



Summary of our Annual Review 2017



Photo: A rainforest blue wing dragonfly in Brazil



Contents



The challenge	2
From the CEO	3
Our mission	4
Progress to our 2020 targets	5
Breakthroughs	8
Our finances	13
Our offices	15
Our organisation	16

The challenge

In a rapidly urbanizing planet with growing climate variability, we need to re-think our relationship to the Earth's natural water systems: wetlands. As they continue to be lost and damaged, we experience more water shortages and damaging floods. We lose species and productive land. Societal tensions increase. Only by investing in sustainable ways to manage and restore wetlands, we will be able to achieve "safe and just development" as set out in the Sustainable Development Goals, by 2030.





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



They **protect** our shores



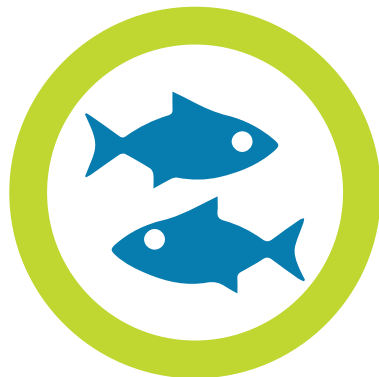
They are Earth's greatest natural **carbon stores**



They support abundant and **unique nature**



They are the engines of **local economies**



They provide plentiful **food and fish**

From the CEO

During 2017 the world paid increasing attention to rising water risks, as many devastating floods, droughts and storms hit the headlines and the UN declared it the costliest year ever for extreme weather and climate events. The role of healthy ecosystems, particularly wetlands, in preventing water crises and buffering the impacts was not so much highlighted, while we have continued to build the evidence base for investing in wetlands as climate buffers in all regions during the year and expanded our role in facilitating action, particularly in urbanising deltas.

Wetlands International has continued its work in Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America & Caribbean to show how managing wetlands can open the door to sustainable development and be effective in building resilience to climate change. We also demonstrated the link between the condition of wetlands, human security and peace. In the full report you can find many promising examples. Here, in the short version, we summarise our progress in against our long-term goals and provide a sample of our “breakthrough” achievements under each work Stream of our Strategic Intent. These outcomes are the result of many years of work and are a cause to celebrate. The results help us to build momentum for scaling up our efforts.

Last but not least I would like to mention that we welcomed the chance to work with a range of new partners in 2017, to gain the support of a number of additional donors and to bring on board additional Associate Experts. Together with the continued invaluable support of our government and NGO members, these additional supporters have enriched the organisation. Thank you all!

Jane Madgwick
Chief Executive Officer



Our mission

Our mission is to sustain and restore wetlands, their resources and biodiversity.



Photo: Fishers and pelicans in Panama Bay

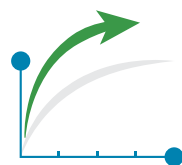
Progress to our 2020 targets

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?

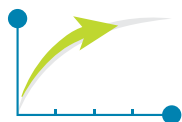
In order to achieve our targets by 2020 we need to scale-up our pilot projects to regional initiatives that can have a wider impact. This requires the support of partners and donors, including governments and the private sector. In many cases it also requires a change in thinking from business as usual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

5



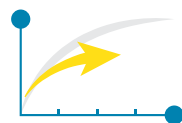
On track to exceed target (we will achieve the target before 2020)

4



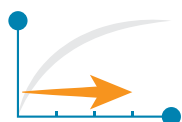
We expect to achieve the target by 2020

3



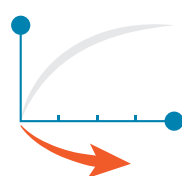
Substantial progress, more time required to reach our target

2



So far, there is no significant overall progress

1



The situation is deteriorating and we can't manage to make improvements

Full report at:

www.wetlands.org/annualreview2017

Healthy Wetland Nature

Progress

Ambitious, large scale initiatives were mobilised that will enable concerted action to benefit 'iconic wetlands' and flagship species along coasts, peatlands, riverine, mangrove and delta ecoregions in Africa, Asia, Middle East and Latin America and more ambitious work is in the pipeline. Through our work on flyways and on iconic wetlands, many more wetland management decisions include biodiversity and ecosystem service values. Most significant impacts are likely to be realised beyond 2020.

