation of the integrated monitoring framework for the East Atlantic Flyway.
 - In 2013 support was given for preparing the Flyway Vision which was accepted at the Trilateral Governmental Conference in February 2014 by 16 parties and work was done for the subsequent Plan of Action 2014-2020

Annex 1

