

# Wetlands International

3 year review: 2005-2007



Coverphoto: Herdsmen in the Ruoergai peatlands, China (Marcel Silvius).

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Wetlands International, October 2007.

# Introduction to Strategy Review, 2005-2007



By Jane Madgwick  
Chief Executive Officer

## **Context and purpose of this document**

In November 2004, Wetlands International confirmed its ten year Strategic Intent and established 5 year targets, linked with four major Goals (see Strategic Intent, 2005-2014). Following this, the senior staff developed strategies and implementation plans at the global, regional and office levels.

In this draft document, we bring together an overview of the achievements of our work in the period 2005-2007, towards the 5 year targets under each Goal area. The data on our achievements from across the office network were collated on a web-based information system. This information base and personal communications were used to compile this document. Our progress over 3 years is presented, target by target, highlighting one key achievement, some of the other significant achievements – and by providing some comment on the status and outlook for our work in each case. The “star rating” provides a rough visual indication of how far we are in reaching the 5 year target after the first 3 years. The document does not pretend to be complete in its analysis, since not all data was available from all offices. It rather serves to highlight some key achievements and point to the main gaps.

We also illustrate in the following pages of this document, in broad terms, the overall and regional investment made by Wetlands International, indicating the extent of human and financial resources invested in working towards each Goal.

Our aim is to use this review document to stimulate feedback from our Supervisory Council, our members, partners and donors. We will consider in particular the reasons for the overall pattern of achievement, including regional differences in focus, capacity and opportunity. Furthermore, we will invite feedback on any adjustment of the targets that might be justified for our work in the upcoming triennium – and the implications of this for our operations.

## **Overview of pattern of achievements**

It can be seen from this broad assessment that a few, large-scale projects contributed disproportionately to achievements according to our global targets, that we set ourselves in 2004. In particular, the Green Coast project (in South and South-East Asia), the Wetlands and Poverty Reduction Project (in Africa, South-East Asia and Latin America), the Central Kalimantan Peatland Project (Indonesia), and the Ruorgai Marshes project (China), have contributed to achieve targets under each of the four Goals. This can be explained by the fact that they are fully “integrated projects”, i.e. they aim to bring about benefits to both nature and people through community-based actions for wise use and restoration of wetlands, based on wetland assessments and using capacity building, policy and communications approaches to reach out to stakeholders and decision-makers at a range of scales.

This review reveals that very significant results can be achieved through such projects in just 2-3 years, especially where we have existing experience and strong local partnerships. However, the review also serves to illustrate that achieving real changes in policies and management practices at for example a whole basin scale, requires a longer-term commitment, stretching well beyond the normal project cycle, as in the cases of Chilika and Loktak Lakes in India and the Inner Niger delta in Mali. All of these example achievements place emphasis on the critical role of partnerships in achieving success. Additionally, each of these projects is seen as a ‘model’ or demonstration, that has potential for replication or upscaling to bring larger scale impact.

Leaving aside the results of planned project activity, the review illustrates that Wetlands International was able to respond effectively to some major threats to wetlands, that became prominent on the global environment agenda unexpectedly during the reporting period - such as the Asian tsunami, avian influenza and the rapid rise in global attention to the threat of climate change. Using our past experience and the strength of our office and specialist expert networks, we were quickly able to define our niche, forge new partnerships and attract resources to scale up our operations in each case. This resulted in significant outcomes in terms of wetland conservation and wise use, human well-being and some important national and international policy adjustments. It is worth noting that these activities also served as a vehicle to greatly increase the visibility of Wetlands International in national and international media over this period.

### Broad differences in achievement per Global Goal

It can be seen from this review document that there are some achievements under each global target. However, within each Goal area, there are both strengths and weaknesses. The status of achievements can be very roughly grouped into three main categories:

- Targets which have been achieved or exceeded (see targets 1.1, 2.3, 4.2)
- Targets where significant work is in progress and planned, so greater achievements are anticipated in due course (see targets 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.3).
- Targets for which Wetlands International has not been able yet to develop sufficient capacity and resources to make significant progress over this period (see targets 1.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4).

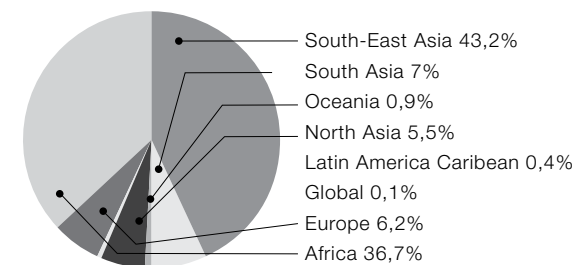
Not surprisingly, this outcome reflects considerably on the capacity and experience of the organisation, our existing donor and partnership profile. It also reflects the staff time investment needed to develop expertise, networks, partnerships, opportunities and resources to tackle some relatively new directions signaled by the Strategic Intent 2005-2015. It will be important for the senior staff to analyse the institutional challenges that the review reveals, taking into account any adjustments in direction that seem justifiable, for example in the light of changes in the external environment in which we operate.

### Main regional differences

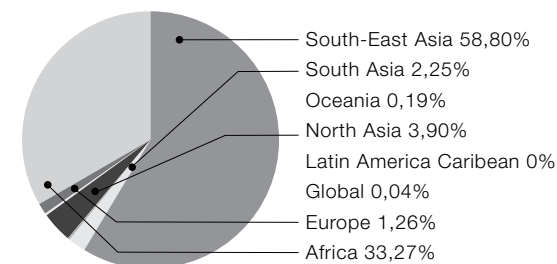
From the charts that illustrate the pattern of investment in each Global Goal (GG) per region can be seen for 2005-2008. While the overall turnover of Wetlands International has almost tripled in this period, around 60% of our investment 2005-2008 has been in the field of Wetlands and Livelihoods, supporting initiatives that contribute primarily (but not exclusively) towards Goal 2. The historical strong focus of our work in Africa and South-East Asia, according to bi-lateral aid and development

priorities, is also apparent. It can be seen that the Oceania team mostly works on Goals 3 and 4, while the offices in North Asia work on all Goal areas, but with a higher focus on Goal 1. The relatively low investment in Latin America reflects the presence of only one small office, with a primary focus on biodiversity conservation project work over this period. Through expansion of our Wetlands and Livelihoods work in LAC, planned to start in 2008, this picture is set to change. It is anticipated that these patterns will vary considerably year to year, considering that the organisation is still primarily project-based.