3

Our work with governments and private sector companies in Uganda, Indonesia, Iraq and Brunei continues to leverage investments in wetlands as natural capital and new initiatives in Malaysia, Nigeria and Russia are starting. Although the practicalities of quantifying these investments and communicating the outcomes needs further work we are achieving impact in an increasing number of sites.

4

Vibrant Coasts and Deltas

Progress

We have continued our work in five high-value coastal wetland systems. Under the Global Mangrove Alliance we have started to develop synergies with the programmes of Conservation International, IUCN, the Nature Conservancy, WWF and others. By bringing together the diverse skill-sets of the different organisations we will be able to more easily reach our goals and leverage funding to scale up our work. We should be able to achieve impact by 2020.

4

We are well on track to reach our goals for both aquaculture and rice farming. Measures for restoration of mangroves in abandoned rice fields in Guinea-Bissau are currently being upscaled and replicated in Tanzania.

3

We introduced the Building with Nature approach in a number of projects in Asia and Latin America. Pilot projects are currently connected in regional programmes and a global initiative on sustainable urban development. This offers opportunities for addressing barriers to upscaling of Building with Nature through a joint approach, and for connecting site-based plans for Building with Nature with multi-lateral donors and investors.

4

Our dialogues on sustainable delta management in Asia, Africa and Latin America resulted in adoption of management plans in five deltas. This ensures the protection and restoration of environmental values and that the needs of diverse stakeholder groups are considered. It is expected that similar plans will be adapted in the other target deltas.

4

Blue Lifelines for a Resilient Sahel

Progress

Knowledge and tool development and civil society capacity building have continued in the Upper Niger and Ewasu Ny'iro and Sourou basins to help safeguard major wetlands. Our plans to work in the Sudd have been initiated. Engagement and support to governance and decision-making bodies and organisations from local to watershed scales is increasing, building on development of capacity in our local partners. The overall status of these major systems depends on the nature of large scale energy and agriculture investments that are yet to be made.

3

Replenished Water Stores from Mountains to the Sea

Progress

An initiative in the Andes has been initiated, focusing on two important wetlands in Peru and Argentina. Early results are already promising with local partners and communities enthusiastic and asking to consider means for upscaling and replication. An eco-regional initiative for the Andean wetlands is being proposed.

3

We are active in many catchments and river basins building the capacity of civil society to engage with government and private sector to address key policy gaps, investments and implementation challenges. Increasingly we are becoming influential in policy and investment in many of these basins with good examples in the Ziway-Shalla basin in Ethiopia, Agusan in the Philippines. New programmes in the Mediterranean including in the Sebou basin, Morocco show further promise for the future.

4

A large-scale, long-term programme has been initiated in the Parana-Paraguay river corridor spanning Argentina and Brazil, where investments in floodplain management and restoration are foreseen, especially in the Lujan River, Argentina. Work is continuing in the Ganges floodplains in Bihar and our European Office has been building networks and partnerships to influence the reviews of major European water legislation.

3

Peatland Treasures Safeguarded

Progress

Through our work intact peatlands were prioritized for protection in Indonesia, Mongolia, Russia and Europe and have been given priority conservation status in fire and haze mitigation plans in Indonesia and Russia. Over twenty percent of the global palm oil production and most of the Indonesian pulpwood production ensured the identification and management of high conservation status peatlands. Unfortunately, other companies continue conversion of intact peatlands.

3

Capacity building and advice to governments of Indonesia, Russia and Mongolia is improving the success of the implementation of the rehabilitation of three million hectares of degraded peatlands, mainly in Indonesia and Russia. Industry players in the palm oil and pulp for paper sector have enhanced their contribution to government-set goals in Indonesia through collaboration on landscape scale with civil society, government and with our technical advice. Therefore, the aimed for GHG emission reduction seems achievable.

