

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



Wetlands
INTERNATIONAL

*Wetlands International Africa
Western Coast and Gulf of Guinea*

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I. MESSAGE FROM DIRECTOR



Ibrahima THIAM

Executive Director

Ladies, Gentlemen, dear partners,

In wetland management, behind every restored hectare, every piece of data produced, or every activity implemented, there are above all human stories and ecosystems coming back to life.

In 2025, Wetlands International Africa – Western Coast and Gulf of Guinea continued its mission with a strong conviction: the restoration of wetlands is not limited to technical interventions. It is a lever for sustainable transformation, at the crossroads of biodiversity, climate, and human development.

The results speak for themselves: hundreds of thousands of hectares better protected, and thousands of people engaged in sustainable economic and social dynamics. But beyond the numbers, these are trajectories that are changing.

We have seen structured micro-enterprises, organized communities with a dynamic where conservation becomes an opportunity, not a constraint.

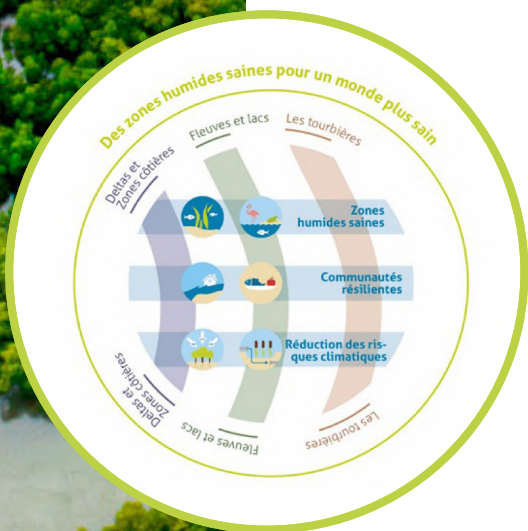
The year 2025 also marks a step up in our work, with the launch of new structural initiatives and the expansion of our regional presence. It confirms that solutions exist provided they are built with the community, over the long term.

None of this would have been possible without the commitment of our partners, the trust of communities, and the mobilization of our teams. We express our deepest gratitude to all of them.

In 2026, we will continue this momentum with the same ambition: amplify what works, support ongoing transformations, and continue to make wetlands a pillar of sustainable development in West Africa.

Because ultimately, restoring a wetland is also restoring balances, local economies, and futures.





WHO WE ARE

We are a foreign association under Senegalese law, member of the Wetlands International network, a global non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation and wise use of **wetlands**.

Wetlands International Africa – Western Coast and Gulf of Guinea – WIACO operates along the West African coastline with the support of governments, NGOs, a network of specialized experts, and local communities. We have been supporting the **restoration of mangroves** and related **ecosystems** for several years, combining it with livelihood development through the promotion of **income-generating activities (IGA)** and Savings and loans Groups for Mangrove Conservation (**GECCOM**). This strategy is supported by local stakeholder capacity building and **environmental education and awareness**.

OUR VISION

Inspire and mobilise society to preserve and restore wetlands for the benefit of people and nature for a world where wetlands are cherished and nurtured for their beauty, the life they support, and the resources they provide.

II. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Our strategic framework defines our three key ecosystem **intervention areas** : **Deltas and coastal zones Rivers and lakes Peatlands**.

In these three intervention areas, we pursue three impacts : **healthy wetlands, resilient communities, and reduced climate risks**.



III. MISSION IN ACTION

In 2025, Wetlands International Africa – Western Coast and Gulf of Guinea consolidated its integrated approach for West African wetlands.

From ecological restoration to the structuring of sustainable economic models, through local capacity building and youth engagement, our interventions have contributed to strengthening the resilience of ecosystems and communities.

A. Restore to Regenerate

Ecological restoration remained at the heart of our action in 2025.



+1,100 hectares

of ecosystems directly restored

This figure tells a story, one of an approach that does not merely plant trees, but repairs ecological functions in their entirety.



Mangroves



Thanks to the innovative Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) method for rehabilitating abandoned rice paddies, **149 hectares** were directly restored in Guinea-Bissau in the natural parks of Cacheu and Cantanhez and their surroundings. In Sierra Leone, the same approach was replicated with extensive hydrodynamic studies in Yawri Bay preceding any intervention: **36 ha** impacted.