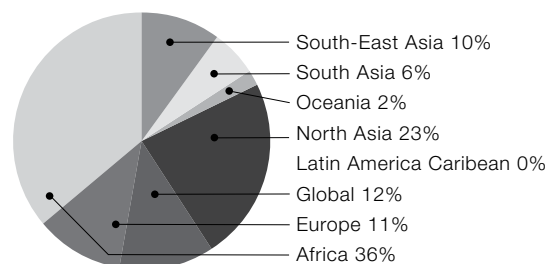
**Staff-days in GG2 per region in 2005-2007 (14,000 days)**



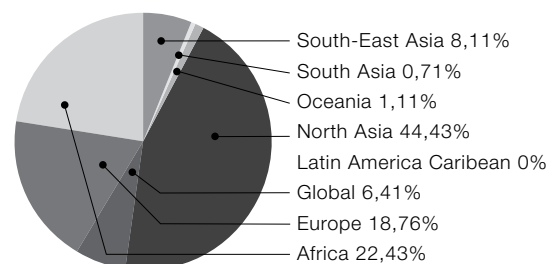
**Investment in GG2 per region in 2005-2007 (€ 19,9 mln)**



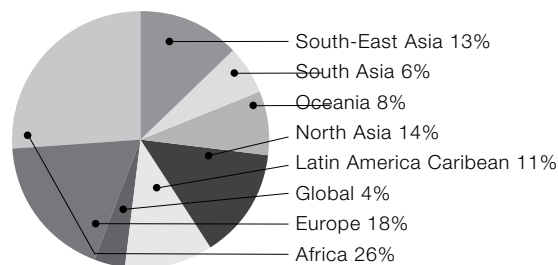
**Staff-days in GG1 per region in 2005-2007 (8,400 days)**



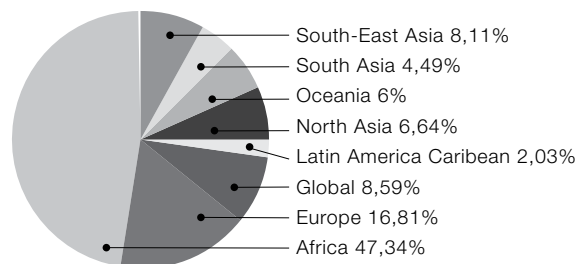
**Investment in GG1 per region in 2005-2007 (€ 3,4 mln)**



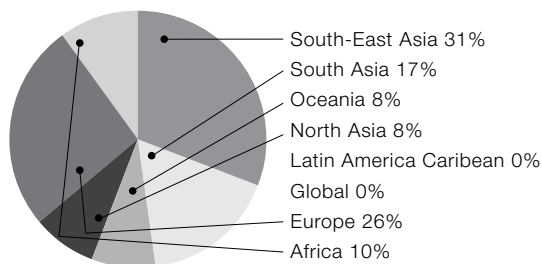
**Staff-days in GG4 per region  
in 2005-2007 (9,700 days)**



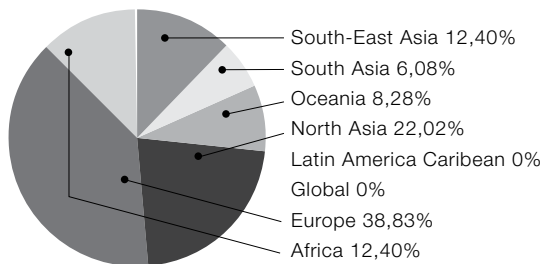
**Investment in GG4 per region  
in 2005-2007 (€ 9,1 mln)**



**Staff-days in GG3 per region  
in 2005-2007 (7,200 days)**



**Investment in GG3 per region  
in 2005-2007 (€ 4,0 mln)**



**Outlook and key issues for 2008-2010**

Wetlands International has undergone considerable development in terms of organisational growth and activity, over the review period. This is set to continue over the next triennium. Many of the opportunities and pathways to enhance our impact through our programmatic work are already broadly identified at the global and regional levels, building from our platform of existing achievements and partnerships. However, at this juncture, particular attention needs to be given to defining how Wetlands International can best use its knowledge, experience and networks to identify, demonstrate and promote the role of wetlands in mitigation and adaptation for climate change – given the recent rise to prominence of this issue on the global agenda. This has relevance for all 4 Global Goals. Additionally, special consideration should be given to review the specific targets and the organisational approach to Goal 1 (wetlands knowledge-base), considering that identification of the specific Wetlands International niche, development of internal capacity, partnerships and resources to support this work, has proved especially difficult over the reporting period.

Apart from refocusing our programmatic directions, the main challenges for Wetlands International over the next few years are to continue to build institutional strength and internal capacity in our office network; to revitalize the scientific and advisory architecture that supports our work; and to continue to increase our visibility and broaden our donor profile.



**1.1** Capacity for wetland assessment and monitoring is increased through regional and national initiatives, benefiting 25 countries; including the development of national wetland inventories, wetland valuation and assessment tools

**Rating** ★ ★ ★ ★ ☆

### Status and outlook

Wetlands International continued to build on its experience in wetland assessment and to engage with partners to develop and test new tools at a variety of scales in all regions. In this period opportunities were taken to apply our experience and approaches to influence some critical ecosystem management and development/ relief situations. The target for country beneficiaries was exceeded.

