



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



**SWM SUSTAINABLE  
WILDLIFE  
MANAGEMENT  
PROGRAMME**

# newsletter

**Issue 6 - July to October 2020**

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## WELCOME

This has been a challenging year for everyone, given the massive impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The SWM Programme has inevitably experienced some unforeseen disruptions and delays. However, since July, our teams have made considerable progress on many fronts, and field activities have resumed – following strict social distancing and health measures – at most project sites.

We need to learn from the pandemic and support a green recovery. To contribute to this goal, the SWM Programme has published a comprehensive [White Paper](#) and [Policy Brief](#) *Build Back Better in a post-COVID-19 world – Reducing future wildlife-borne spillover of disease to humans*. The White Paper analyses the available scientific information on the causes of zoonotic disease spillover and their subsequent spread. Building on this assessment, both documents provide clear recommendations on how to prevent, detect and respond to future outbreaks.

I hope that you could attend the launch of the White Paper at the Global Landscape Forum – Digital Biodiversity Conference in October. For those of you who missed the lively presentations and discussions, I encourage you to watch the recording ([click here](#)). The last four months have also seen a major increase in our online presence, due to the production of seven engaging 1-minute social media videos. These can be viewed on either our [French](#) or [English](#) YouTube playlists.

Keep safe, and enjoy this issue of the SWM Newsletter.

Hubert Boulet  
SWM Programme Coordinator

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## HIGHLIGHTS

Summarised below are the highlights from each SWM site for the period July 2020 to October 2020. They build on the highlights in the [first](#), [second](#), [third](#), [fourth](#) and [fifth](#) SWM Newsletters.

### Congo - Ouessou basin

The feasibility study on domestic protein production is being finalised after a second round of visits to the villages at the project site. Data collection during the hunting season for value chain analysis is currently underway, as well as data collection on the consumption of wild and domestic animal proteins.

### Democratic Republic of the Congo - Ituri landscape

Several studies have been finalized that provide baseline data on the project site (e.g. socio-economic studies, bibliographic synthesis of current hunting models and report on past livestock projects in Ituri) and information to support discussions on hunting models (e.g. module to sensitize communities on their access rights to natural resources).

### Gabon - Mulundu Department

Martin Hega, the SWM community and communication officer, tragically passed away due to COVID-19. Condolences were sent to his family and colleagues. Two new project staff are continuing his exceptional work in Lastoursville. Household surveys and analysis of customary laws began, monitoring hunting activities now include 5 new groups, and management committees have been re-launched.

### Guyana - Rupununi Savannahs

A comprehensive mammal survey was finalized. River patrols continued along the Rupununi River. Veterinary inputs and chicks continued to be sold to farmers. A citizen science module was incorporated into the environmental education programme. Current knowledge of wildlife regulations was assessed. Communication materials on hunting seasons and protected species were produced.

### Papua New Guinea - Bismarck Forest Corridor

Community-based natural resource management rules were finalized in the Kwiop community and drafted with the Danbagl community. These rules will be formalised through a legal contract called a "Conservation Deed". To assist this process a legal consultant held workshops in both communities. The Danbagl community tree nursery was renovated.

### Madagascar - Makira landscape

The study on hunting practices was completed. It provides a basis for discussions on sustainable hunting. Support to community poultry and fish farming projects progressed well, and included the allocation of chickens and fry, fish farming training, preparation of ponds, a preliminary chicken vaccination campaign and installation of veterinary kiosks.

### Sahelian Wetlands Site - RESSOURCE Project

Chad, Egypt, Mali, Senegal and Sudan

A planned rainy season aerial survey of wetlands in southern Chad was cancelled due to COVID-19. The amendment to the Financing Agreement extending the French Facility for Global Environment (FFEM) funding to the end of December 2021 was signed by FAO and FFEM. The technical partners are currently preparing field activities for the forthcoming winter.

### Zambia and Zimbabwe - KaZa Transfrontier Conservation Area

A terrestrial game survey was carried out to estimate wildlife abundance and species distribution in the Mucheni Community Conservancy. A workshop was organised in Binga to discuss the livestock study results and to develop a draft livestock intervention plan. Materials and equipment were distributed to improve educational infrastructure at the Zambia project site.

## SPECIAL FOCUS - HEALTH MEASURES

The health of the SWM teams, and the many people with whom we work, is our first priority during the COVID-19 pandemic. Project staff are taking the necessary precautions and adopting stringent health measures. Project sites have given staff explicit guidance on personal behaviour, use of public transport, cleaning of offices and vehicles, and meetings with local partners. Non-essential international travels are postponed, and for the travels which are maintained, travellers have to be tested for COVID-19 and/or comply with quarantine rules.

This guidance includes training on COVID-19 symptoms, and preventive measures such as frequent hand washing, wearing face masks, and maintaining a safe distance from others. Meetings have also been kept to a minimum and with a minimum staff count. If staff exhibit mild symptoms they must stay at home and self-isolate. If they have a high fever and difficulty breathing they must immediately seek medical help and follow the guidance of the local health authority. By taking these measures seriously we can protect our partners and staff and keep SWM activities moving forward.



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# COUNTRY STORY - SENEGAL

"The Sahelian wetlands are home to a rich biodiversity, including millions of migratory and resident waterbirds" explains Bruno Portier, the RESSOURCE Project (Sahelian Wetlands Site) Coordinator; however, "climate change, agricultural development, water supply projects and intensive use of natural resources are threatening these wetland habitats." The changes are not only affecting the wetlands and bird populations, which may have declined by 40 percent between 1960 and 2000, but also the communities that rely on them for food and income.