More than **200 hectares** were directly restored in Senegal:

In the Saloum Delta, specifically in the Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) of Gandoule and Joal-Fadiouth, actions under the ARC and Only One projects enabled reforestation over **84.11 hectares**, combining plantings of *Rhizophora* and *Avicennia* species, alongside the establishment of a nursery of **9,600 Avicennia** plants to ensure the sustainability of actions.

In Casamance, the Rooted Resilience and Only One initiatives continued restoration over **120 hectares** across six (6) MPAs.

Restoration of sedge marshes through canal dredging near the Djoudj National Bird Park (Saint-Louis, Senegal), impacting an area of **720 ha** and offering essential refuge to the Aquatic Warbler, a globally threatened species.

Over-exploited mudflats: Rehabilitation of sites at Mbassis Log and Joal-Fadiouth (in the Saloum Delta) through controlled repopulation and monitoring of mollusk species.



Critical Wetlands



B. Protect to Preserve

Strengthening the sustainable management of protected areas in Guinea-Bissau and Senegal.



+865,000 hectares

of ecosystems protected and sustainably managed

In Guinea-Bissau, our actions continued with structural advances. The year 2025 was notably marked by the validation of the management plan for Cantanhez National Park, located in the Tombali region. This protected area of **105,000 hectares** is home to the country's last dense tropical forests, as well as important mangrove ecosystems and remarkable biodiversity.

Furthermore, **88,000 hectares** of mangrove-dominant ecosystems are protected in Cacheu National Park (PNTC), in the north of the country. Composed of two zones separated by the Cacheu River, this park is characterized by a mosaic of mangroves, forests, and savannahs, essential for biodiversity and local livelihoods.

In Senegal, our close collaboration with the Directorate of Community Marine Protected Areas (DAMPC) strengthened sustainable ecosystem management in the seven Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) of the Saloum Delta (**247,814 ha**) and the eight MPAs of Casamance (**413,982 ha**).

Our support was structured around several complementary levers:



Active and reinforced field surveillance:

Surveillance outings and marine patrols were supported alongside MPA agents. Logistical resources were also consolidated: canoes, outboard motors, motorcycles, and safety equipment, to strengthen the operational presence of managers and deter illegal activities.



Technology in service of protection:

The use of the Global Mangrove Watch (GMW) tool enabled improved detection and monitoring of degradation dynamics. In Casamance, each satellite alert was systematically verified in the field and precisely mapped, contributing to more responsive, data-driven management.



Strengthened governance and partnerships:

We contributed to the revitalization of regional platforms, support for policy review processes, and the formalization of structural institutional partnerships. In this dynamic, a partnership with Senegal's National Solid Waste Management Company (SONAGED) enabled the development of operational waste management plans for the Saloum islands, contributing to reducing environmental pressures on coastal ecosystems.



C. Educate and Raise Awareness

Sustainable transformation rests on community engagement, particularly among the youngest.



A network of 150 active Mangrove Environment Clubs (CEM) operating across all our intervention areas, engaging over 5,500 school students.

In 2025, our commitment to environmental education was consolidated through this dynamic network comprising 75 clubs in the Saloum Delta (approximately 40 students per club), 60 in Casamance (approximately 35 students per club), and 13 in Guinea-Bissau (approximately 30 students per club), forming a pool of young ambassadors committed to wetland protection.

Students were engaged through field trips, awareness campaigns, cultural activities, and action-learning initiatives.



Pedagogical innovation: Wetlands Kids Day

This playful and competitive concept, tested in the Saloum islands, raises students' awareness of wetland protection through games, readings, and interactive challenges.

The comic book 'Youssooupha and the Mangrove,' finalized and distributed this year, now serves as a valuable educational resource for reaching younger audiences.



Community awareness

Beyond the school setting, community awareness was strengthened during celebrations of international days dedicated to wetlands and migratory birds, widely mobilizing communities in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau.

In Casamance, radio broadcasts also helped broaden the reach of restoration and conservation messages to a wider audience.

These actions contribute to anchoring a culture of conservation at the local level.



D. When Nature Becomes an Ally of Development

Our conviction: we can only sustainably protect what has value in the eyes of those who live with it. Conservation is inseparable from local economic development.

In 2025, several value chains were strengthened: beekeeping, agro-ecological market gardening, rice farming, aquaculture, fishery product processing, and non-timber forest products.



Nearly **1,500 hectares** of agricultural land restored

in Guinea-Bissau (Cantanhez area) benefiting **483 households**



Economic value chains : the example of beekeeping

Monitoring of 38 active hives in 3 Economic Interest Groups (EIGs) in the Saloum Delta.

