These are unprecedented times in more ways than one, and without ignoring the tragic aspects, there are many worthwhile lessons to be drawn. In the face of this tremendous challenge in improving our relationship with the rest of the living world, we strongly believe that our task is of paramount importance.

Initiatives such as the RESSOURCE Project and the Sustainable Wildlife Management (SWM) Programme, which aim at reconciling the conservation of biodiversity with harmonious human development, have a leading role to play, now more than ever. This need strengthens our commitment and our determination. To be successful we must inform, disseminate and share knowledge, which we strive to do, among other things, through these six-monthly newsletters.

In spring, millions of migrating birds that wintered on the African continent returned to Europe. Like every year, the winter months have been the scene of intense activity for all of the RESSOURCE Project teams and technical partners working in the field. This fifth issue will present the highlights and the challenges they faced.

I hope you enjoy it!

Bruno Portier
RESSOURCE Project Coordinator

"Strengthening expertise in Sub-Saharan Africa on birds and their rational use for communities and their environment"
Sustainable exploitation of white water lily, present everywhere in the Senegal River Delta, is promising. Although for many of us, the white water lily is mainly appreciated for its decorative value, it also has many nutritional and pharmaceutical benefits. Its seeds are, for example, very popular in several local recipes.

White water lily production is up to ten times more profitable than growing rice. “If cultivating lilies in abandoned rice fields converted for this purpose is successful, it would be possible to develop a profitable economic sector that supports wetland conservation,” he concludes. The exploitation of the white water lily could therefore contribute to the food and financial needs of local communities.
The wetlands of Chad represent an exceptional natural heritage. Over the past few months, the RESSOURCE Project has continued the waterbirds census, from the ground or aircraft, over these vast areas.

It is crucial to carry out these biodiversity monitoring activities on a regular basis and simultaneously across major wetlands. “This would allow us to collect data that are invaluable at the local and national levels, but also for international agreements relating to the conservation and management of waterbirds and wetlands,” explains Clémence Deschamps, Project Manager at the Tour du Valat Research Institute.

More than 11 hours of flight time were required to sample the vast Ramsar site of the Logone floodplain and Toupouri depressions. “Several thousand Spur-winged Geese and Collared Pratincoles were counted in the wet meadows located north of the site,” affirms Jean-Yves Mondain-Monval, of the Migratory Birds Unit of the French Office for Biodiversity (OFB). On Lake Fitri and the flood plain of Bahrs Aouk et Salamat, significant numbers of Black-Crowned Cranes and Ruffs have been identified.

FACTS AND FIGURES

More than 2,000 interviews have been conducted since 2017 as part of the socio-economic study on the importance of the waterbird value chains.

During the 32nd waterbirds census in the Senegal River Delta, more than 100,000 Northern Pintails were recorded.

Nearly 50,000 waterbirds were counted in areas that are rarely inventoried in southwest Chad.

EVENTS CORNER

World Wetlands Day
2 February 2020

The theme of World Wetlands Day was “Wetlands and Biodiversity”. On this occasion, FAO highlighted the contribution of the RESSOURCE Project to international conservation efforts (see Tweet).

Open-ended Working Group on the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

24-29 February 2020
FAO headquarters, Rome, Italy

During this event, a presentation and a booth helped raise awareness amongst the delegates about the most recent progress in the SWM Programme and the RESSOURCE Project (see Tweet).

World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD)
9 May 2020

The theme was “Birds Connect Our World”. The RESSOURSE Project was promoted on FAO, FFEM twitter accounts and also via the official WMBD account.
One of the major risks of counting birds from the ground or by boat (just as for fishermen) is the presence of hippos!

NEWSPAPER

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

- On World Environment Day on 5 June 2020, the European Union published the article, “Counting birds for better conservation of wetlands in Senegal”, which discusses the RESSOURCE Project (here). This article was also posted on their Twitter account (here).
- On World Environment Day, the RESSOURCE Project launched its brochure (click here).
- The Technical Support Unit for the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) African Initiative presented the project activities (read more).
- The fourth SWM Programme Newsletter (November 2019–February 2020) was published in French and English.

WHAT’S COMING UP?

- Colloque international sur les espèces envahissantes (International Symposium on Invasive Species) Université Gaston Berger de Saint-Louis (Senegal) 22–25 September 2020
- World Migratory Water Bird Day 10 October 2020 (Read more)