### Some significant achievements, 2005-2007

- Through the Ramsar Sites Information System, we delivered topical and publicly-available information on the increasing network of designated Ramsar sites
- Through the Green Coast Project, a combined ecological and social assessment method was developed and applied to tsunami-hit coastal stretches in 5 countries in South and South-East Asia. This information was used as a basis for assessing options and applying funds for ecosystem rehabilitation and livelihood development by this project and by government and relief agencies
- Through the Wetlands and Poverty Reduction Project, wetland valuation was included as a core module in training of trainers for wetland management in West and East Africa; involving 120 policy makers and 150 practitioners
- A Indonesian series of peatland atlases were compiled that described the peatland distribution and carbon contents at the district level; peatland maturity and thickness. The atlas has been widely used as reference material in both local, national and international meetings

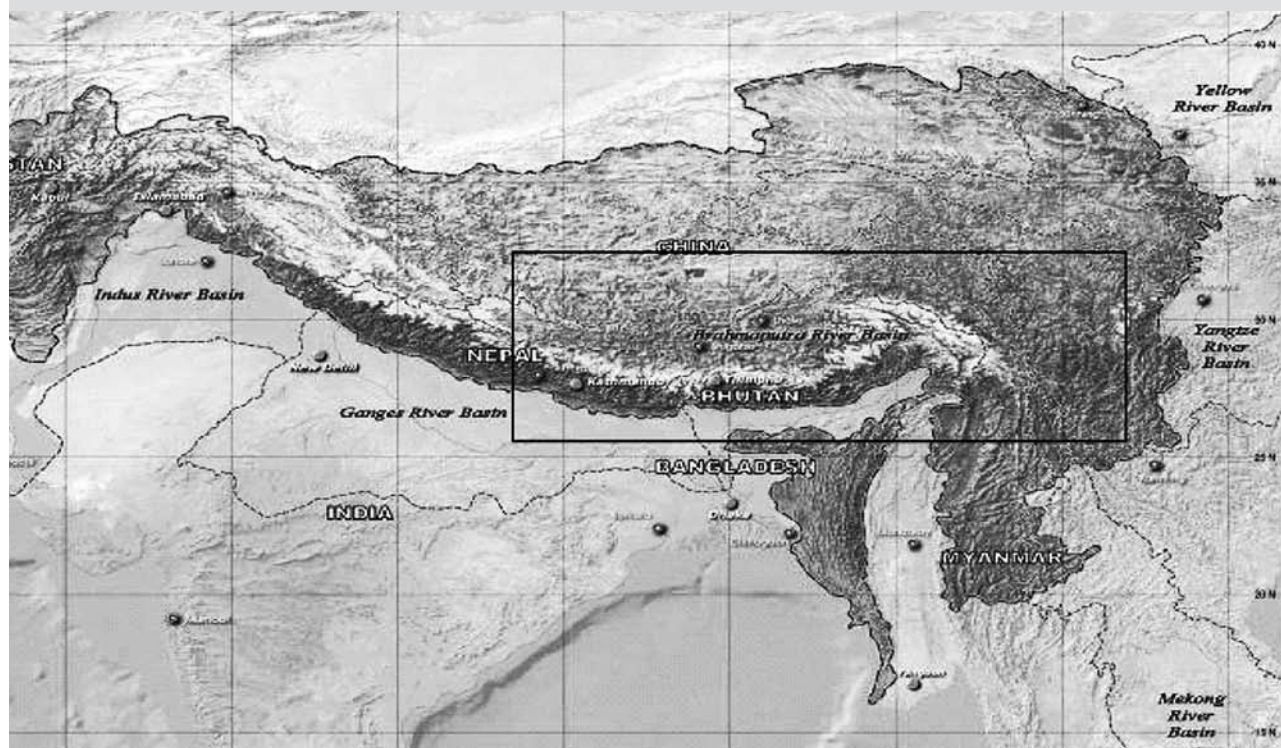
### A key achievement

## Building capacity in high altitude wetlands of the Himalayas

As a contribution to the broader, multi-stakeholder Himalayan Initiative, Wetlands International established the first major application of the Asian Wetland Inventory (AWI) methodology, initially developed by Wetlands International in 2001. The work will contribute to the first wetland database and decision-making tools for water management in the Himalayas, which serve as the 'water tower' of Asia, providing resources and services to 250 million people locally and to approximately 1.5 billion people downstream. The project has focused on a pilot catchment and involves Bhutan, China, India and Nepal. In 2006-2007, it involved building capacity among agencies and stakeholders for wetland and hydrological assessment and

inventory and coordination processes for integrated catchment management. The standardised monitoring framework uses a hierarchical map-based approach of data collection at four different levels of detail. It optimises the application of data from the field in decision making processes. Through regional workshops, participants were trained to pilot the approach, which is to be expanded once more countries become involved. The project is funded by the European Union and implemented by ICIMOD and several other partners, under the lead of Wetlands International.

The Himalayan region: water tower of Asia. The frame delineates the project area of the Himalayan initiative.



**1.2** National wetland policies are developed, adopted and/or implemented in 12 additional countries

**Rating** ★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆

### Status and outlook

For those cases where Wetlands International was directly involved, we have reached halfway with this target and we expect to achieve it by 2010. Apart from advising governments directly, a successful strategy has been to work in partnership with non-governmental organisations in developing countries, supporting their advocacy role financially and technically. A third strategy has been to influence resolutions and decisions made by inter-governmental Conventions. Some clear successes were achieved in this respect with regard to Resolutions at the last Ramsar Convention Conference of Parties (COP 9 , Kampala, 2005). These Resolutions are useful vehicles for promoting improved policies at the national level.