Results: 90 kg of honey produced in 2025 with **769,500 FCFA** in annual revenues generated for the two groups.



The silent revolution of GECCOMs (Savings and Loans Groups for Mangrove Conservation):

+10,700 people involved

+395 official and spontaneous GECCOMs active in Saloum, Casamance and Guinea-Bissau

150 groups in the process of being structured as cooperatives in Senegal (Saloum and Casamance).



Training and equipment for empowerment :

In Saloum and Casamance :

Over **300 women** active in **7.5 ha** of equipped market garden plots.

35 EIGs trained in market gardening, poultry farming, aquaculture, aquaponics, beekeeping, oyster farming, and product processing.



Energy alternatives to reduce pressure on mangroves :

Improved cookstoves: **350 stoves** distributed in 13 localities of the Saloum Delta and the GECCOM cooperative in Casamance. Local EIGs were trained in the manufacturing and use of these stoves.

Butane gas supply: **100 cylinders** distributed in 3 island villages in Casamance, facilitating access to clean energy and reducing dependence on wood.

Local distribution points: 3 **operational energy shops** in the Saloum Delta, enabling regular and sustainable access to energy solutions for local populations.



E. Building Capacity for Sustainable Conservation

Training, structuring, and equipping local stakeholders is an essential pillar of our approach.

Training on technological tools:

27 stakeholders in Casamance and **42** in Sierra Leone trained on the Global Mangrove Watch tool, enabling them to map and monitor the state of mangroves precisely and independently.

Scientific and ornithological monitoring:

In Saloum, under the CREAM project, **78 participants** were trained in bird identification, monitoring, and banding techniques (Palmarin and Bétenty), contributing to the production of reliable scientific data for conservation.

Community-Based Ecological Mangrove Restoration (CBEMR):

50 participants trained in Sierra Leone and **33** in Guinea-Bissau, including local communities, government services, Civil Society Organizations, and local NGOs, strengthening community participation and sustainable implementation of restoration projects.



Testimony

Aissatou Sanè

Member of the UFOAN cooperative in Niaguis, Casamance (Senegal).

“

Before, life was very difficult for us, the women of the group. We had almost no stable income-generating activities. Some days went by without us being able to earn enough to properly provide for our families' needs. We worked with very limited resources, without suitable equipment, and without proper training to make the most of the fishery resources in our community. Many women stayed at home due to the lack of opportunities.

Then, Wetlands International came to support us. Through the training sessions, we learned new techniques for production, processing, and management of fishery resources. The organization also provided us with equipment that completely transformed the way we work.

Little by little, we regained confidence in ourselves. Today, our group produces more efficiently, works in better conditions, and generates higher incomes. Women who previously had no source of activity are now able to support their families and look to the future with hope.

This support has not only improved our work; it has also restored dignity and given an important place to the women in our community.

”



IV. KEY LEARNING AND TEACHING

What mangroves taught us in 2025

Sustainable restoration starts with hydrology : we don't restore an ecosystem we restore its functions. The hydrodynamic studies conducted in Sierra Leone confirm this approach: understand the water before acting.

Technology is an ally, not a substitute

The Global Mangrove Watch tool allowed us to detect degradation alerts remotely. But every alert required field verification. The satellite-field combination is a winning approach provided local stakeholders are trained in these tools.

GECOMs are much more than savings groups

With **10,700 people** involved, GECOMs have become a genuine economic and social fabric. Their structuring as cooperatives in Casamance demonstrates institutional maturity beyond our expectations. The demand for support now exceeds our capacity to provide it.