4

Through establishing and operating a new Fund, we have enhanced capacity and stimulated implementation of community-based sustainable land-use on re-wetted peatlands in Indonesia. However, the mechanisms for upscaling are not in place and there are no plans by government nor private sector to phase-out peatland drainage use beyond pilots. Engaging with the private sector via established and emerging industry platforms is helping to enhance sharing of pilot results to stimulate learning, identification of knowledge gaps and policy needs. Further progress depends on governments recognising the business case and acting on solutions which to curb public costs while keeping productive use of peatlands.

3

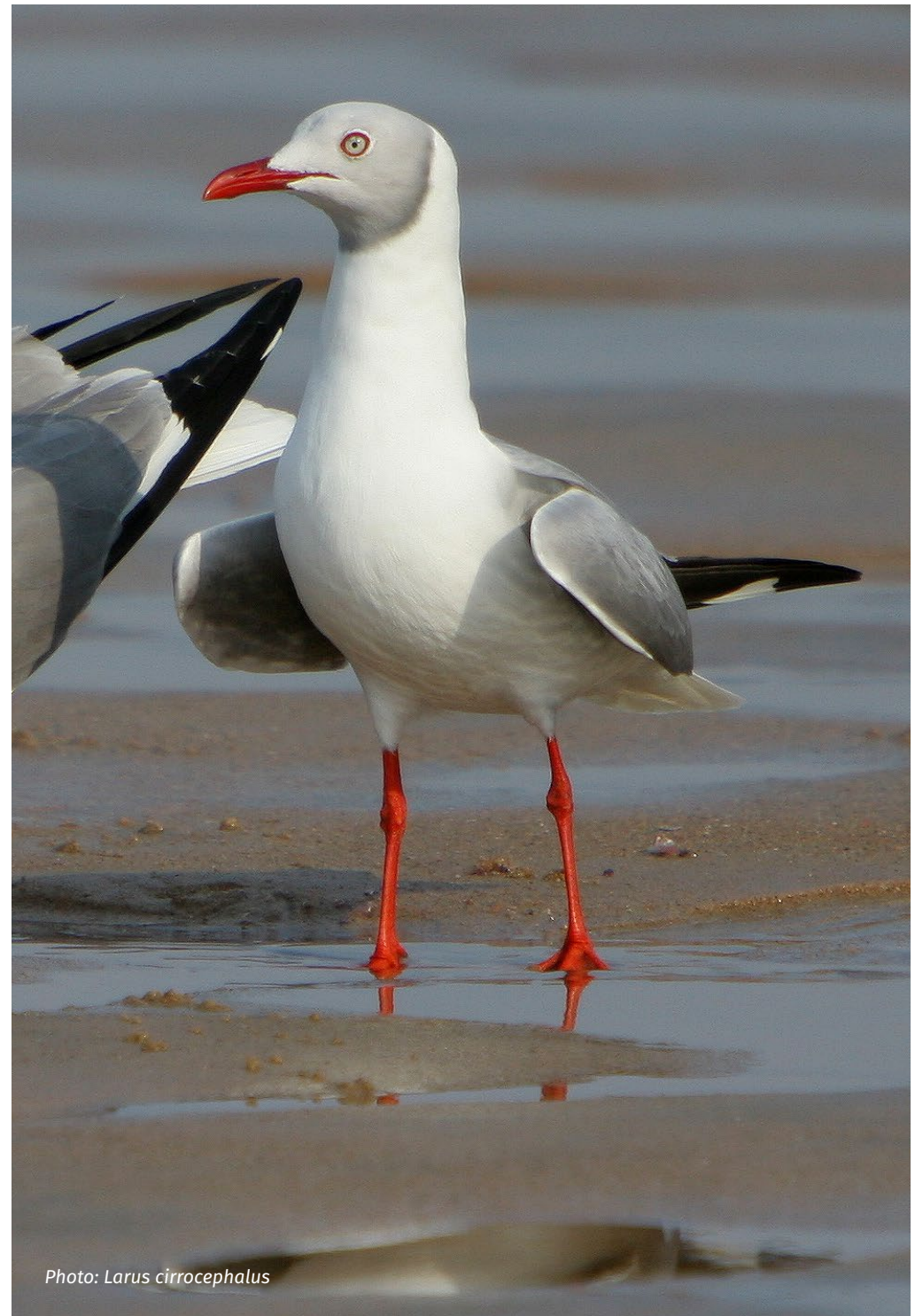


Photo: *Larus cirrocephalus*

Breakthroughs

Wetland values revealed along Indian Ocean coast

As part of our Coasts Count! Campaign, new coastal wetland territories were surveyed in the International Waterbird Census. Important new counts include Bahrain, Seychelles, Réunion and the British Indian Ocean Territory. This led to the recognition of the importance of coastal wetlands for waterbirds and support for the designation of the wetland Barr Al Hikman in Oman, as a Ramsar site of international importance.

Photo: Barr Al Hikman, Oman



Enabling mangroves to recover naturally

NGOs and government partners in Guinea-Bissau, Philippines and Indonesia have started to apply ecological mangrove restoration approaches restoring 150 ha. We reached thousands of mangrove professionals worldwide, informing them about new mangrove restoration approaches that succeed through creating the right conditions for natural recovery. The brochure “to plant or not to plant” was disseminated in 10 languages.

Photo: Mangrove swamp in the Philippines

Wetlands as peace-keepers on the international agenda