### Some significant achievements, 2005-2007

- Through the Wetlands and Poverty Reduction Project, we worked together with local partners in Kenya, Ethiopia, Senegal, Mali and Ghana. This already resulted in final adoption of Wetlands Strategies for Ghana and Mali in 2007 .
- Our Black Sea Office drafted the Ukrainian Wetlands Strategy. The final version was accepted but is still waiting to be politically approved

### A key achievement

## Linking wetlands-water and poverty reduction in Ghana

Through the Wetlands and Poverty Reduction Project, Wetlands International supported the Ghana Wildlife Division in its objective to deliver a Revised Wetlands Strategy and Action Plan of Ghana through the provision of technical expertise and ensuring wider stakeholder consultation. Wetland ecosystems in Ghana constitute about ten percent of the country's total land surface and make a vital contribution especially to the economies of coastal communities. Noting that wetlands play a significant role for the regulation of water supply, purification and floods, key steps were taken to ensure this particular wetland policy was well aligned with the National Water Policy of Ghana also. Steps were taken to ensure that this Wetland Strategy was well

aligned with the National Water Policy of Ghana as well as to ensure specific linkage to Ghana's Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy II (GPRS II; 2006 – 2009). Following this result, Wetlands International supported a workshop on National Wetland Policy development (held in Cotonou, Benin in March, 2007) as an outreach platform to ensure that the good example developed by Ghana could be shared with some other African Contracting Parties. The training was led by the Governments of Ghana and Uganda.

Training of trainers course on wetland management in West Africa (Pieter van Eijk)



**1.3** Development of major initiatives for communicating and sharing wetland information, including a Global Wetlands Database and a World Wetland Index

**Rating** ★ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

#### **Status and outlook**

This ambitious target remains a huge challenge. The organisation has too little capacity to invest in establishment of a comprehensive wetlands database and has not been successful in gaining resources for global level wetland assessments and analyses. However, during this period we have made significant steps in communicating policy-relevant information based on data Wetlands International have collated and analysed e.g. on the status of waterbird populations and on peatlands. We also were successful in bringing together and communicating wetland case studies that illustrated the findings of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. It is planned that this approach be more strongly developed in the coming years – for example to regularly publish “State of the World’s Waterbirds”.

#### **Some significant achievements, 2005-2007**

- Outcomes of the International Waterbird Census - Waterbird Populations Estimates 4 were successfully converted in press coverage, focusing on the critical situation of waterbirds in Asia and successes of conservation measures in regions such as Europe
- The outcomes of the Edinburgh Conference “Waterbirds Around the World” were converted into media outreach on waterbirds and climate change impacts
- Major media outreach was achieved on the status shorebirds in South-East Asia; addressing the loss of coastal wetlands

#### **A key achievement**

### Watching wetlands from space

The GlobWetland initiative (2003-2006) provided a standardised information service towards wetland managers, including detailed remote sensing data on long-term trends in wetlands as well as guidance on how to optimally use earth observation data for improving water resources management. Focusing on Europe, Africa and the Americas, the initiative provides detailed information on 50 wetlands in 21 countries. The project enhanced knowledge exchange among partners through a global conference as well as a web site providing information on products and project developments. It was developed as a response to the need for

quantified information on wetland threats, land use, flow regimes and changes in vegetation cover. Funded through the European Space Agency (ESA), the project was implemented by Vexcel Canada, Wetlands International and several remote sensing consultants. In order to optimally aid conservation efforts and to maximise data applicability, the project adopted a user oriented approach; By consulting end-users in the field, it identified specific needs for information and prioritised sites for monitoring.

Providing information on the global state of waterbirds

## Waterbird Population Estimates

Fourth Edition



**WETLANDS**  
INTERNATIONAL



**2.1** Values and services delivered by wetlands, including their importance for environmental and food security, are recognised in poverty reduction and development policies in at least one country in each of five focal regions: West, East and South Africa, South-east Asia and Latin America

**Rating** ★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆

### **Status and outlook**

We have been successful in reaching this target, particularly in South Asia, South-East Asia and West Africa where our offices have strong networks. Some achievements have been made against this target in all regions. In Africa, we highlighted the significant evidence on the role wetlands play in providing freshwater for agriculture, grazing, fish production and drinking water. In South-East Asia, we have been able to demonstrate the huge global value of peatlands as carbon sinks and how restoration of coastal forests and other wetlands can provide livelihood opportunities and increase security from the impacts of storms. By quantifying and communicating research and field demonstration results, we have attracted the interest of major global and regional finance institutions such as the World Bank, African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, the EU. It is anticipated that Wetlands International will continue to expand its influence in Africa and Asia in this way and will strengthen this aspect of our work in Latin America over the coming years.

### **Some significant achievements, 2005-2007**

- Five countries in West Africa – Mauritania, Mali, Guinea Bissau, Gambia and Senegal endorsed the recommendations for policy change made by Wetlands International as a result of a 3 year assessment of 4 major ecoregions
- By Presidential instruction, the Central Kalimantan Peatland Project in Indonesia achieved recognition for the need to restore and manage the peatlands of the area in order to alleviate poverty
- Ramsar Convention Resolutions on wetlands and poverty reduction (IX.14) and on preventing and mitigating impacts of natural phenomena (IX.9) were strongly influenced by Wetlands International

### **A key achievement**

## Wetlands values and services recognised in Rwandan policies

Wetlands International collaborated with a local Rwandan NGO (Envirotech) through the Wetlands and Poverty Reduction Project (WPRP) to highlight to the government the possible role of wetland management in poverty reduction in Rwanda. Advocacy focused on elucidating the wetland values and services that link directly to human conditions. Envirotech benefited from one of the wetland training opportunities in East Africa, supported by WPRP. The training coupled with Envirotech's supporting technical work, contributed to the acknowledgment of the role of wetland conservation and management in the Poverty Reduction Strategy

Paper of Rwanda. Rwanda is a small country with a population of over eight million, and a population density of 321 people per square kilometre. Approximately 87% of the population depends on agriculture for their daily survival. This high dependency of the population on natural resources and the high population growth rate (2.6%), has put great pressure marginal lands, including wetlands. Improved wetland management would make a contribution to sustainable development.