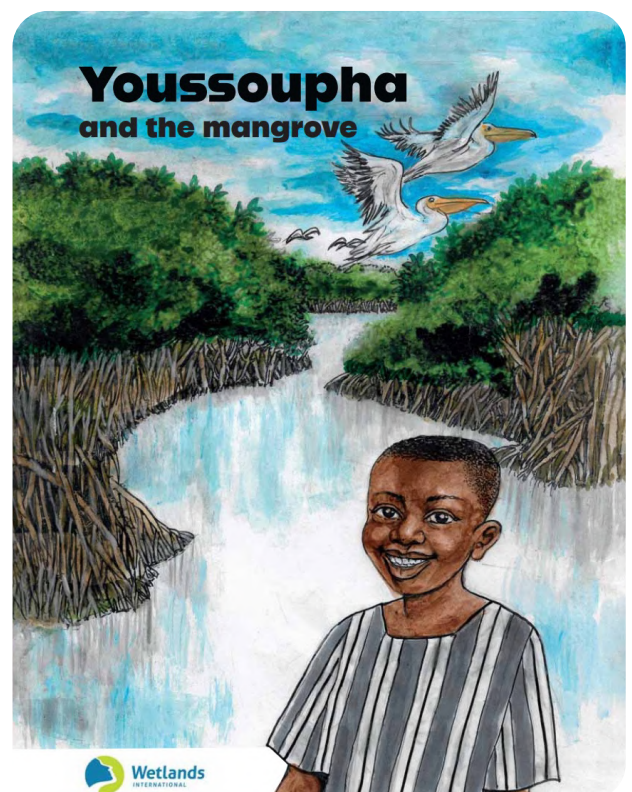
Education transforms mindsets over the long term

The Mangrove Environment Clubs, created as early as 2020, are now **150 active clubs**. Their stable presence in schools creates a generational effect.

The Wetlands Kids Day and the comic book 'Yous-soupha and the Mangrove' respond to a need for modern, adapted educational tools.

Women are the pillars of community resilience.

Whether in market garden plots, GECCOMs (groups that are almost exclusively female), or the manufacture of improved cookstoves, women are the first to adopt and spread innovations. Their economic empowerment is the most powerful lever for conservation.





key figures not to be missed

3 countries, one vision	Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone
Regional scientific contribution (annual DIOE coordination)	19 West African countries covered
Ecosystems restored	+1,100 ha
Ecosystems protected	+865,000 ha
People involved in savings groups (GECCOM-Savings and Loans Groups for Mangrove Conservation)	+10,700
Youth mobilized through Mangrove Environment Clubs (CEM)	+5,500
Farmland developed or secured	+1,500 ha benefiting nearly 500 households
Stakeholders strengthened in sustainable Income-Generating Activities (AGR)	+1,350 Direct beneficiaries
Stakeholders trained in sustainable ecosystem management tools	+250
Financial resources executed in 2025	1,047,872,482 FCFA
Operational expenditures directly linked to 2025 activities	661,825,818 FCFA

4,989 hectares of mangroves restored in Senegal, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone since 2012.



Behind every figure, a transformation.

These are not just numbers; they reflect the trust that our technical and financial partners place in our hard work.

But the most powerful impact remains human.

What the numbers don't say :

behind every restored hectare, there are hours of work under the sun, hands plunged in salt water, and a collective will to repair what has been weakened.

They do not show that these **1,100 hectares restored** represent areas where fish are returning, where oysters are regenerating, and where communities are gradually regaining stable sources of income.

They do not show that the **865,000 hectares protected** also serve as natural barriers against erosion and flooding, safeguarding entire villages and securing agricultural land.

They do not show that, for many of the **10,700 members of savings groups**, this has meant gaining financial autonomy for the first time the ability to fund an activity, cope with emergencies, or send a child to school.

They do not show that behind the **5,500 young people mobilized** there is a generation changing its perspective on the environment, shifting from exploitation to protection.

They also do not show that the **1,350 beneficiaries of income-generating activities** now have concrete alternatives, reducing pressure on natural resources.

And above all, they do not show that these dynamics are rebuilding connections among women within the same village, between generations, and between communities and their ecosystem.

Numbers speak to scale. But on the ground, it is about restored dignity, strengthened resilience, and a rebuilt future.





Testimony

Binta sonko

Member of the Bogoyay group in Joal-Fadiouth

“

Before, our group worked under very difficult conditions. We were determined to develop activities for women, but we lacked almost everything: no suitable workspace, very little equipment, and very limited technical knowledge. Each woman tried to manage as best she could to support her family.

At that time, many women did not have stable incomes. Some depended entirely on their husbands or on small activities that brought in almost nothing. Yet, we had resources around us, but we did not really know how to process and make the most of them.

The arrival of Wetlands International Africa marked a turning point for our group. The organization supported us through training, equipment, and especially the construction of an annex that now serves as our workspace and processing center.

Thanks to this support, we learned how to process several local products. Today, we work with cereals, honey, oyster farming, eco-friendly charcoal, local juices, soaps, and many other products. What we once considered simple local resources has now become a real source of income for the women in the group.

The equipment we received allows us to produce under better conditions and improve the quality of our products. Through the training sessions, we also learned about management, organization, and how to enhance the value of our activities.

