



## Summary of our Annual Review 2016





Photo: Southern carmine bee-eater

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## The challenge

While more than 90% of disasters are water-related, investments in safeguarding and restoring wetlands, which regulate and store water in the landscape, are insufficient.

Wetlands are continuing to degrade, contributing to the risk of severe floods and droughts.

*Photo: Rice farming, India*





Wetlands act as **water sources**, sinks and purifiers



They **protect** our shores



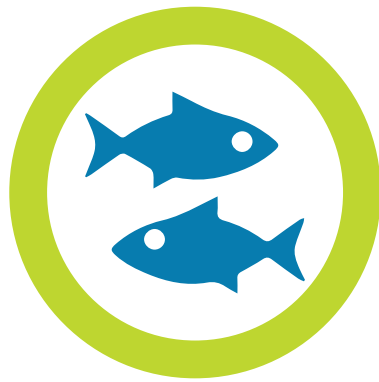
They are Earth's greatest natural **carbon stores**



They support abundant and **unique nature**



They are the engines of **local economies**



They provide plentiful **food and fish**

## From the CEO

In 2016, Wetlands International took some bold steps towards realising our vision set out in the Strategy 2015-2025. We set our sights on safeguarding some of the most biodiverse and threatened wetland systems in the world and organised partnerships to step up action for African mangroves, South-east Asian peatlands and High Andean lakes.

Thanks to our earlier decades of activity, 2016 saw major new public and private sector policy commitments and investments to rehabilitate peatlands in Russia, Mongolia, Indonesia and Europe. If we can build on this momentum, we will achieve a major global impact in terms of enhancing biodiversity, carbon and water storage, reducing fire and subsidence risks and improving the lives of poor and vulnerable local communities.



Shifts such as these give us good cause for optimism. However, as investments in hard infrastructure schemes are accelerating worldwide, it is a struggle to safeguard wetlands. We are still swimming against the current. Some of the last river systems and their productive floodplains are threatened by hydropower developments, and the rapid urbanisation of coasts and deltas is encroaching on the remaining coastal wetland buffers – all of which is likely to raise inland and coastal water risks as well as impacting endangered species.

By implementing landscape-scale programmes, enabling civil society action, building political will and trust in wetland solutions and leveraging public and private investments, Wetlands International is building its influence and impact around the world.

I would like to thank all of our donors, members and partners who worked with Wetlands International in 2016!

**Jane Madgwick**  
Chief Executive Officer

# Our mission



Wetlands International works to safeguard and restore wetlands to benefit people and nature.



*Photo: Russet percher dragonfly*

# Progress to our 2020 targets

We have developed targets that we aim to achieve by the year 2020. Below we summarise the progress we are making.

## What is needed to achieve our targets?

In order to achieve our targets by 2020 we need to scale-up our pilot projects to regional initiatives that can have a wider impact. This requires the support of partners and donors, including governments and the private sector. In many cases it also requires a change in thinking from business as usual to integrated approaches that benefit people and nature.



Full report at:

[www.wetlands.org/annualreview2016](http://www.wetlands.org/annualreview2016)

## Healthy Wetland Nature

## Progress

The extent and quality of habitat has been improved in five iconic wetland ecoregions worldwide and the conservation status of 10 flagship species has been improved.

**3**

Three showcase public and private investments in wetlands as Natural Capital deliver sustainable development.

**3**

## Vibrant Coasts and Deltas

Three high value coastal wetlands totaling at least 150,000 hectares are conserved and restored.

**3**

A model for integrated wetland landscape management involving conservation and production systems (rice, oil-palm and aquaculture) is implemented in two areas, contributing to environmental and food security.

**3**

Building with Nature is mainstreamed in three landmark urban planning and hydraulic infrastructure developments, enhancing community resilience.

**4**

Healthy ecosystems sustain human populations and biodiversity in 10 key deltas across the world.

**4**

## Blue Lifelines in the Desert

Improved status of at least three major wetland systems in the Sahel, as part of efforts to achieve sustainable and climate resilient development.

**3**

## Replenished Water Stores from Mountains to Sea

### Progress

Investments in restoration and sustainable management of high altitude wetlands in two ecoregions committed to by governments and International Finance Institutions.

2

Public and private investment commitments in six watersheds to safeguard and restore freshwater wetlands as measures for water and food security.

4

Public and private investment commitments for three flagship landscape scale floodplain restoration programmes.

3

## Peatland Treasures

Governments and key private sector actors (drivers of conversion) in at least four key peatland regions have active policies to avoid the development, conversion and degradation of intact peatlands.

3

Governments and key (peatland based) private sector invest in at least five peatland regions have reversed the degradation of over 3 million hectares of degraded peatlands (7% of the global area of degrading peatlands) achieving substantial greenhouse gas emission reductions.

4

Governments and key (peatland based) private sector (e.g. palm oil, pulp for paper, biofuels) as well as local communities are actively piloting or upscaling paludiculture as an innovative means for sustainable development and peatland landscape management and climate change mitigation.

