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**RESSOURCE
PROJECT**

SWM Sahelian Wetlands Site

newsletter

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WELCOME

As the Sahelian wetlands prepare to welcome hundreds of thousands of migratory waterbirds for winter, the RESSOURCE* Project is actively planning its future field activities.

This fourth Project newsletter underscores the need for all stakeholders, at the grassroots or national and international decision-making levels, to step up their overall, inclusive and cooperative approaches.

As our work moves forward, it's exhilarating to see how growing new information has made us more aware and collectively committed to safeguarding the global biodiversity on which countless rural communities – and, in reality, all humanity – directly depend.

There's a long road ahead with significant challenges in store and vital ongoing advocacy efforts to keep up. So lend us your support by spreading the word about our work. Happy reading and have a good winter!

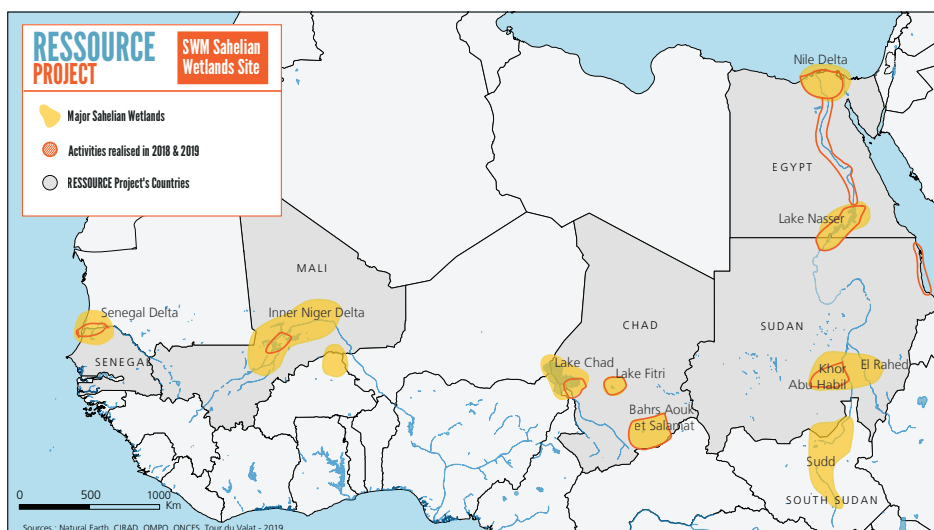
Bruno Portier
RESSOURCE Project Coordinator

“Strengthening expertise in Sub-Saharan Africa on birds and their rational use for communities and their environment”

Supported by



HIGHLIGHTS



Egypt - Lake Nasser, Nile Valley and Delta

This ongoing study in Egypt started up in 2018. It strives to understand the value chains and socioeconomic impact of various hunting sectors, focusing on waterbirds.

Mali - Inner Niger Delta

560 surveys were fielded as part of a waterbird market survey in Mopti, Sévaré, Youwarou, Bamako, Konna and Djenné, with data collection carried out using KoBoCollect. These surveys have allowed establishing the range of species reflected in the data. Regular monitoring of the sampled sellers will provide information on the specific numbers of waterbirds being sold and their importance.

Senegal - Senegal Delta

A socio-anthropological approach using "zoning based on stakeholders" has been tested in the Senegal River Delta. Building on the knowledge that local actors have of their territory, this approach promotes trust and dialogue among stakeholders.

Sudan - Red Sea Coast and Khor Abu Habil wetlands

Field studies and monitoring are being carried out as part of a multidisciplinary territorial assessment of the socio-economic, hydrological and land-use features of the Khor Abu Habil inner delta region. This data collection and monitoring activity is an important step supporting Khor Abu Habil's designation as an internationally important wetland under the Ramsar Convention.

Chad - Bahr Aouk et Salamat Ramsar Site and Lake Chad Basin

In addition a socio-economic study on waterbirds as a food source, the project is also testing out a system for sustainable waterbird resource management at the community level. To this end, a monitoring-directed management system approach is being implemented in two village communities bordering Lake Fitri.

SPECIAL FOCUS - HABITAT CONSERVATION

Maintaining suitable habitat is essential for waterbird conservation. The expansion of agricultural activities, such as rice farming and market gardening, threatens wetland ecosystems.

According to Alexandre Czajkowski of the European Institute for the Management of Wild Birds and their Habitats (OMPO), "At a time when the agribusiness industry is exerting unprecedented pressure to convert wetlands into rice fields, it's vital to raise awareness about wetlands among stakeholders, policy makers and the general public."

As part of its sustainable development advocacy efforts for riparian populations, the RESSOURCE Project is supporting, creating and implementing management plans in two pilot wetland areas: the Trois Marigot Community Reserve in Senegal and the Khor Abu Habil floodplains in Sudan. These wetland management plans integrate waterbird conservation while considering the multiple uses of these areas as well.