Fish caught by local community in Sumatra, Indonesia  
(Pieter van Eijk)



**2.2** Development agencies, water agencies and conservation organisations cooperate in new partnerships which result in policies and initiatives for sustainable use of wetlands and socially equitable development

**Rating** ★ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆

### **Status and outlook**

Wetlands International has developed a large number of active partnerships with development and aid NGOs and research institutes to achieve project results during this reporting period, at both global and regional levels. Additionally, we have engaged in a number of new informal partnerships that have added greatly to the capacity of our organisation to take effective action. Some progress has been made in engaging corporate partners, for example in the palm oil sector, concerning carbon trading to support peat swamp forest conservation and policy change for sustainable palm oil production. Further achievements in terms of policy change are anticipated in the coming years, through our work through partnerships of this nature. Starting in 2009, a global project on wetlands and human health will give further opportunities for establishing partnerships with the corporate sector in Africa, South-East Asia and LAC.

### **Some significant achievements, 2005-2007**

- Under the Wetlands and Poverty Reduction Project; 8 partnerships with NGOs were developed in Africa, Asia and LAC to build their capacity to assist policy change at the national level for sustainable use of wetlands
- A Memorandum of Understanding in West Africa with UNDP and with Oxfam America, to frame joint activities for wetlands and livelihoods
- A Memorandum of Understanding with the global Water and Sanitation organisation WASTE to bring together expertise at the policy and practical level, in particular on urban wetlands

### **A key achievement**

## **Green Coast for nature and people after the tsunami**

Together with WWF, IUCN and BothENDS in the Netherlands, Wetlands International convinced Oxfam to invest in coastal ecosystem restoration as part of its tsunami relief strategy in Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Malaysia. This cutting-edge project, led and managed by Wetlands International (2005-2007) supported coastal community recovery linked with rehabilitation of the coastal ecosystems. By targeting small grants for sustainable development and facilitating community-based ecosystem restoration, over 90,000 people benefited from increased income and revival of ecosystem services such as protection against storms and floods and improved fisheries.

Around 12,000 people benefited directly from small grants or micro-credit agreements. The targeting of resources was informed by assessments of coastal and community condition. Hundreds of local community based organisations were involved in the project. The consortium was successful to influence the reconstruction policies and coastal development strategies of government, planning agencies, development organisations and donors in the region. A second phase of Green Coast is currently being implemented, involving the same set of partners.

Mangrove rehabilitation in Aceh, Indonesia (Jane Madgwick)



**2.3** Six major demonstration projects integrating poverty reduction initiatives with wetland conservation demonstrate livelihood benefits from wise use

**Rating** ★ ★ ★ ★ ☆

#### **Status and outlook**

While many wetland field projects have consequences and benefits for local livelihoods, there are few examples worldwide where the linkages between wetlands wise use and livelihoods benefits can be clearly demonstrated. It is anticipated that the five Wetlands and Poverty Reduction Project demonstration projects will be significant in this respect in coming years. The Green Coast Project (see 2.2) Central Kalimantan Peatland Project (see below) and the Ruoergai project in China (see 4.2) were all outstanding during this period in identifying tangible livelihood benefits following support to community-based initiatives. Therefore, we are already very successful in reaching this target, not counting many smaller initiatives in most regions of the world that play this demonstration role.

#### **Some significant achievements, 2005-2007**

- Four wetlands and livelihood demonstration projects were initiated in Africa (3) and South-east Asia (1) by the Wetlands and Poverty Reduction Project
- Research projects in three major eco-regions in coastal and Sahelian West Africa clearly demonstrated the options and benefits for improving livelihoods, linked to ecosystem restoration and management

#### **A key achievement**

### Improving livelihoods through wise use of peatlands

Through the Central Kalimantan Peatland Project (CKPP; 2005-2007), Wetlands International and partners have enhanced the livelihoods of local communities linked through improving land use and management of tropical peatswamps in Central Kalimantan. Together with local communities, the project built 12 dams in drainage canals, so restoring the hydrology of over 50,000 ha of drained and degraded peatlands. Additionally, around 250,000 ha of peatland now has improved security from fires and fire-fighting capacity has been improved in 25 villages. Access to health facilities was improved in 14 villages. Communities were supported to adopt more sustainable land management practices. By providing seedlings of valuable indigenous tree species that can live under waterlogged circumstances, farmers were convinced to plant these (over 1000 ha so far)

and to reduce drainage and stop burning of land. Changes to management of the area will help to sustain important natural resources such as fish, timber and other peatland products. The project has led to improved spatial planning policies and plans of provincial and national government and better coordination between government departments on peatland matters. CKPP is implemented in partnership with several development and conservation organisations, managed by Wetlands International and funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The success of this pilot project has attracted significant interest from other major international donors.

Empoverished community in degraded peatland, Indonesia  
(Pieter van Eijk)





**3.1** Water Management policies and IWRM plans lead to actions that enable the maintenance or restoration of ecological services of wetlands in five major river basins and five small to medium sized river or coastal systems

**Rating** ★ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆

#### **Status and outlook**

During this period many initiatives were commenced towards this target, including in South Asia, Russia, Ukraine, China, Oceania, West Africa, the Mediterranean, South America and the Himalayas. Furthermore, partnerships with development organisations are being established with the potential to mainstream IWRM approaches in this sector. However, these initiatives are still in an early stage and the organisations capacity to engage growing. As highlighted below, some very significant outcomes were achieved in India, following many years of activity. This illustrates that real changes in water management policies and practice can often only be achieved after 5-10 years of work, involving several phases of problem identification, partnership and project development, research and advocacy. It is anticipated that significant achievements against this target will be forthcoming in the following years.

