Preserving ecosystems
Uniting communities
Influencing change

Wetlands International Africa
Half-Yearly Newsletter No. 01 (January–June 2025)

The first six months of 2025 were marked by an intensification of innovative initiatives in favour of wetlands, increased local mobilisation and major advances in governance and environmental advocacy.

I Governance and Advocacy

A. Active participation in political processes and consultation frameworks

- In Casamance, Wetlands International Africa supported and actively participated in the International Scientific Colloquium on Mangrove Ecosystem Management in West Africa (GEMAO), organised by the Department of Agroforestry at Assane Seck University in Ziguinchor (UASZ).

- In the Saloum Delta, the organisation participated in the workshop to review the Agrosylvopastoral and Fisheries Policy Act, as well as the workshop on marine resource governance and ecosystem restoration.

- We also took part in the forum on salt land recovery organised in Loul Séssène in Saloum, contributing to the collective reflection on large-scale restoration strategies.

- ***Guinea-Bissau on track for a new biosphere reserve Jeta-Pecixe-Cacheu (RBJPC): official launch of the application.***

Guinea-Bissau, although ranked among the least developed countries in the world, is rich in natural resources and ecological heritage of global importance. The country relies on its marine, coastal and terrestrial ecosystems to combat poverty and build sustainable development. It is in this context that the application file for the future Jeta-Pecixe-Cacheu Biosphere Reserve (RBJPC) was prepared for inclusion in the UNESCO programme. This preparatory phase was made possible thanks to funding from Wetlands International Africa through its programmes Mangrove Capital Africa (MCA) and Wetlands For Resilience (W4R), Grdr Migration-Citoyenneté-Développement, and the Environment Fund of the Portuguese Ministry of Environment and Energy Transition, in partnership with IBAP Guinea-Bissau.

Official launch of Guinea-Bissau's candidacy by the Executive Director of WIACO and the Director of IBAP for a new biosphere reserve

B. Partnerships to combat plastic pollution

As part of efforts to reduce plastic pollution in the Saloum Delta, a structural partnership has been established with the National Waste Management Company (SONAGED). This semester, a joint mission was conducted to develop the Operational Waste Management Plan (POGD) for the islands of Diogane, Dionewar and Niodior, with the aim of reducing environmental pressures on wetlands.

C. Consolidation of landscape platforms and institutional agreements

- In Guinea-Bissau, the JPC landscape partnership platform (Jeta-Pexice-Cacheu) was officially launched, promoting a collaborative approach to mangrove landscape management.

- In Sierra Leone, a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) was signed between Wetlands International Africa, the Government (represented by the National Protected Area Authority) and the Mokorbu community. This agreement formalises the commitment of stakeholders to mangrove conservation and restoration by strengthening institutional collaboration.

Aerial view of the mangroves of the Saloum Delta

II RESTORATION: 48 hectares of mangroves undergoing regeneration

In Senegal and Sierra Leone, the Rooted Resilience and Mangrove Capital Africa projects have enabled more than 48 hectares of mangroves to be included in ecological restoration processes.

- In Kagnobon (Casamance), a 170-metre canal dug by 30 villagers has restored water circulation to nearly 18 hectares.

- In Sierra Leone, the restoration of abandoned rice fields in Yawri-Bay has already had an impact on 30 hectares of the planned 50.

Monitoring of reforested sites

III Ecological monitoring: communities on the front line

Through financial and logistical support to protected area managers, monitoring patrols are regularly organised in the intervention sites, with the involvement of local communities. The aim is to ensure the effective implementation of the management plan and to monitor the state of the protected area.

- In the Saloum Delta, a total of 58 surveillance trips were supported during this six-month period, with 163 people mobilised.

- In Casamance, more than 25 marine patrols supported by WIACO were organised in protected areas. These missions mobilised nearly 125 people, including 75 Marine Protected Area agents and 50 members of local management committees.

58 SURVEILLANCE OUTINGS
SALOUM

25 MARINE PATROLS
CASAMANCE

IV MANGROVE CLUBS AND AWARENESS

A. Mangrove Environment Clubs are increasing their educational activities.

- In Saloum, 79 clubs organise outings and cultural activities.
- In Casamance, 20 new clubs have been set up, involving nearly 1,000 young people in educational outings, agroecological training and school gardens. Awareness-raising does not stop there: World Wetlands Day, radio programmes, national and local celebrations have reached thousands of people from Senegal to Guinea-Bissau.

B. Community awareness campaigns

- World Wetlands Day was celebrated in Saloum, Casamance and Guinea-Bissau, mobilising communities on a large scale.

- ***In Casamance :***

  The celebration of Senegal's 65th anniversary of independence was an opportunity for 101 members of the Mangrove Environment Clubs to raise awareness among communities about mangrove preservation. Community meetings were organised, notably in Séléky, where the population agreed to the establishment of an Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) area on degraded land, and in Kafountine, where women's groups were made aware of the issue and will now receive support.

  Two radio programmes also helped to reach a wider audience on the issues of restoration and the role of GECCOMs.

