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RESSOURCE
PROJECT

SWM Sahelian Wetlands Site

newsletter

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WELCOME

Conserving migratory species is complex because they depend on a fragile mosaic of favourable habitats, breeding environments, a connected network of high-quality stopover sites along their migration routes, and optimal wintering sites.

In these particularly difficult times marked by pressing global problems linked to climate change, biodiversity loss and the adjustment of priorities and global balances, it is more important than ever to act collectively, to strengthen dialogue and to make collective decisions to ensure the sustainability of our shared resources such as birds.

International initiatives such as the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA), the Convention on Wetlands of International Water Importance (Ramsar Convention), the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) have advocacy and knowledge-sharing platforms with national actors and decision makers.

In order to ensure that the results of our work are beneficial for the birds and rural populations that depend on the Sahelian wetlands, in recent months, the RESSOURCE Project* has invested heavily in sharing its main successes and results. The project team has indeed participated in various major public international events. This has been an opportunity to highlight the innovative aspect of the many activities carried out by the project, integrating research and development, and seeking to reconcile development and conservation. We will discuss this further in the following pages!

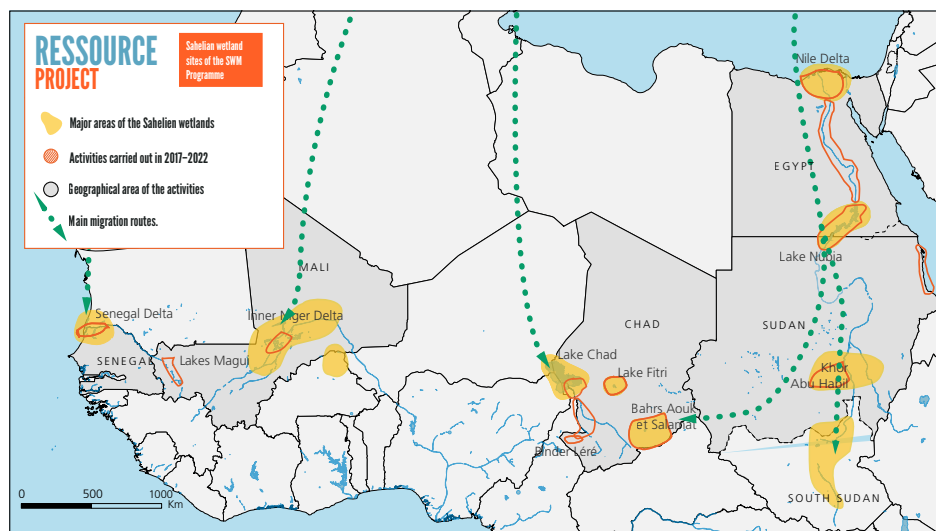
Bruno Portier
RESSOURCE Project Coordinator

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

Supported by



HIGHLIGHTS



Source: Natural Earth 2019 modified to comply with UN map 4045, 2018

Egypt - Lake Nasser, Lower Nile Valley and Nile Delta

A compilation and a legal analysis of current national policies, laws and regulations regarding wildlife and wetlands, were carried out, notably, on the evaluation and domestication of the Ramsar Convention and the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA). The texts and analyses have been published online through a country-specific [Legal Hub](#) in order to facilitate access to legal information and therefore participation in legislative processes.

Mali - Niger Inner Delta

Despite the involvement of national authorities, due to the current situation in the country, the project is not able to provide the planned technical support in the field. Cross-cutting support activities will continue to the extent possible.

Senegal - Senegal River Delta

The January 2023 waterbird census in the Senegal River Delta is the 35th consecutive one carried out with the technical support of the European Institute for the Management of Wild Birds and their Habitats (OMPO). Again, this census confirms the leading role of the Djoudj National Bird Sanctuary, which hosts the bulk of waterfowl, with two species exceeding 100 000 individuals: the Northern pintail (*Anas acuta*) and the White-faced whistling duck (*Dendrocygna viduata*). Garganey (*Spatula querquedula*), in contrast, has one of its lowest numbers in the past 15 years (approximately 9 000 birds).

Sudan - Red Sea coast and upper Nile Valley

The successful collaboration between the Sudanese Wildlife Administration and the RESSOURCE Project led to, on 10 April 2022, the designation of the Khor Abu Habil Inner Delta as a site of international importance under the Ramsar Convention. The video [Wetlands conservation in Sahel: Sudanese experience](#) and the poster illustrating the process (available in [English](#)) were widely disseminated at major international events.