#### **Some significant achievements, 2005-2007**

- Through the Green Coast Project partnership, we promoted “Green Reconstruction Guidelines” as a means to influence the location and manner of post-Tsunami developments. These were adopted by various government agencies and have resulted in many new or rebuilt settlements being constructed away from remaining wetlands and their water supply and sanitation being established along integrated and sustainable principles. This has safeguarded existing wetlands and their services

#### **A key achievement**

### Improved management of Chilika and Loktak lagoons, India

As a hotspot for biodiversity and sustaining the livelihoods of over 200,000 fishers and 700,000 farmers, the Chilika lagoon in eastern coast of India is known for its great economic and environmental importance. In 2006, Wetlands International, based on detailed assessments, influenced the state government’s policy for water allocation to Chilika Lagoon. This was the culmination of many years work, following a World Bank funded hydrobiological monitoring project that aimed to assess the linkages of hydrological regimes with the values and functions of the lagoon ecosystem. Wetlands International South Asia worked in partnership with Chilika Development Authority and others to assess and quantify the hydrological, ecological and socio-economic consequences of four different water flow scenarios. Based on these assessments and intensive community consultation, a flow scenario maximising freshwater availability to the lagoon ecosystem that also maintains agricultural productivity within the floodplains was recommended. These recommendations were accepted by the state government which directed implementation of

barrage schedule, operationalising the optimal flow regime.

In Loktak Lake, water diversion for hydropower project led to rapid degradation of the lake affecting livelihood of 0.2 million fishers dependant on the its resources for sustenance. Maintenance of constant lake levels to provide water supply for the hydropower project has led to loss of fisheries, rapid proliferation of weeds, deterioration of water quality and most significantly, degradation of habitat of highly endangered ungulate species, Cervus eldi eldi. Assessments and demonstration projects carried by WISA over a period of a decade in partnership with the Loktak Development Authority, research organizations and local communities, led to the formulation of a basin level management action plan. The state government, accepting our recommendations, has initiated an environmental flows assessment, led by WISA, for harmonizing water use for hydropower generation and agriculture with maintenance of lake biodiversity.

Fishermen in Chilika lagoon, India (Chris Baker)





**3.2** Coordinated actions in a total of 12 river basins and / or coastal zones contribute to the conservation and restoration of internationally significant wetlands

**Rating** ★ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆

#### **Status and outlook**

Significant progress was made towards this target. In the cases of the Green Coast project (S and SE Asia) and the Inner Niger Delta project (Mali), there is now potential to extend and replicate our approach to benefit other basins and coastal stretches. Looking ahead, there are many significant projects recently initiated or in progress in all regions that are anticipated to contribute further in the coming years – for example through Wetlands International's work on the Mangrove Initiative through the Regional Programme for the Protection of Coastal and Marine Resources (PRCM) partnership in West Africa and through a significant integrated basin and coastal project in Oceania. Some opportunities have also been identified for Wetlands International to work through partnerships in South America to improve the conservation status of major inland and coastal wetland systems.

#### **Some significant achievements, 2005-2007**

- Development of a management plan for Wular Lake in the Kashmir Region of India, that plays a crucial role in mitigating the impacts of extreme rainfall in the Himalayan mountains
- Baseline studies of the Sivash coastal wetland ecosystem in Ukraine provided the information basis for management planning, to address water management and pollution related problems associated with irrigation and industrial development in the region
- The Green Coast project in South and South-East Asia resulted in some notable achievements, such as restoration of 260 hectares of degraded mangrove forests in the 20 priority coastal stretches; protection of a previously unrecorded 100 km<sup>2</sup> coral reef in Phang Nga, Thailand; protection of a coral reef in Sri Lanka; creation of a 38 ha marine protected area off Sabang Island, Aceh; protection of the coastline of the Tg. Piai Ramsar site in Malaysia using mangroves instead of the planned hard infrastructure

#### **A key achievement**

### Conserving floodplains of the Inner Niger Delta, Mali

Through communicating the outcomes of several consecutive projects, Wetlands International was instrumental in achieving commitments to conserve the Inner Niger Delta. The Inner Niger Delta, consisting of more than 3 million hectares of floodplains, lakes and rivers, is of critical importance to biodiversity and sustains the livelihoods of more than one million cattle herders and fishermen. Overexploitation of fish resources, overgrazing and changed water regimes as a result of dam construction however, increasingly pose a threat to the delta's environmental and economic values. Following the development of a baseline wetland inventory (2002-2004) to quantify values and threats in the delta, policy makers and managers were informed on the environmental and socio-economic

implications of management decisions in the delta. Emphasis was placed on the impacts of upstream alterations in water regimes, on biodiversity and on the livelihoods of communities downstream. Wetlands International facilitated restoration activities such as reforestation of flood forests and rehabilitation of grazing land, to demonstrate the benefits of improved environmental conditions in the field. This work culminated in increased recognition of the needs for improved management among stakeholders and in willingness to develop an integrated water resources management plan for the delta, involving Wetlands International, supported by the Dutch government.

Flood forest in the inner Niger Delta, Mali (Leo Zwarts)



**3.3** Awareness raising and capacity building initiatives facilitate partnership development between water resource managers and wetland managers in all regions

**Rating** ★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆

#### **Status and outlook**

Wetlands International made significant achievements with respect to facilitating training and capacity building initiatives linking wetlands and water management over the last years, especially in Africa, South and South-East Asia. However, it is difficult to establish whether this will result in new partnerships between these sectors, as such. There are additional opportunities on the horizon to promote partnerships with the water sector through projects in all regions. For example, it is intended to support capacity building of civil society groups and governments in the southern and eastern Mediterranean to better integrate the role of wetlands in water resource management, through a 5 year initiative that started in 2007. Greater engagement with the water and sanitation sector networks commenced during this period and this is anticipated to result in improved dialogue and joint projects over the coming years.