Through our landmark report “**Water Shocks: Wetlands and Human Migration in the Sahel**”, we presented evidence on how the shrinkage of wetlands in the Sahel is contributing to undermine human security, fueling societal tensions and compelling people to migrate, including to Europe. This has provided new links with the development and humanitarian sectors and opened up dialogues and opportunities to influence investments in development and climate action across the Sahel.



Photo: Fisher with nets in Inner Niger Delta, Mali



Corredor Azul: Connecting people, nature and economies along the Paraná-Paraguay river system

We initiated a major long-term programme, “Corredor Azul”, to help safeguard the Paraná – Paraguay river corridor in South America, one of the worlds’ last remaining free-flowing major river system. The programme focuses on three hugely diverse wetlands: the Pantanal wetland, the Iberá marshes and the Paraná Delta. The river and wetland system is threatened by growing pressure on land and water for industrial scale agriculture, hydro-electric developments and navigation.

Photo: Paraná river and delta, Argentina



Peatlands gain recognition as climate change regulators

With German and Russian partners, we were proud to receive the prestigious UN Momentum for Change Award for our work on peatlands at the UNFCCC COP 23. Through our PeatRus project – the largest peatland restoration initiative in the world - we guided the rewetting of 35,000 hectares of degraded peatlands in Russia, leading to emission reductions of over 175,000 tons of CO₂ equivalent a year.

Photo: Peatland in Russia's Tver region

Our finances

We aim to focus our work on the issues where wetlands matter the most to people and nature. We develop programmes and initiatives to meet our strategic goals, organised according to five streams. Increasingly, our programmes are large scale and long-term, involving several of our offices. Head office and network offices combine efforts in resource development and increasingly network offices are directly financed by donors.