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

As a result of innovative census techniques developed and tested by the project, vast wetlands were sampled by aerial transects. As a result, analyses were carried out using statistical methods (e.g. distance sampling) and extrapolated abundances were obtained at a scale of surface coverage, which could never have been achieved otherwise.



The RESSOURCE Project team presenting the key results of the project during the MOP-8 AEWA, Budapest (Hungary), 29 September 2022.

SPECIAL FOCUS - DISSEMINATION OF LESSONS LEARNED AND PERSPECTIVES

The RESSOURCE Project was invited to present the lessons learned drawn from the activities implemented from 2017 to 2022 during recent international events (see "Events" section below).

"The project's knowledge-sharing and advocacy work during these international events is crucial for strengthening the partnership approach and raising awareness among decision makers and actors in the field to ensure wetlands in the Sahel region are sustainable, healthy and functional", explains Bruno Portier, coordinator of the RESSOURCE Project.

Among the many lessons learned, Clémence Deschamps, project manager at the Tour du Valat Research Institute, recalls that "the organization of periodic, regular and standardized censuses is essential for monitoring waterbirds. The data acquired make it possible to monitor over time and reassess the overall population numbers, and therefore to prepare the health report of the populations concerned."

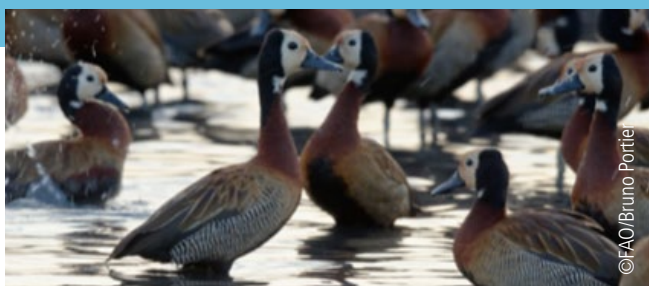
"The RESSOURCE Project will continue to strengthen access to innovative techniques for waterbird monitoring and wetland habitat conservation. It will also continue to build the capacities of national authorities and local communities in the field," adds Bruno Portier. Strengthening and expanding capacity building, particularly for African youth, is another key element for the future of the Sahelian wetlands and for the Project.

COUNTRY STORY - CHAD

The RESSOURCE Project monitored offtake by subsistence hunting and local commercial hunting in the Lake Fitri area to determine whether it was sustainable.

“Out of around 30 species harvested, the share of Afro-tropical species predominates, with nearly 80 percent of the catches, including three major species: the White-faced whistling duck (*Dendrocygna viduata*), the Reed cormorant (*Microcarbo africanus*) and Spur-winged goose (*Plectropterus gambensis*)”, explains Dr Sébastien Le Bel, researcher at the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD). The animal biomass of waterbird caught from March to June 2021 has been estimated at 6 tonnes, with an estimate of catch of around 10 000 Spur-winged goose, 12 000 Reed cormorants and 20 000 White-faced whistling ducks. During this period, the quantity of waterbirds harvested per hunter was around 32 kg, which would cover a quarter of the individual monthly protein requirements in March, a third in April, and half in June.

“In view of the support received from the Chadian authorities and the country’s undeniable importance in terms of hosting Palearctic migratory waterbirds, it is essential to continue providing technical and scientific support in Chad – in order to study the importance of waterbirds as a source of protein for local communities, to estimate the overall number of waterbird populations and to ensure sustainable practices”, concludes Bruno Portier, RESSOURCE Project Coordinator.



White-faced whistling ducks (*Dendrocygna viduata*) at the Djoudj National Bird Park (Senegal).

FACTS AND FIGURES

On average, approximately **250 000 waterbirds** are recorded annually in the Djoudj National Bird Sanctuary. For **26 species**, the 1 percent threshold of the supported individuals in a waterbird biogeographic population* is usually exceeded.

Between 2017 and 2022, the waterbird counts conducted by the RESSOURCE Project in the five countries generated **23 059 records**, which were formatted, validated and stored in an international database specifically developed by the project.

In total, more than **2 169 sites** have been inventoried, and nearly **4 million waterbirds** belonging to **141 species**, of which **125** are included in the AEWA list, have been counted.

* Ramsar designation Criterion 6 among the nine criteria defining wetlands of international importance.