3



Photo: Tibetan girl at first bend of Yellow River, China - Marcel Silvius

# Breakthroughs

## 50th International Waterbird Census boosted

Awareness of the importance, quality and value of the International Waterbird Census as a prime provider of waterbird and wetland data in policy and decision-making for conservation and development planning was boosted significantly. Through the IWC50 campaign, waterbirds were counted in more places than ever and 14 new countries participated.







## **Nigeria improves its Environmental Impact Assessment legislation**

Following a review of the existing legislation as part of our programme in the Niger Delta, the Government of Nigeria adjusted the Environmental Impact Assessment legislation to ensure better integration of wetland values in decisions over development.

*Photo: Dabar Magini, Nigeria*

## Sustainable shrimp production is boosted in Indonesia

With our partners, Blue Forests and Wageningen University, we enabled smallholder farmers in Demak (Central Java) to increase their harvest of shrimps 3 to 20-fold by introducing organic aquaculture. Their new practices do not rely on chemicals and allow for mangroves to be restored.

Photo: Shrimp





## Panama City Invests in Building with Nature solutions to reduce flood risks

A water management action plan was developed that reduces flood risks in Panama City through the restoration and conservation of floodplains, wetlands reservoirs and mangroves. This is the result of the Panama & Dutch Water Dialogue that we facilitated, bringing together water sector partners. In 2017, the city will issue a 50 million USD project to implement these measures.

*The capacity building process conducted by Wetlands International has been key, since it is only with inter-generational awareness raising tools and capacity strengthening on climate change that we will be able to secure a smooth transition towards a low emissions economy.*

**Rosilena Lindo, Climate Change Director of the Ministry of Environment in Panama**



## **European peat extraction sector adopts sustainability standards**

Over 4000 ha in six European countries from 10 companies that extract peat for horticulture, were certified by the Foundation Responsibly Produced Peat. An additional 5000 ha in 29 sites was applied for. Standards, which we helped to develop, include the avoidance of intact peatlands and the obligation for post-extraction rehabilitation.

*Photo: Peat extraction*



## **Governments take action to rehabilitate peatlands**

In the wake of devastating fires and in line with our recommended solutions to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, subsidence and biodiversity losses, Indonesia established a Peatland Restoration Agency to restore 2.4 million hectares of degraded peatlands by 2020. Following the success of our PeatRus project that restored 40,000 hectares of peatlands in three regions, Russia approved a project to upscale ecological peatland rewetting approaches to over half a million hectares in 10 regions.

*Wetlands International has been a valued agreement partner for the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, and we appreciate the results which the Wetlands International partnership has achieved.*  
**Frida Linnea Skjæraasen, Norad**

*Photo: Rewetting peatlands in the Tver region, north of Moscow*

# Our finances

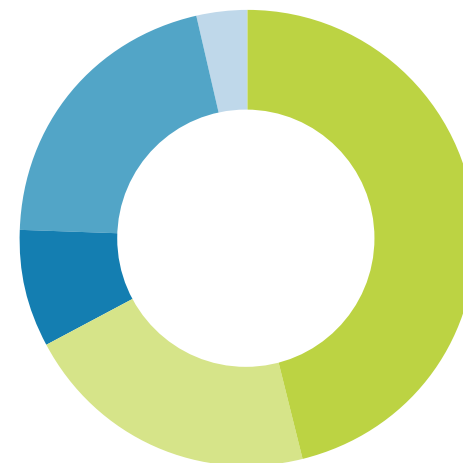
We aim to focus our work on the issues and places where wetlands matter the most to people and nature.

## Activities across five Streams of work



- Peatland Treasures
- Healthy Wetland Nature
- Water Stores
- Blue Lifelines
- Coasts and Deltas

## Project expenditure per region in 2016



- Africa
- Asia
- Latin America
- Europe and Russia
- Global and multi-regional

Full report at:  
[www.wetlands.org/annualreview2016](http://www.wetlands.org/annualreview2016)

# Our offices

Africa office - Senegal

Mali

Guinea-Bissau

Kenya

Ethiopia

Nigeria

Uganda

Argentina

Panama

Guatemala

China

Japan

Indonesia

Malaysia

Brunei

Philippines

South Asia

European Association

Russia

Head office – Netherlands



# Our organisation

Network organisations are becoming more effective than traditional, centralised, hierarchical ones. Our network organisation is more than a list of offices and partners. It consists of diverse entities which share knowledge and values.

- **9**  
Supervisory Council Members
- **5**  
Counsellors of Honour
- **2**  
Management Board of the Foundation
- **169**  
Partnerships
- **64**  
Donors
- **35**  
Members
- **26**  
Associate Experts
- **20**  
Our offices
- **11**  
Specialist Groups



Find the full list of members at:  
[www.wetlands.org/annualreview2016](http://www.wetlands.org/annualreview2016)





## We thank our supporters

Thank you to everyone who worked with us during the year to safeguard and restore wetlands for people and nature.

*Photo: Children in a coastal area*

Full version of the  
Annual Review 2016 at:  
[www.wetlands.org/annualreview2016](http://www.wetlands.org/annualreview2016)

