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Report of the fifth workshop on International Waterbird Censuses (IWC) in North Africa

2-4 October 2016, Arles



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Under the aegis of :



LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Representatives of the IWC national coordinators (or their representatives) of five countries of North Africa (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia) have attended the workshop.

Country (Alphabetical order)	Institution / Organisation	Representative
Algeria	Direction Générale des Forêts	Bendjedda Nadjiba
	Centre Cynégétique de Réghaia	Samir Sayoud
Egypt	Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs	Dr. Gamal Gomaa Medani
Libya	Environment General Authority	Essam Bouras
	Université de Tripoli	Khaled Ettayeb
Morocco	Institut Scientifique de Rabat / GREPOM GREPOM	Pr. Mahamed Dakki Asmâa Ouassou
Tunisia	Association "Les Amis des Oiseaux"	Hichem Azafzaf Claudia Feltrup-Azazaf
France	Institut de recherche de la Tour du Valat	Laura Dami Clémence Deschamps Jean Jalbert
	Office National de la Chasse et de la Faune Sauvage	Pierre Defos du Rau Jean-Yves Mondain-Monval Suet Marie
Holland	Wetlands International	Tom Langendoen

Nicola Baccetti, Italian national coordinator from ISPRA, should have been present by skype conference but the internet connection was not good enough to allow this collaboration. In according with Nicola, this report will be sent to him and we will have a discussion together for next collaborations.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAO: Association “les Amis des Oiseaux” (Tunisia)

AEWA: African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement

CEPF : Critical Ecosystem Partnership Funds

GREPOM: Groupe de Recherche et de Protection des Oiseaux au Maroc (Morocco)

ISPRA : Istituto Superiore per la Protezione e la Ricerca Ambientale (Italy)

IWC: International Waterbird Census

LSB : Libyan Society for Birds

MEDDE: Ministère de l’écologie, du développement durable et de l’énergie (France) (Previous name of the French Ministry of Environnement)

MEEM : Ministère de l'Environnement, de l'Energie et de la Mer (France) (Present name of the Ministry of Environnement)

NGO: Non-governmental organization

ONCFS: Office National de la Chasse et de la Faune Sauvage (France)

TDV: Tour du Valat

TSU: Technical Support Unit (to the AEWA African Initiative)

WI: Wetlands International

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WORKSHOP REPORT

1. Context reminder

1.1. The IWC

The IWC constitutes a monitoring programme for the conservation of migratory waterbirds and wetlands. This scheme is an essential tool for the implementation of the AEWA and the Ramsar Convention on wetlands. The IWC is a simple and effective tool to estimate **trends in waterbird population numbers** and **evaluate the relative importance of wetlands** for biodiversity as a whole. It is one of the world's largest programmes for monitoring biodiversity.

1.2. The Support programme to IWC in the Mediterranean Basin

In the Mediterranean Basin, an IWC Support Programme was initiated in 2012 by Tour du Valat, ONCFS and Wetlands International, with the support of the MEDDE (present MEEM) and the MAVA Foundation. This programme aims to **improve the spatial coverage and the overall quality of waterbird monitoring** and wetland conservation by creating synergies between existing programmes, by strengthening national networks of observers and by completing wetlands inventories.

This program aims at covering all the Mediterranean countries, but in the first instance, it focused on the countries of southern Mediterranean. **North Africa** has indeed a great role to play in this Mediterranean programme, but also in the AEWA **African Initiative** and its **Plan of Action for Africa**¹ (2012-2017) adopted at the AEWA MOP 5 (La Rochelle, France, May 2012).



A **1st regional workshop on the IWC in North Africa** was held in Tunis (Tunisia) in October 2012 with representatives of governments, NGOs and universities from Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia. Capacity building of national networks, training of observers, data sharing, as well as a better use of IWC for the management and conservation of wetlands were discussed. This workshop resulted in the creation of the **"Mediterranean Waterbird" network**.



As a follow-up to this initiative, a **2nd regional workshop on IWC in North Africa** was held in El Kala (Algeria) in June 2013 with representatives of governments, NGOs and universities from Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia. The 1st part of the workshop focused on recent developments in training for trainers with the presentation of existing tools. The 2nd part of the workshop was devoted to the **meeting of the "North Africa" sub-region** for the implementation of the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa.