The RESSOURCE Project aims to improve the sustainable use of natural resources, particularly waterbirds, in the wetlands of Chad, Egypt, Mali, Senegal and Sudan. In Senegal, one recent activity has been to combat invasive aquatic plants in the Trois Marigots Community Reserve. "The Sacred Lotus (*Nelumbo nucifera*) was introduced to the Senegal Delta for ornamental purposes in 2004, but has voraciously colonised many areas of open water," emphasises Bruno Portier. "It is threatening the ecosystem, hindering navigation, preventing fishing and affecting the feeding and breeding areas for many waterbirds." In June 2020, the Project financed a major eradication campaign. Under the supervision of OMPO, the Lotus plants were manually removed by local communities. It has successfully restored approximately 5 ha of natural habitat.

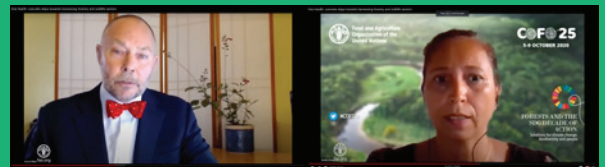


## EVENTS CORNER

### FAO 25th Committee on Forestry (COFO)

5–9 October 2020

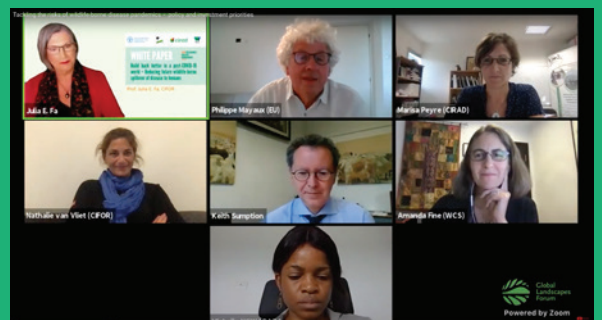
The FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu mentioned the SWM Programme in his COFO opening remarks (see [press release](#)). David Wilkie (WCS) and Sandra Ratiarison (FAO) represented the SWM Programme in the session "[One Health: concrete steps for harnessing forestry and wildlife sectors](#)".



### Global Landscape Forum (GLF) biodiversity conference

28–29 October 2020

The SWM [White Paper](#) and [Policy Brief](#) *Build back better in a post-COVID-19 world: Reducing future wildlife-borne spillover of disease to humans* were launched during a lively SWM session at the GLF conference. The GLF published an SWM [session paper](#) and a [press release](#).



## FACTS AND FIGURES

**577 delegates** attended the SWM White Paper [launch event](#) at the Global Landscape Forum biodiversity conference

Over **30 000 people** have viewed the SWM camera trap video on [Twitter](#)

The [SWM web portal](#) has received over **6 000 visitors** since July

## FROM THE FIELD



Chief Sinansengwe (Mucheni village, Binga District, Zimbabwe) receiving a framed SWM photo taken by Brent Stirton.

## NEWSROOM

Recent SWM Programme news items include:

- SWM public portal launched ([click here](#)).
- CIFOR forest news – Robert Nasi to U.S. congressional staff ([click here](#)).
- SWM Free, Prior and Informed Consent animation launched ([click here](#)).
- Seven new videos on the SWM [playlist](#) and the European Commission [portal](#).
- Press Release for the SWM White Paper ([click here](#))
- CIRAD news – SWM White Paper launch ([click here](#))
- FAO Brussels news – SWM White Paper launch ([click here](#))
- Article in The Conversation published by Julia Fa, CIFOR ([click here](#))
- Article in Africa Science News ([click here](#))
- CIRAD news – Marisa Peyre "Emerging disease must be nipped in the bud right away" ([click here](#))

## WHAT'S COMING UP?

- World Wildlife Day  
3 March 2021  
<https://www.wildlifeday.org/>
- International Day of Forests  
21 March 2021  
<https://www.un.org/en/events/forestsday/>
- XV World Forestry Congress – Building a Green, Healthy and Resilient Future with Forests  
24–28 May 2021  
<https://wfc2021korea.org/>

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## SWM TALKS

### Alain Billand, Director for Impact and Marketing of Science, French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD)



Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, science has been (and still is) eagerly requested by decision-makers to provide knowledge and guidance. In the face of an unknown virus, there are still few answers to questions about its origins and the mechanisms by which it has spread, including the roles played by wildlife, wildlife farms, and animal markets for pets, food and medicine.

Media are the echo chambers of the scientific parole. However, they do not always distinguish between hypothesis and scientific evidence. For months, the pangolin was in the headlines as the COVID-19 culprit, despite the lack of data to substantiate these claims.

While science still seeks COVID-19 explanations, what is certain is that natural ecosystems, and the biodiversity on which mankind depends, are being lost at alarming rates. The drastic degradation of natural habitats, and the intensification of livestock production and trade, are also amplifying outbreaks of new animal-borne diseases.

The SWM White Paper, which is fresh off the press, presents our current understanding of these dynamics and provides valuable recommendations to prevent future pandemics. Policies and investment in One Health approaches are now a necessity. The SWM Programme, and its consortium of partners – which include a United Nations agency, a global conservation NGO and two international research centres – are well positioned to support such science-based solutions to ensure that we "Build back better".



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