#### **Some significant achievements, 2005-2007**

- An inter-sectoral African Training Board and a wetlands training programme for Africa were developed. Institutes in West and East Africa trained dozens of trainers who will, in turn, train hundreds of wetland managers and development professionals in different sectors
- Our Indonesian programme trained over 50 local non-government organisations in the technical aspects of coastal ecosystem rehabilitation and management
- A network of more than 100 small NGOs was established in the Ukraine to develop partnerships with government and local authority agencies concerning wise use of small rivers and wetlands.
- Government staff in Mali were provided training to assist development of the Mali National Wetlands Strategy
- Our South Asia programme trained managers of five state governments in India on integration of hydrological processes in wetland conservation planning

#### **A key achievement**

### Partnership development for water and wetland management, lake Uromiyeh, Iran

Wetlands International's work through the Integrated Water Resources Management project for lake Uromiyeh basin (2005), built capacity and awareness for sustainable water and wetland management by integrating the interests of different stakeholders in the region. The environmental values of the lake Uromiyeh basin greatly suffered from associated development and poor management that resulted from conflicting stakeholder interests. Capacity building and awareness raising involved provincial agencies, local NGOs and wetland experts through workshops, presentations, interactive discussions, community

consultation and practical assignments in the field. Emphasis was placed on improving evidence-based assessment and decision making. Increased wetland management capacity formed the basis for reconciling the diverse needs of different actors. The result was greatly enhanced dialogue among participants the development of a draft integrated water resources management plan for Uromiyeh, incorporating all relevant social, economic and environmental issues.

Community consultation near lake Uromiyeh, Iran (Chris Baker)





**3.4** Recognition of the ecological requirements and socio-economic value of freshwater dependent fish in transboundary, national and regional policies and actions to safeguard these values in three major river basins

**Rating** ★ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

#### **Status and outlook**

This target remains a very significant challenge in all regions. Very few projects specifically focus on freshwater-dependent fish currently, although there has been some consistent attention to building in specific objectives for fish conservation in our work in the Pacific islands, due to the presence of one skilled and qualified staff member based in Fiji. Alongside the establishment of an active Freshwater Fish Specialist Group, it was decided to support the development of regional project concepts through dialogue between staff and the FFSG network representatives. It is intended that these concepts will provide a focus for project and resource development over the coming years. It is anticipated that there will be many cross-linkages with other Targets, for example due to the importance of fish as a source of nutrition and livelihoods in the developing world.

#### **Some significant achievements, 2005-2007**

- 200,000 fishermen depend on Chilika Lake in north-east India for their livelihoods. Revised operation of barrages, restoration of the link with the sea and management zonation have contributed to an eight-fold increase in fishery catches in terms of weight [ see Target 3.1]

#### **A key achievement**

### Recognition of ecological requirements of fish in the Inner Niger Delta

From 2003 to 2005 Wetlands International, together with several NGOs and consultants developed a range of inventories to quantify the socio-economic values of the Inner Niger Delta, including a study on the importance of the delta's remaining flood forests as breeding chambers for commercially attractive fish species and resident water birds. The study demonstrated that these nutrient rich forests are home to 29 species of fish, serving as important refuges for juvenile and reproducing individuals. Loss and degradation of these ecosystems was shown to have important consequences to the fish productivity of the delta as a whole. Based on these findings, together with local communities

and regional authorities, plans were developed to implement community based flood forest conservation and restoration initiatives. This has led to the actual revival of several flood forests in the area. Findings on the ecological requirements of fish were also fed into country-level policies such as the Master Plan of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development, the National Action Plan of the Environnement (PNAE) and the National Action Plan for the Wetlands Policy. This has led to greater recognition of the requirements of freshwater fish among respective authorities.

Fish, harvested from the inner Niger Delta, Mali (Leo Swartz)



**4.1** Improved information base and plans for wetland management result in targeted actions that enhance the conservation status of waterbirds and other wetland species, particularly freshwater fish

**Rating** ★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆

#### **Status and outlook**

The important role of Wetlands International in providing clear, science-based information to policy makers and to public audiences, was strongly highlighted during this period when we stepped in to the technical and media discussions on avian influenza. Our regional waterbird officers and specialist expert networks were highly valuable in this respect. Significant achievements towards this target were made for a range of freshwater taxa, especially in West Africa – and this work is anticipated to continue and strengthen over the coming years. Through working with the Freshwater Fish Specialist Group and a number of partners, we especially aim to strengthen the information base to guide freshwater fish conservation over the next period.

#### **Some significant achievements, 2005-2007**

- Wetlands International's waterbird data, analyses and advocacy were vital to the debate about the spread of avian influenza (HPAI H5N1), influencing the position of the main stakeholders including the Food and Agriculture Organisation. Our work, helped to prevent many adverse measures against migratory waterbirds
- The use of freshwater biodiversity information linked with large infrastructure schemes (e.g. in Environmental Impact Assessments) in Africa was enhanced by development of a database to guide management decisions and by demonstration of its use, for example in the management of the Gambia river dam
- Species action plans for waterbirds and other wetlands taxa (e.g. West African Manatee) were developed and are now used as a tool to promote conservation measures
- In Uruguay, improved habitat management practices were promoted to landowners based on information gathered about the areas Buff-breasted Sandpipers use in that part of their flyway

#### **A key achievement**

### A baseline for improving rice field management in South America

Wetlands International has called attention to the need for improved management of rice-fields in South America through sharing information with stakeholders on the values and threats of rice-fields for migratory water birds. These agro-ecosystems serve as critically important foraging and staging sites, but can easily turn into deadly traps due to extensive use of pesticides and other unsustainable activities. This poses a serious threat to the populations of a large number of vulnerable species. In 2004-2005 Wetlands International carried out an extensive assessment of bird distribution and rice-farming practices in 341 sites in

Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay and reviewed existing literature. The resulting report provides the basis for improved management plans and policies for rice field management. Through several workshops, Wetlands International familiarised stakeholders with the findings of the study and established an intent for cooperation on improving rice cultivation techniques. The next step will be to develop concrete plans for improving rice field management.