Under the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa, a **TSU was created at the initiative of France to strengthen the implementation of the African Initiative for the period 2013-2015**. At the request of the MEDDE, Tour du Valat co-hosts this TSU with ONCFS. Its main objective is to develop and sustain technical support of France to the African Initiative until the MOP6 (2015) by helping African Parties to implement the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa.

¹ <http://www.unep-aewa.org/activities/africaninitiative/publication/index.htm>

This **5th workshop** has been organized in France in order to share the time schedule of some participants with other following meetings in Arles. This document is the **report of this workshop**.

2. The 5th IWC-MED Workshop

Tour du Valat Director, Jean Jalbert, and the representative of the National Office of hunting and Wildlife, Jean-Yves Mondain-Monval, insisted on the importance of this international meeting and thanked all the participants for their presence and their commitment to the network.

The workshop offered the opportunity to discuss the following points:

- achievements of the network during the last year,
- status and changes of January counts in each country
- progress on the submitted article and on the next scientific article to be produced
- progress on the Medwaterbirds online database
- the network's data charter
- fund-raising possibilities
- other points of discussion...

2.1. Achievements of the Mediterranean waterbird network

A quick presentation of the **actions carried out since the last meeting** in October 2015:

- The **database has been updated** up to at least January 31, 2015 with more comprehensive and precise data
- The **leaflet** about the progression of the general UTS projects has been printed and is being distributed at international meetings
- The network was presented at **4 different international meetings** (MOP 6 of the AEWA, Spoonbill workshop, Task Force of the CMS against the Illegal killing and at the European Birds Census Council)
- **The article on synchronized counts** of January 2013 has been **submitted** to the review "Biological Conservation".
- **Two fund-raising applications**: one for a project based on data analyses to link climate change to changes in species communities, submitted to the BNP Paris Bas Foundation. It was rejected (many projects submitted and ours did not go into enough technical detail to propose concrete solutions). The second one was on the project linking the IWC in the field and the awareness-raising actions against the illegal killing; it was submitted in September.
- **A project funded by the CEPF** that must be completed by the end of October: it is based on **the development of capacity building** of counters in 4 of the 5 countries and it has been successful in this area/to that effect. **A final workshop was held in Algeria** just before this meeting to assess the successful actions but also the difficulties.

2.2. Achievement of IWC counts in countries

Each IWC national coordinator (or their representative) presented the implementation of this scheme in January 2016 (site coverage, observer network, national coordination, other complementary actions, etc.).

These presentations highlighted the **general improvement in wintering counts** and the great effort accomplished by each country to cover an important area of wetlands.

2.3. Achievement on the article “2013”

The article “**The first coordinated trans-North African mid-winter waterbird census: the contribution of the International Waterbird Census to the conservation of waterbirds and wetlands at a biogeographical level**” has been submitted to the “**Biological Conservation**” journal and has reported a lot of remarks and comments.

The Editor has highlighted the general interest of this paper, but also the needs of a lot of **changes and/or additions to make before the 10th of October**. Pierre, supported by the team, is working hard on it since the end of August and hopes to finish in time to re-submit.

2.4. Achievement of the next scientific article

The new scientific article will be led by Morocco and it will concern analyses on historical data. It has not yet started because of the dataset has only recently been updated and cleaned of all the mistakes (on sites, coordinates or species).

At present each country can enter data on medwaterbirds and after the signature by all the partners, of the data charter, the data could be used for common studies and analyses.

The TdV and the ONFCS will coordinate and support the progression of this article. It has been discussed to **include the surfaces of wetlands sites**, because it seems to be well related to the abundance of birds (at least in Morocco). After a discussion on the feasibility of adding this parameter, it has been accorded **to test the time needed to calculate it**, basing on the methodology of the IBA guidelines (sent to all the partners by Hichem Azafzaf during the workshop – Annex 1): if it will be possible to use this methodology easily to calculate areas of wetlands, the parameter will be included in analyses. In the meantime, analyses on other parameters have to be produced, so it is possible to wait until next spring to include this parameter. **Previous analyses** will be focuses **on targeting species and factors (climate, breeding success and flyway parameters)**. **First analyses** will focus specifically **on coots, ducks and geese** (because of the kind of data allow to have a long pattern).