Our group has become a reference in the area, and this makes us very proud. We can sincerely say that Wetlands International Africa has changed the lives of the women of Bogoyay.

”





2026 Perspectives : Consolidating and Expanding Our Impact

In 2026, our efforts will focus on:

Strengthening mangrove restoration, supporting sustainable economic activities, improving local governance, making better use of data for advocacy, and expanding community engagement.

Support sustainable economic value chains (beekeeping, market gardening, processing) and guide GECCOM cooperatives toward greater autonomy.

Leverage scientific data to inform decision-making, contribute to policy reforms, and strengthen advocacy for mangrove conservation.

Key highlights :

Strengthen ecological restoration through the rollout of the CREAM project, the expansion of activities in Sierra Leone, and improved scientific monitoring of restored sites.

Improve participatory governance through landscape platforms, capacity building for protected area managers, and strengthened institutional partnerships.

Mobilize communities more effectively especially young people and women through environmental education, awareness campaigns, and innovative financing mechanisms.

V. OUR PARTNERS & PROJECTS

THOSE WHO TRUST US



PROJECTS

Project	Execution period	Donors
Aquatic Warbler on move (AWOM)	2025-2029	European Union, NATURA 2000
Climate resilience for sites critical to migratory birds and communities along the East Atlantic Flyway (CREAF)	2025 - 2033	International Climate Initiative (IKI) – German Federal Government
To Plant or Not To Plant (TPNTP)	2023 – 2030	Greenchoice
Mangrove Capital Africa (MCA)	2017 - 2027	DoB Ecology
ONLY-ONE	2022 - 2026	ONLY ONE INC
Wetlands for Resilience (W4R)	2024 - 2026	SIDA
Community Resilience Support in the Saloum Delta (ARC-DS)	2023 - 2026	Swiss Philanthropy Foundation
Rooted Resilience	2024 - 2026	The Swedish Postcode Foundation
Community Resilience Project in the Saloum Delta (PRC-DS)	2021 - 2026	Woodside-Petrosen



VI. KEY DATES



15 January
International Waterbird Census



2 February
World Wetlands Day



08 March
International Women's Day



22 March
World Water Day



9 May
AWOM Project Launch



11 May
World Migratory Bird Day



05 June
World Environment Day



26 July
Mangroves Day



August
Launch of 'Youssoupha and the Mangrove' comic book



September
CREAF Project Launch



12 October
World Migratory Bird Day



December
IUCN Biodiversity Congress

VII. OUR TEAM



Ibrahima THIAM
Executive Director



Mamadou Sileye NIANG
Program Coordinator



Aïssatou Bouna BADIANE
Executive Assistant



Waly SENE
Project Manager



Rokyatou THIAM
Communications Officer



Abdoulaye NDIAYE
Program Manager



Khady GUEYE
Biodiversity Officer



Alhaji Malikie SIAKA
Project Manager



Momar WADE
Driver and Fleet Manager



Joceline EMBALO
Administrative and Financial Assistant



Ousmane SANE
Driver



Mohamed Hafie Turay
Accountant



Dicko CISSE
Senior Accountant



Kéba THIAM
Project Assistant



Yacine Diongue
Project Assistant



Dr Boubacar SAGNA
Project Manager



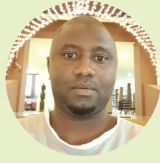
Khadim DIOP
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Khadime DIOP
Accounting Assistant



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Yaye Binta DIAGNE
Monitoring and Evaluation Assistant



Demba Tine
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Leonildo BENATE
GIS Assistant



CLOSING REMARKS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



*This report tells of a year of actions, but above all a year of collective commitment. Behind every result presented, there are women and men, partners, institutions, and communities, all united by a common will: **to preserve essential ecosystems and build sustainable solutions.***



We express our deep gratitude to our technical and financial partners, whose trust and support make the implementation of our actions and their deployment at greater scale possible.



We salute with recognition the local communities, true agents of change; the national and local authorities for their collaboration and commitment.



We also pay tribute to our teams, whose work often discreet but decisive transforms ideas into concrete impacts in the field.



Finally, we thank all those who, near or far, contribute to advancing this mission. We thank you for your trust and invite you to continue this shared commitment. Please do not hesitate to support us.



“Inspire and mobilise society to safeguard and restore wetlands for people and nature.”

      Wetlands International Afrique

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