RESSOURCE is also working to strengthen the protection status of these two wetlands by lobbying for their designation as internationally important sites under the Ramsar Convention. This will help government partners commit to ensuring the sustainability and integrity of the wetland ecosystem services and ecology in these areas.



COUNTRY STORY – SUDAN

The Khor Abu Habil alluvial fan complex and adjacent White Nile area in central Sudan form one of the most important wetland areas in the country. Each year, this inner delta receives rainwater from the Nuba Mountains, creating tens to even hundreds of seasonal clay pools (mayaas) around Tendelti.

“These temporary wetlands right in the middle of the Sahel are a refuge for many migratory waterbirds. They are also indispensable to the traditional farming, livestock-raising, hunting and fishing activities of the rural communities which have adapted to the area’s unique geographic and ecological features over the centuries,” reports Aurélien Lossier, a master’s student in anthropology at the University of Strasbourg.

Rainfall and flood-based agriculture coexist in Khor Abu Habil. Both are critical to the survival of the local communities and – like the region’s abundant waterbird populations – these agricultural systems also depend on seasonal rains and flooding. For this reason, maintaining the natural balance of the ecosystem there is vital.

Several potential threats, including agricultural, dam and other hydrographic facilities development in the area, could jeopardize the sustainability of this vast wetland.

A multidisciplinary assessment has shown the importance of Khor Abu Habil, both for migratory avifauna and for local communities. Knowledge of the hydrological dynamics and human occupational patterns in this wetland area are indispensable to its future conservation. This information also contributes to getting the key data needed for designating the region an internationally important wetland under the Ramsar Convention.



FACTS AND FIGURES

Nearly **87 percent** of wetlands have been lost over the last two centuries

Nearly **67 000 waterbirds** were counted in Khor Abu Habil, Sudan

Nearly **75 000 waterbirds** were counted in the Zakouma National Park and the Ramsar Area of Bahr Aouk et Salamat, Chad

EVENTS CORNER

World Migratory Bird Day

12 October 2019
Durban, Afrique du Sud

More information on this year’s theme “Protect the birds: be the solution to plastic pollution” can be found [here](#).



Valuing local knowledge in Senegal

July 2019

Discussion groups are to be held in the Senegal River Delta with ecoguards, farmers, fisherfolk, herders and youth to encourage the use of local knowledge in wetland management.



FROM THE FIELD



White pelicans, Little Egret and White-breasted Cormorants
– Djoudj National Bird Sanctuary, Senegal

NEWSROOM

Further information about the RESSOURCE Project can be found through the following links:

- Counting for better conservation: Building capacity in local communities in Senegal ([read article](#))
- Astou – A young Senegalese conservationist and bird enthusiast ([see video](#))
- Assane – An inspiring Senegalese conservationist ([see video](#))
- Conservation and monitoring of waterbirds in Africa ([see video](#))
- Monitoring waterbirds in Africa: The experience in Chad ([see video](#))
- Nature and Wildlife Review, Volume 32, Number 2, Senegal River Delta: the management of wetlands with local populations ([read article](#))

WHAT'S COMING UP?

- The Thirteenth Session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), Gandhinagar, India 15–22 February 2020
<https://www.cms.int/en/cop13>
- IUCN World Conservation Congress, Marseille, France - 11–19 June 2020
<https://www.iucncongress2020.org/>

RESSOURCE TALKS

Philippe Mayaux,
Team Leader for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
at DG DEVCO, the European Commission

The erosion of biodiversity and the climate crisis are major challenges. They bring the very existence of humanity into question. In this regard, wetlands are among the most threatened habitats in the world. Their conservation calls for urgent and concerted action at the local, national and international levels.



The large wetlands of Peri-Saharan Africa play a fundamental role in the livelihoods of the communities living there. These wetlands are home to important economic, agricultural and pastoral activities. They also contain rich biodiversity, particularly in terms of large waterbird populations. Some of these birds contribute to the financial and food security of communities in the region. Because of this, the loss of Sahelian wetlands jeopardizes important livelihood sources for rural populations there.

The RESSOURCE Project is both unique and innovative. It builds on synergies with the Sustainable Wildlife Management Programme (SWM Programme), one of the largest biodiversity initiatives currently funded by the European Union. The RESSOURCE project is being implemented in five of the thirteen (13) SWM Programme countries and is the only SWM component that considers meat from wildlife sources in terms of waterbirds. In this way, RESSOURCE is contributing to global thinking on the link between bushmeat and food security.

Improving the direct management of waterbird populations and their habitats by national wildlife administrators and local community stakeholders can benefit both wetlands and the human populations that depend on them.



FIND OUT MORE

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