Sources of income for the global organisation



-  Dutch government
-  German government
-  other governments
-  Association Wetlands International
-  Trusts, Foundations and NGOs
-  companies

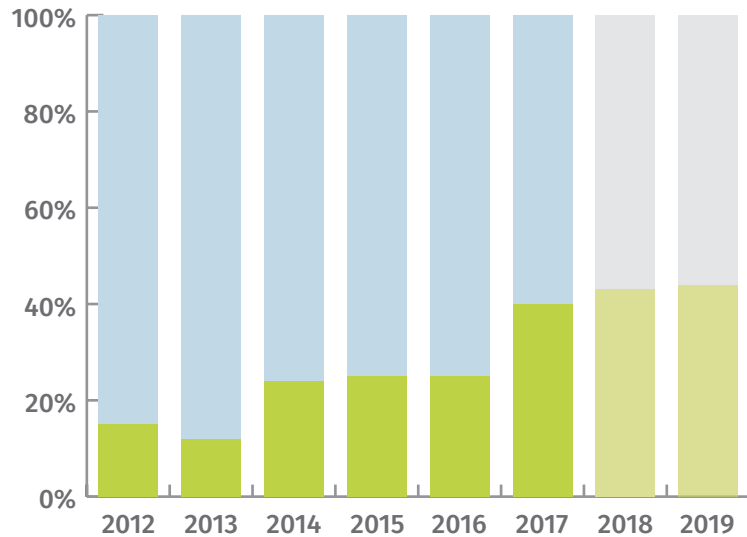
Network expenditures across five streams of work



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

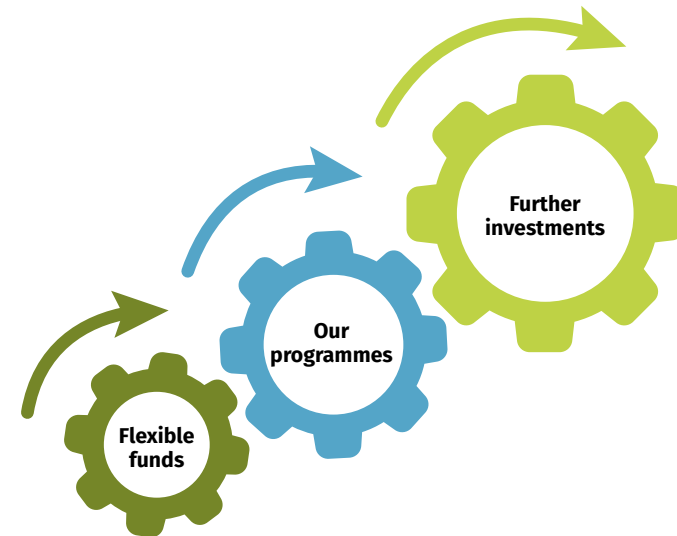
Full report at:
www.wetlands.org/annualreview2017

Increased resource development by network offices



- **Project income raised by network offices**
- **Project income raised by head office**

Our funding model to leverage investment



Using very little flexible funds, we are able to bring actors together and develop small pilot projects, which in turn leverage larger programmes supported by finances of partners and additional donors. With our programme results we leverage larger scale public and private sector investment in wetlands.

Full report at:

www.wetlands.org/annualreview2017

Our offices

- Senegal / Africa
- Mali / Sahel
- Guinea-Bissau
- Kenya / East Africa
- Ethiopia
- Nigeria
- Uganda
- Argentina/ LAC
- Panama / LAC
- Guatemala
- China
- Japan
- Indonesia
- Malaysia
- Brunei
- Philippines
- India / South Asia
- Belgium /
- European Association
- Russia
- Netherlands / Head office



Our organisation

Network organisations are becoming more effective than traditional, centralised, hierarchical ones. Our global network organisation is more than a list of offices and partners. It consists of diverse entities, members, partners and supporters who share knowledge and collaborate in programmes and for policy influence.

- **9**
Supervisory Council Members
- **5**
Counsellors of Honour
- **4**
Management Team members
- **177**
Partnerships
- **53**
Donors
- **35**
Members
- **27**
Associate Experts
- **20**
Our offices
- **11**
Specialist Groups



Find the full list of members at:
www.wetlands.org/annualreview2017

We thank our supporters

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



Photo: Annual Global Meeting with staff in the Philippines



Full version of the
Annual Review 2017 at:
www.wetlands.org/annualreview2017