EVENTS CORNER

The 8th Session of the Meeting of the Parties to the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) (MOP8 AEWA), Budapest (Hungary)

26–30 September 2022

On the occasion of the MOP8 AEWA, the RESSOURCE Project team presented the main results achieved since 2017, and the participants had the opportunity to test the first modules of the massive open online courses (MOOC) entitled, “Identifier et dénombrer les oiseaux d’eau d’Afrique du Nord et du Sahel – Comment et dans quels buts?” (Identifying and counting North African and Sahelian waterbirds: How and for what purposes?).



Mrs Clémence DESCHAMPS (Tour du Valat) explaining the use of the MOOC-RESSOURCE to the participants of the MOP-8 AEWA.

14th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP14) of the Ramsar Convention, Geneva (Switzerland)

5–13 November 2022

On the sidelines of the plenaries, the RESSOURCE Project organized a side event to present its major findings. This event was an excellent opportunity to meet some key personalities, particularly Stéphanie Bouziges-Eschmann, French Facility for Global Environment (FFEM), Pierre Dubreuil, Director General of the French Biodiversity Agency (OFB), and Colonel Bocar Thiam, Director of National Parks of Senegal.

15th Pan-African Ornithological Congress (PAOC15), Victoria Falls (Zimbabwe)

21–25 November 2022

With more than 300 participants, this event was an unprecedented opportunity for the RESSOURCE Project team to disseminate, inform and discuss all of its findings with a wide high-level audience. The six oral presentations and the two posters presented were all very well received, eliciting great interest and enthusiasm, and leading to many constructive discussions with several potential partners for the extension phase of the project.

FROM THE FIELD



Djibril Diouf, a resident of Diadam 3 village in the Senegal River Delta, pulls out a fishing net that was illegally used in the middle of the Djoudj National Bird Park. These nets are dangerous for waterbirds because, when trying to catch fish caught in the mesh, they can become entangled and drown.

NEWSROOM

Other information on the RESSOURCE Project can be consulted in the links below:

- AEWA News, Successful Collaboration with AEWA: RESSOURCE Project to Sustain Achievements in the Sahel Region (click [here](#)).
- AEWA News, The RESSOURCE Project Presented Two Side-Events at the 8th Session of the Meeting of the Parties to AEWA (click [here](#)).
- FAO Unasylva 253, Wild food from forests – Ways to improve nutrition and conserve biodiversity (click [here](#)), p. 57.
- Poster, Sudan designates the Khor Abu Habil Inner Delta as a Ramsar site with support from the RESSOURCE Project (click [here](#)).
- FAO Stories, Bringing water lilies back into nature and back to the Senegalese cuisine (click [here](#)).

WHAT'S COMING UP?

- World Migratory Bird Day
13 May 2023
www.worldmigratorybirdday.org/news/2022/world-migratory-bird-day-2023-focus-water
- World Environment Day
5 June 2023
<https://www.un.org/en/observances/environment-day>

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RESSOURCE TALKS

Colonel Bocar Thiam,
Director of National Parks of Senegal

Senegal is full of parks and natural sites of inestimable biological wealth that we must develop to their full potential.

The achievements of biodiversity conservation inside and around protected areas are currently under threat from several factors, such as climate change and its consequences, as well as the rapid growth of rural populations whose livelihoods remain essentially dependent on the exploitation of biodiversity.

The objectives of sustainable management of wetlands and waterbird populations pursued by the RESSOURCE Project are aligned with the country's national wetland management policy. Since the beginning of the project in 2017, the Directorate of National Parks (DPN) of Senegal has therefore been strongly engaged in the activities of this innovative project.

The valuable collaboration between the DPN and the RESSOURCE Project in carrying out waterbird census, supporting capacity building of national parks and forestry administration officers, and strengthening the legal and institutional frameworks relating to the conservation of migratory waterbirds and wetlands directly contributes to the implementation of the country's national wetland management policy.

We are also excited about the scope of project activities, which are beneficial for national parks and rural communities. For example, the field guide on waterbirds identification and the guide on invasive plant species in the Senegal River Delta have been widely distributed. In addition, the development of the water lily sector is important to communities, thus helping to promote the sustainable management and conservation of natural wetlands.

We strongly hope that the collaborative efforts between the DPN and the RESSOURCE Project will be sustained in Senegal; however, for greater impact, we also encourage a large-scale replication of this initiative in other regions of the Sahel.



FIND OUT MORE

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