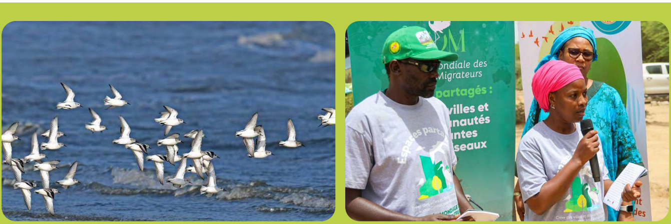
- World Migratory Bird Day (10 May) was celebrated in Bissau, Bubaque, Mansoa and Calequisse, with activities to raise awareness of the importance of these species and their habitats.

Wetlands
INTERNATIONAL
Erosion de la biodiversité
Dégradation des services écosystémiques

Activities organised by Mangroves clubs

V BIODIVERSITY MONITORING

As it does every year, the Organisation took part in the International Waterbird Census Day (JDIOE). This event helps to monitor changes in waterbird populations and feed into international databases, which are essential for guiding conservation efforts at regional and global level.



Celebration of World Migratory Bird Day

VI SAVINGS AND LIVELIHOODS

A. Support for Income-Generating Activities (AGR)

- *Structuring of groups and access to certification*

In the Saloum Delta, four Economic Interest Groups (EIGs) comprising 208 members (92% of whom are women) received technical and administrative support to obtain FRA certification. This process aims to facilitate their official recognition and improve their access to markets.

Facilitating marketing

A tricycle was given to the Matyr (32 members, including 31 women) and Moundor (53 members, including 13 women) economic interest groups to improve the mobility of processed products and reduce logistical constraints on distribution.

Promotion of agroecological market gardening

An exchange visit to Niaguis (Casamance) strengthened the capacities of 20 women from four groups on organic market gardening techniques.
A market gardening area is also being equipped for the benefit of the Fara Badji group, where 42 women are active.

Development of modern beekeeping

In Saloum, 25 members of the Mall Pal (Mbassis) economic interest group were trained in modern beekeeping techniques. At the end of the training, each member received beehives and beekeeping kits to start or expand their honey production.

Support for rice farming

A new rice husker has been provided to the Djissof Fakone economic interest group (Kagnobon, Casamance), made up of 30 women.

In Guinea-Bissau, the MCA and TPNTP projects have enabled the development of 1,493 hectares of agricultural land in the Cantanhez area, benefiting 483 households.

Making beehives

Monitoring beehives

Harvesting rice

B. Support for savings and access to credit: Structuring and strengthening of GECCOMs

- Casamance: Official creation of the GECCOM Cooperative Society, bringing together 87 groups of 30 women.

- Guinea-Bissau: As part of a revitalisation of existing GECCOMs, 24 members of 12 GECCOMs were trained in the management of savings/credit groups and the relaunch of collective initiatives.

VII Capacity building: training and equipping for action

Training :

On the Global Mangrove Watch (GMW) tool

27 stakeholders were trained in the use of the tool for monitoring mangroves in Casamance, and 35 in Sierra Leone.

On community-based mangrove restoration (CBEMR):

Training of 29 participants in Sierra Leone and 33 in Guinea Bissau, including community members, government officials, CSOs and local NGOs.

Equipment :

In Casamance, nine protected areas have been equipped with digital tablets to improve data collection on restoration and conservation activities.

In the Saloum Delta, 200 life jackets were distributed to the seven CLPAs (Local Artisanal Fishing Councils) in the Foundiougne department to ensure the safety of teams during monitoring and surveillance missions.

VIII Event

Launch of the AWOM (Aquatic Warbler On the Move) project at Djoudj National Bird Sanctuary: a strong commitment to the conservation of the aquatic warbler

On 9 May 2025, Djoudj National Park hosted the launch of the LIFEAWOM project, dedicated to the conservation of wintering areas for a migratory bird species that is threatened on a global scale.

This ambitious initiative, implemented in Senegal by Wetlands International Africa – in partnership with the National Parks Directorate (DPN) and the local communities of Débi and Tiguet – aims to restore critical habitats and strengthen conservation efforts at the national level.

Launch of the Aquatic Warblers on the Move project

World Wetlands Day 2025

On 2 February 2025, Wetlands International Africa - West Coast and Gulf of Guinea celebrated World Wetlands Day with several events organised in its areas of operation. The theme for this year's event was 'Protecting wetlands for our shared future', bringing together various stakeholders committed to preserving vital ecosystems.

International Waterbird Census in Joal-Fadiouth: A renewed commitment to bird conservation.

On Wednesday, 15 January 2025, wetland biodiversity took centre stage at the Joal-Fadiouth Marine Protected Area (MPA), where the annual International Waterbird Census was held. Alongside local stakeholders, Wetlands International West Coast and Gulf of Guinea (WIACO) marked its presence through an active and sustained commitment to the conservation of avian fauna.

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Identifying sites for reforestation

Next steps (July–December 2025)

- ✓ *Continue restoration efforts with rigorous monitoring.*
- ✓ *Consolidate sustainable economic sectors.*
- ✓ *Strengthen participatory governance.*
- ✓ *Use data to refine strategies and advocacy.*

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To inspire and mobilize society to safeguard
and restore wetlands for people and nature.