It would be important to work **in collaboration with Wetlands International** for this paper.

Following, a reminder of the previewed schedule of scientific articles to write: part of the lateness could be regained in working at the same time both articles “2014” and “2015”.

Years	First author	General Theme
2013	Algeria	First analyses on the IWC MED of North Africa data
2014	Morocco	Analyses on historical data
2015	Tunisia	Spatio-temporal dynamic of threatened waterbirds
2016	Egypt	Impact of anthropic and environmental factors on waterbirds population of North Africa
2017	Libya	Impact of management actions of wetlands on waterbirds populations

2.5. Achievement of the data charter

The **network's data charter** about terms and conditions for using and sharing International Waterbird Census (IWC) data of this network **was** reviewed, corrected and **finalized**. **All the partners accepted** conditions reported on the charter **and signed it**: this is a **great achievement** for the network!





2.6. Prospects on Fund-raising

A little list of fund-raising possibilities was given as example of the difficulty to find good useful grants:

Programme	Grant size	Theme
Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund	No specific limit	Selected Conservation International "hotspots" - See after strategy definition
Global Environment Facility	50000 USD	Funds NGO or CBO-led projects on biodiversity
Global Environment Facility-medium and full-size grants	1 million max	Biodiversity and climate change
Levinson Foundation	30000 USD	Ecosystem and Biological Diversity
Mitsubishi Corporation Fund for	30000 GBP	Conservation

Europe and Africa		
WWF US	> 7500 USD	Grants for conservation workshop 2015-2016 Africa and Asia
Rufford Foundation	?	Small nature/biodiversity conservation projects and pilot programmes in developing countries

The WWF US could be used by each country in order to ask little grants for national trainings.

It will be necessary to verify the eligibility of countries and areas for all the proposed grants and notably for the GEF (Global Environment Facility).

Other possibilities of funding have to be studied and the research for grants will be active and reinforced as soon as possible. All other suggestions on eventual funds are welcome.

2.7. Other points of discussion

- Next wintering counts are supposed to be **“Total counts”** in order to assess the status of key sites, to identify important wetlands in need of protection and provide much needed information on the status and distribution of waterbird populations. **A great effort has necessary to realize them**, in order to cover a great number of wetlands. It has been accepted by mutual verbal agreement, to use the training budget to carry out the total counts (**1000 euros for each country**) and to **ask a complementary support** to the general budget of the Tour du Valat to allow having at least 2000 euros (in total) for each country. Wetlands International and Tour du Valat will write **letters describing the importance of these counts in order to be used at a National level, to ask a support** to Ministry of Environment in each country. The training session, previously engaged on this budget, could be transformed in technical training on the field during waterbirds counts: **Yves Kayser**, who is an important ornithologist based at the Tour du Valat, **will go in Tunisia to support counts** and provide trainings on waterbirds identification and counts. But **trainees will have to find funds to pay their travelling expenses**.
- **Tom Langendoen from Wetlands International, briefly explained the “IWC Data Use Agreement between the national schemes and Wetlands International” and “Terms of use for International Waterbird Census data”**. These documents are at present in consultation and it is so possible to send comments and remarks. It will be also presented during the PAOC meeting to other National coordinators. Comments and remarks will be integrated until the **30th of October**.
- It has been mentioned the interest of **some voluntary counters from Europe**, who are **interested in joining counts in Morocco**. These people could contact directly Professor Dakki to see with him the possibilities of collaboration.

3. Excursion

The daily excursion was at the Viguirat Marshes : the field excursion was in the morning , accompanied by a very good weather and some birds. After the lunch with local products, we had a **presentation on the management of the Reserve by Marine Pascal and a following presentation by**

Niolas Sadoul on the LIFE+ ENVOLL (<http://www.life-envoll.eu/>) project, on protection of colonial Charadriiforms : a group of seabird species for which conservation stakes are high.



Thanks to each partner for collaboration and implication at each discussion!

Looking forward to working with you again!

Annexe1

Intégrer a copie de la charte signée let les documents métrologiques des ZH de Hichem