Southern Screamers (*Chauda torquata*) in a rice field, Argentina  
(Daniel Blanco)





**4.2** Major global and regional initiatives result in the conservation and wise use of critical wetland habitats - including strategic policy and management initiatives for peatlands in at least 4 regions

**Rating** ★ ★ ★ ★ ☆

#### **Status and outlook**

Very good progress has been made in this period towards this target. For example, we have achieved strong international recognition of the importance of tropical peat swamp forests for carbon storage, livelihoods and biodiversity – and developed global and regional initiatives to tackle the imminent threats to these forests and the root causes of their degradation. This work will be ongoing in the coming years and is set to result in a significant upscaling of achievements. Significant regional initiatives were also developed for mangrove restoration in West Africa and South-East Asia. These initiatives, will be further developed through our partnerships - and we anticipate extending our approach to Latin America during the next triennium. Extension of policy and management initiatives linked to arid zone wetlands are planned over the coming years, building on our projects and partnerships in the Sahelian zone, the Mediterranean and elsewhere.

#### **Some significant achievements, 2005-2007**

- A Presidential Instruction for the conservation of remaining peat swamp forests; cancellation of a road planned through the Sebangau National Park and reduced fire risks in an area of 250,000 ha of degraded peatlands, resulted from our CKPP project (see 2.3). We contributed to the Indonesian National Peatland Strategy and to inter-departmental cooperation for its implementation
- Strong global press outreach, based on scientific insight on the huge emissions of carbon dioxide from degraded tropical peat swamp forests, has influenced some international development and biofuel policies, such as the EU-draft Directive on biofuels

#### **A key achievement**

### Conserving high altitude peatlands, China

The Ruoergai Marshes are one of the world's largest high altitude peatlands and are part of the headwaters of the Yellow River. The marshes have high values for biodiversity, climate change mitigation and for sustaining the livelihoods of nomadic herders, but are increasingly threatened by overgrazing, drainage and peat mining. The Ruoergai peatland project (2003-2006) improved the conservation status of the 490,000 hectare peatlands. This was achieved by assessing and quantifying values and threats and raising awareness among stakeholders of values and services linked with ecosystem restoration. The project involved local communities in pilot restoration activities, including building small dams in drainage gullies. The success of these

pilot activities in terms of restored grazing quality, tourism potential and reduced flood risks led to increased financial and political support for further restoration management. It resulted in policy changes that halted unsustainable mining and overgrazing. The marshes will be maintained for local Tibetan people who depend on this land for their livelihoods. It is anticipated that water supply to the Yellow and Yangtze rivers will improve with benefits to downstream communities. The project was supported by UNEP-GEF and implemented by Wetlands International, Chinese authorities and several local and international NGOs.

The Ruoergai peatlands, China (Chris Baker)



**4.3** Development of ecological networks in flyways and in priority river basins result in targeted action for wetland conservation and wise use, benefiting biodiversity and people

**Rating** ★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆

#### **Status and outlook**

There has been good progress in furthering the development of flyway conservation partnerships, approaches, tools and actions in the major flyways of the world, with perhaps less obvious achievements in the Americas. The Wings over Wetlands project is set to provide very tangible benefits for wetlands, waterbirds and people along the African-Eurasian flyway. It is hoped and anticipated that additional resources and actions will follow the commitments made by governments, NGOs and corporates with respect to this flyway, the Central Asian flyway and the East Asian-Australasian flyway in the coming years, assisted by the efforts of Wetlands International, acting as a key adviser and facilitator at the global and regional levels.

#### **Some significant achievements, 2005-2007**

- Central Asian Flyway range states have adopted the flyway approach to conservation and wise use of waterbirds and wetlands by agreeing an action plan as a basis for the Central Asian Flyway initiative at a major meeting in New Delhi in 2005. Wetlands International, as a leading partner, organised the two key meetings and facilitated the development of the technical aspects of the action plan
- The Wings over Wetlands project in the African Eurasian Flyway is the single most comprehensive demonstration of the flyway approach in the world and it will take forward 75% of the implementation priorities of AEWA and strongly support Ramsar. Bringing the partnership together and getting the project started is an achievement in itself. The project has already resulted in flyway maps for all species and a draft capacity development programme for adaptation in the regions. 12 demonstration projects are well underway

#### **A key achievement**

### **East Asia-Australasian flyway partnership**

In November 2005, country representatives and NGOs stakeholders formally signed up to the East Asia-Australasian flyway partnership. The partnership was developed to improve cross-boundary conservation of birds along their migration route across Asia and Australasia. On a local scale it aims to sustain wetlands, their biodiversity and the livelihoods that depend on them. As a global authority on waterbirds and as a result of its experience in developing flyway cooperation elsewhere in the world, Wetlands International was closely involved in the establishment of this

partnership over the last years. By providing technical advice, supporting action plan development and by bringing stakeholders together, the organisation has contributed to development of the partnership as a firm framework for co-ordinated conservation of waterbirds, wetlands and wetland resources. Wetlands International is seeking to extend the partnership and to facilitate actions for wetlands along the flyway.

Garganey (*Anas querquedula*) equipped with satellite transmitter for monitoring movements along flyways (Guiseppe Rossi)





## Mission:

To sustain and restore wetlands, their resources and biodiversity for future generations.

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